

# Oregon now waits for postseason bid

■ After a strong showing in the Pac-10 Tournament, the Ducks hope for a ninth straight trip to the Big Dance

By Hank Hager  
Oregon Daily Emerald

On the heels of the Ducks' Pacific-10 Conference season-ending loss to Arizona State comes a question: What's next for Oregon?

Do the Ducks, who finished 17-12 overall and 10-8 in Pac-10 regular season play, have an invitation to the NCAA Tournament extended to them, or do they fall to the Women's National Invitational Tournament, possibly hosting a first round game?

The answer to that question will come next week, but Oregon is already looking ahead.

*"We want to go forward, and we want to play."*

Bev Smith  
Oregon head coach

"I'm looking forward to it and the opportunity to play in front of these fans again," junior Shaquala Williams said about the possibility of starting the WNIT at McArthur Court. "I think we have a young team and a lot of people coming back next year, so (we have) the opportunity to play again and maybe improve for next year. I'm looking forward to it."

A year ago, Oregon finished 17-11 after the completion of Pac-10 play but was defeated in the first game of the NCAA Tournament by Iowa, 89-82.

With two wins in the inaugural Pac-10 Tournament this season, Oregon hopes the NCAA Tournament selection committee takes notice.

"We want to go forward, and we want to play," said first year head coach Bev Smith.

After taking out an overmatched Washington State team, 85-67 on Friday, the Ducks took on a tough Washington squad, seeded No. 2 in the tournament, a day later.

The Huskies, who advanced to the Elite Eight of last season's NCAA Tournament, were well versed with the pressures of playing in a single-elimination tournament.

But so were the Ducks, who for the last eight seasons have made it to the Big Dance. Oregon abruptly ended the Huskies' Pac-10 season, 78-64, and went into the Arizona State match with momentum.

But it was not to be, with Arizona State earning a victory over the Ducks for the third time this season. Arizona State now takes on Stanford, winners over Oregon State, in the Pac-10 Championship at McArthur Court tonight.

The winner of that game receives the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament.

Oregon, who failed to make it to the championship face-off, now awaits its playoff fate.

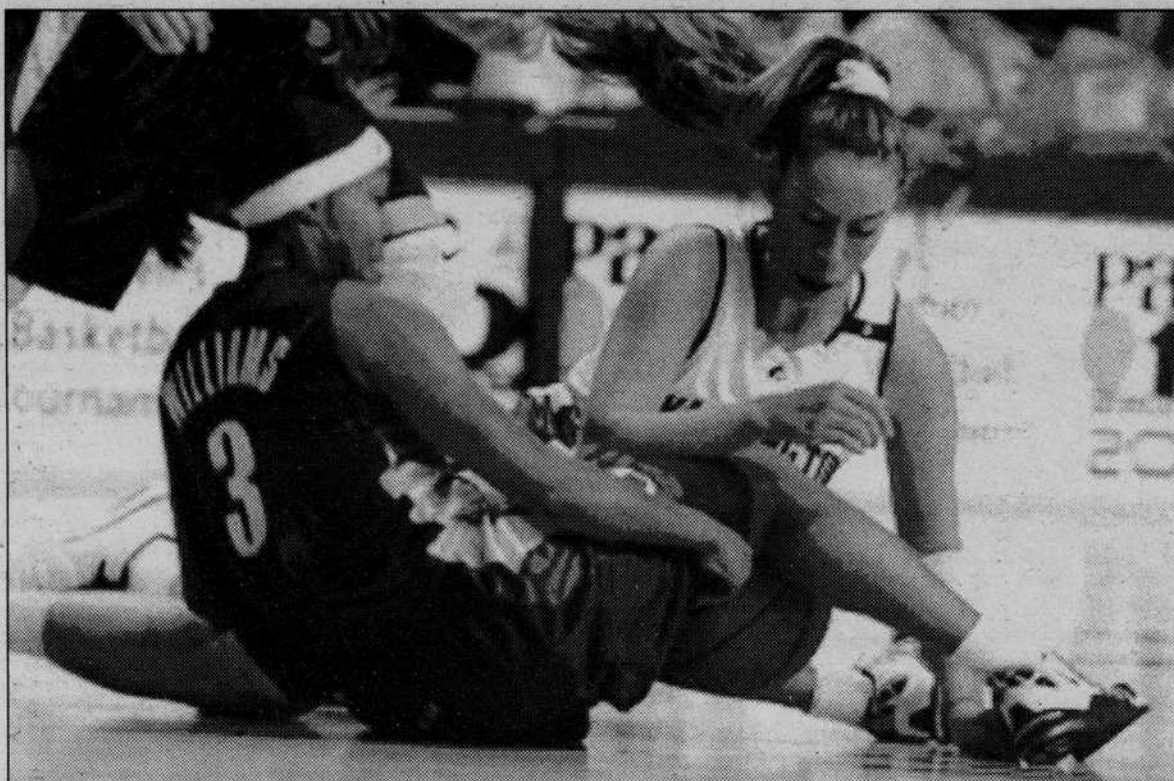
The Ducks finished as the seventh seed in the conference but were only two games behind No. 2-seed Washington. They hope the powers that be in the NCAA Tournament selection will look down on Oregon with golden eyes.

