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Best Bet
East-West Shrine Game,
10:30 a.m. Saturday, ESPN2



Friday, January 11, 2002

Men get Golden win in final four minutes

OREGON 76
CAL 72

■ Oregon erases a seven-point deficit to secure a victory over California and stay undefeated at Mac Court this season

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon men played four minutes of solid basketball Thursday night. Good enough.

The Ducks trailed by seven points with 4:36 left in the game, but stormed back to beat the Golden Bears of California, 76-72, in front of 8,504 fans at McArthur Court. Oregon (11-4 overall, 4-1 Pacific-10 Conference) won its ninth-straight home game, while California (10-3, 1-2) dropped its third-straight road contest.

"The biggest thing is that we were able to pull out one of these close games," said Oregon head coach Ernie Kent, whose Ducks have lost four tight games on the road this season. "It allowed us to step up and grow as a program."

Oregon was able to come back on Cal with a run of good shooting and better

defense at the end of the contest. With four and a half minutes left in the game, California center Amit Tamir hit a long three-pointer to put Cal ahead 65-58. But on the next possession, Oregon guard Freddie Jones collected a rebound on an Anthony Lever miss, put it back and drew the foul to pull the Ducks within four. On Cal's next possession, Golden Bear guard Shantay Legans dribbled the ball off his knee, giving the ball back to the Ducks.

"We made some mistakes that helped to narrow the gap," California head coach Ben Braun said after the game. "We had a couple of turnovers and other things all in the same stretch that really hurt us."

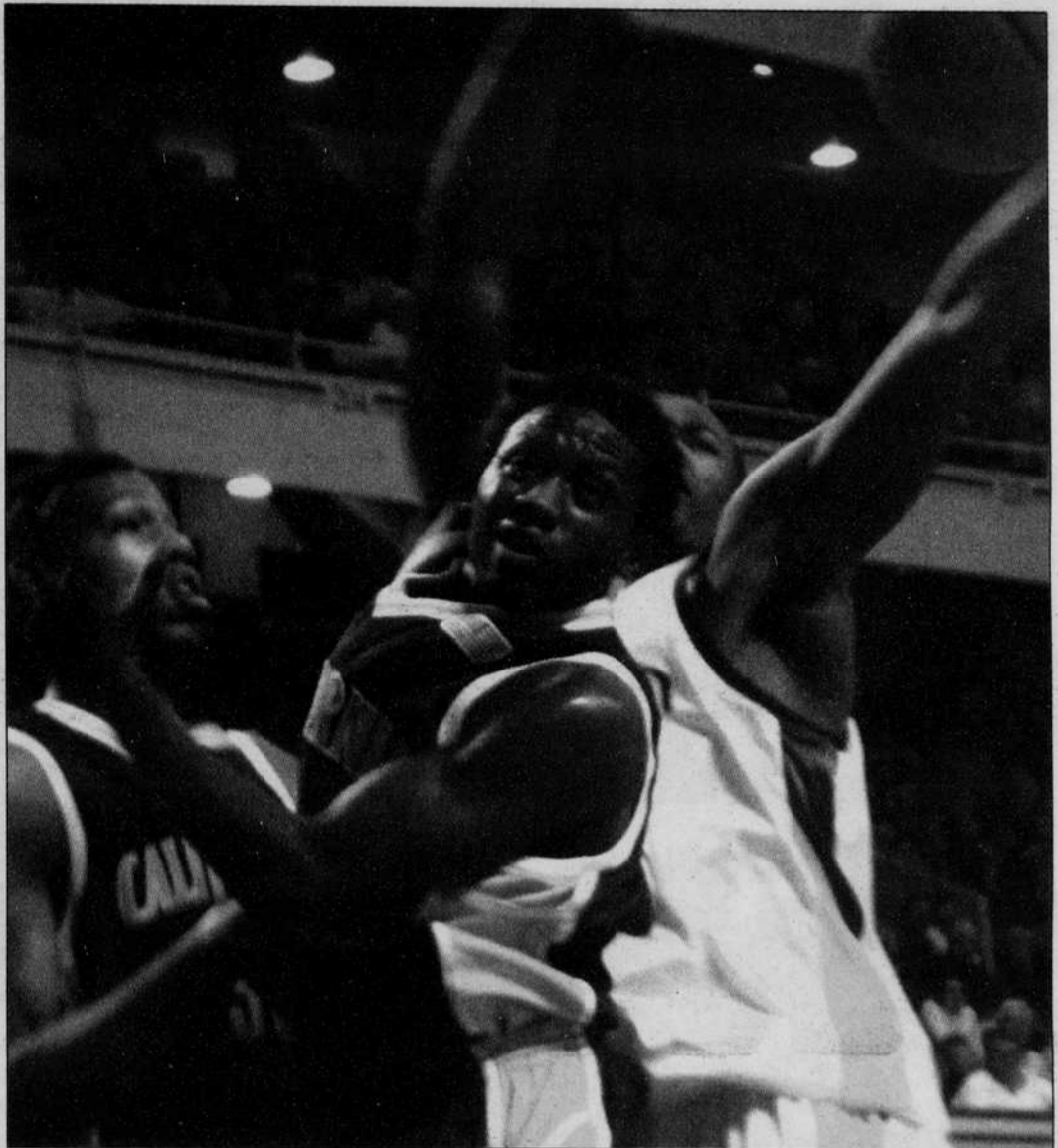
With less than four minutes left, Oregon guard Luke Ridnour — who had been cold all game — drilled a three-pointer to make the score 65-64 California. Two free throws by Luke Jackson on the Ducks' next possession gave Oregon its first lead since the 3:31 mark of the first half. It was a lead the Ducks would not relinquish.

