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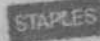
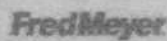
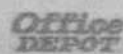
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Women's

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don't really get caught up in where we play, as long as we have enough Duck fans to support us."

Oregon has only two more games after Saturday, and with the inaugural Pac-10 Tournament coming closer, momentum is becoming increasingly important.

"We've really got to play well in these next three games and the Pac-10 Tournament as well if want to make it to the NCAA Tournament," sophomore Cathrine Kraayeveld said. "We've got to play each team as they come."

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Men's

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rival. That's something that we really have come accustomed to not doing. That loss has been more important" than all of the wins.

More crucial than in-state bragging rights this season, though, is the race for the Pacific-10 Conference championship. Oregon is one of six teams in the hunt, and the Ducks know they must protect their home court.

"This team has a focus, an eye-of-the-tiger look," head coach Ernie Kent said. "They want something that's out there for them and they're going to do everything they can to get it."

Saturday, it may mean toning down their run-and-gun style of play against the Beavers. In the teams' first meeting on Jan. 19, Oregon grinded out a 63-51 victory that gave it confidence in its ability to play in the halfcourt.

But these Ducks love to run, especially at McArthur Court, and lead the Pac-10 in scoring with 86.3 points per game. On the opposite end of those rankings, the Beavers are last in the league with 64.1 points per game, which is indicative of their preference for a slower pace.

Oregon State, which is fighting to remain in eighth place in order to qualify for the Pac-10 Tournament, makes up for its lack of scoring with its defense. The Beavers rank second in the Pac-10 by giving up only 65.7 points per contest.

"They're a slow-down team and we're an up-tempo team so we got to make sure that the tempo is in our favor," Oregon forward Robert Johnson said. "We just have to go at them."

Defensively, the Ducks know they will need to keep an eye on Oregon State forward Philip Ricci, who is averaging 16.1 points and 6.7 rebounds a game in his first season as a Beaver.

"He's one of the better players in the conference and we're going to try to limit him as best we can, but he's a tough player to limit," Kent said.

As for Oregon State head coach Ritchie McKay, the one Duck that he's most aware of is sophomore point guard Luke Ridnour.

"He is tremendous at getting the ball to the open player," McKay said. "He's got a vision like Jason Kidd (of the New Jersey Nets) and Steve Nash (of the Dallas Mavericks). I think he'll be an All-American at the University of Oregon if he stays for four years."

"But I hope he doesn't."

Considering his team's struggles against the Ducks, McKay would gladly accept any advantage he can get.

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