"I think given the way we've played, we're open to the possibility, and if that were to happen, it would be a great, great thing for us," Smith said about the team's tournament chances.

The WNIT may be a more likely destination, but Oregon does not plan on squandering its chance should the team make it to the field of 64 for the ninth straight season.

"We will wait and keep working hard and take advantage of whatever opportunity presents itself," Smith said.

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Adam Amato Emerald

Oregon's Shaquala Williams (3) battles for a loose ball with Washington's Giuliana Mendiola in the Ducks' 78-64 win on Saturday.

## Women's

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After being held in check in the first half, Arizona State guard Amanda Levens rattled off 11 points, including two deep three-pointers, in a 13-0 run that put the Sun Devils ahead 53-47 with 5:19 to play.

"Amanda Levens hit a lot of tough shots," said Oregon guard Shaquala Williams, who had a game-high 21 points. "Some of her shots were three or four feet behind the three-point line. Against most players, you don't have to defend that. We just caught on to her a little too late and let her get into a rhythm."

A layin by senior guard Edniesha Curry brought Oregon within two at 57-55 with less than two minutes left, but ASU hit 7-of-10 free throws in the final minute to secure the win.

All of Oregon's starters played at least 29 minutes (with Williams playing 38 minutes and freshman Andrea Bills 35), whereas Arizona State substituted frequently.

"(Oregon) got some good shots down the stretch, but they couldn't

put them in, and I like to think that was because our defense wore them down," Arizona State head coach Charli Turner Thorne said.

Said Williams: "I think our team had plenty of energy and I think we could've played a whole other game."

### Oregon 78, Washington 64

Just a week after the Huskies defeated the Ducks in Seattle, Oregon found its revenge Saturday and sent No. 2-seed Washington home after its first game.

Washington has not won at Mac Court since Jan. 23, 1993.

Williams torched the Huskies for 26 points and five assists, but not before some controversy.

On more than one play in the second half, Williams tangled with Washington twins Giuliana and Gioconda Mendiola. Williams was elbowed in the jaw by Gioconda late in the game, but officials did not see the play. Moments later, during a timeout, Williams elbowed Mendiola in the arm as she walked by. Again, the referees did not see the exchange.

"The Mendiolas are tough kids, and they kind of have a chip on their shoulders when they play, but I think I do, too," Williams said. "But when I'm on my home court, I'm not going to back down from anybody. If they take cheap shots, I'm going to throw them back."

"But they're going home, so I don't really have to worry about that."

### Oregon 85, Washington State 67

The dismal Cougars, the first team to finish 0-18 in Pac-10 play, put up a good fight in the first half against the Ducks in the first game of the Pac-10 Tournament.

Oregon led 36-31 at the break, but pulled away early in the second half as five Ducks scored in double figures.

Washington State had career games from Brittney Hawks (27 points, eight rebounds) and Jessica Perry (21 points, four assists, four steals).

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