"Ridnour hit a real clutch three down the stretch," Jones said. "That motivated us, and told us it was time to take over the game."

The Ducks made eight free throws over the game's final minute to seal the win.

Oregon players made it to the charity stripe 45 times to California's 11, a

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Thomas Patterson Emerald

Oregon's Freddie Jones, who scored 22 points, drives against Cal's A.J. Diggs in the Ducks' 76-72 victory Thursday.

Ducks wake up when it counts after being slowed by Bears

■ After struggling in the closing minutes all season, the Ducks pull out a close one over Cal

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

Like most students this week, the Oregon men's basketball players were having to adjust to the back-to-school lifestyle.

It had been a month of sleep, eat and basketball. Now, they had to add getting up early and going to

school to the equation.

"We just came off a long break where it was just basketball," said guard Freddie Jones, who scored 22 points Thursday. "We just weren't into it tonight. We were kind of out of sync the whole game."

Well, not exactly the whole game. There was the last four minutes where the Ducks finally found a rhythm and somehow found a way to pull out the victory after trailing 65-58 with 4:36 to play.

The final stat sheet shows that

Oregon out-fought California, 76-72, Thursday night in front of 8,504 at McArthur Court. But the real key, the Ducks said, was to fight through their own sluggishness and survive a slowed-down style of play.

"We gutted it through a grind-out game," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said.

Cal entered the game with the best defense in the Pacific-10 Conference. Oregon entered the game with the best offense in the conference.

In the first half, the advantage went to Cal's defense, which forced the Ducks to play in the half-court and not get out and run as much as they like to. After back-to-back threes by Luke Ridnour and Jones at the 10:26 mark of the half, Oregon did not convert a field goal until a buzzer-beating trey by Anthony Lever evened the score at 30 heading into the break.

"We didn't play great basketball in the first half and they had a lot to do with it," Kent said.

"They switched a lot and we didn't do a good job of reading their mismatches."

The second half appeared to keep going Cal's way, with the Bears seemingly converting a rally-killing shot each time the Pit started to go crazy.

But then came the last four minutes of the game when Oregon's defense decided to give Cal a taste of its own medicine.

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Second-half surge gives Ducks victory

■ Oregon defeats California, 65-53, for its fifth conference win to stay in second place

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

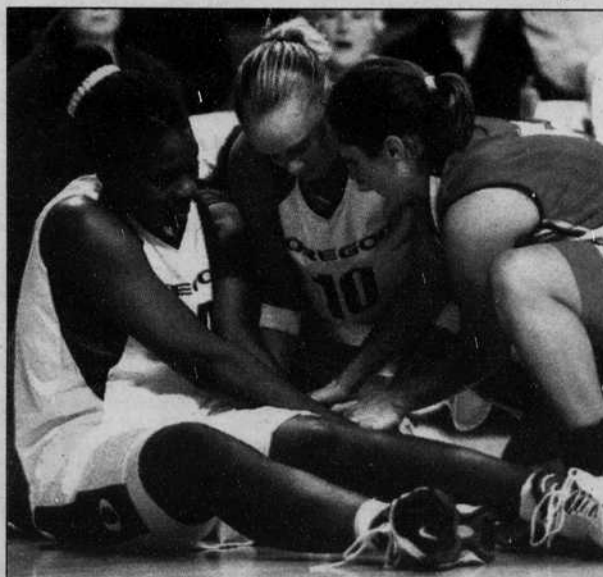
Bev Smith, you may now wipe the sweat from your brow. After trailing by as much as seven points to California on Thursday, the Oregon women's basketball team woke up and pulled ahead in the second half, defeating the Golden Bears (5-9 overall, 0-5 Pacific-10 Conference) 65-53 at Haas Pavilion in Berkeley.

Out-scored and over-played in the first half, the Ducks (10-6, 5-2) were in danger of losing their second game straight of the young Pac-10 season before sophomore Cathrine Kraayeveld stepped into the spotlight.

"Cathrine is kind of a freak," junior Shaquala Williams told KSZR radio after the game. "She has great hands, she can shoot, and she can finish. It makes your life as a point guard that much easier."

Kraayeveld, a 6-foot-3 forward, finished with 15 points and 10 rebounds — her second career double-double — and her 35 minutes played ties a career high. In her five starts this season, the Ducks are 4-1.

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Adam Amato Emerald

Andrea Billis (left) and Jamie Craighead (10), seen here against Western Oregon, helped the Ducks to a 65-53 win over Cal on Thursday.

Oregon wrestlers host No. 4 Michigan

■ At the midway points, the Ducks will host their second match of the season tonight at Mac Court

By Chris Cabot
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon wrestling team's meet against No. 4 Michigan at 7:30 p.m. today marks what could be considered the midway point in the season for the Ducks.

After nine competitions, eight of which were away from Eugene, head coach Chuck Kearney's squad returns to the cozy confines of McArthur Court with a 3-3 dual meet record. The meet against the Wolverines starts a run of 10 duals, eight of which are at home.

Kearney said his team's return will be a tough test, as the Wolverine lineup features a ranked competitor at every weight class. Michigan has also won its last 11 dual meets.

Michigan "is solid from top to bottom — a very good team," Kearney said.

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