

NCAA

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The win was the Ducks' first in the Big Dance since beating Utah, 65-54, on March 11, 1960. Oregon (24-8) now advances into Saturday's second round match-up against No. 7 seed Wake Forest, which beat Pepperdine.

Ridnour and Jackson each led the Ducks in scoring with 18, while Jones scored 16 and Johnson contributed a career-high 15. Montana was led by Tigard, Ore., native Ryan Slider with 12 points and Dan Trammel and Brent Cummings, who each scored 10.

Before the game, the Grizzlies talked about slowing down the pace of the game and not letting the Ducks get out and run. For the most part, Montana's game plan was effective as the Grizzlies had

the Ducks visibly frustrated in the first half.

Oregon began the game with three straight turnovers, not scoring until a Jones three-pointer after almost three minutes had passed.

The Ducks led only 22-20 with less than five minutes to play until halftime, leaving many of the 15,904 at Arco Arena wondering if there was any potential of witnessing a huge upset.

But then Ridnour drilled a three and Jackson connected on a floater in the lane, which kick-started an 8-0 run that led to Oregon taking the 34-26 halftime advantage.

"We stuck with them," Montana guard Shane Christensen said. "We were only down by eight at the half so we were feeling good about our chances."

The Ducks came out in the second half with more poise but still had to deal with the Grizzlies, who cut the margin to 47-40 with 13:46 to play.

Soon thereafter, though, Oregon led 61-44 and held off Montana for the win.

"When you're a No. 2 seed, people expect you to blow them out," Kent said. "It was a strange game for us. But the bottom line is we got the win."

Montana head coach Don Holst knew that it would take a lot of things falling perfectly in place for the Grizzlies to beat Oregon, but was proud afterward of the fight his team gave.

"I think Oregon knew they were in a basketball game about five minutes in," Holst said.

But the Ducks know that the key to the Big Dance isn't necessarily how you play, but that you win. And advance.

Johnson admitted that when the brackets were first released he found it tough to fight off the temptation to glance forward at potential match-ups down the road, especially with the Ducks securing the favorable No. 2 seed.

"But coach keeps us in line about not looking at other brackets," Johnson said.

The philosophy that Kent has taken with his team is to view each weekend as "mini-tournaments." There's this weekend's first and second rounds, the regionals and semifinals a week later and finally the Final Four in Atlanta from March 30-April 1.

All of the hype can be overwhelming, but Kent's confident his team can keep its heads grounded.

"It's huge to stay alive in this mini-tournament and on Saturday we play for the championship," Kent said.

It may not seem like a big deal that the Ducks beat the Grizzlies, who entered with just a 16-14 record, but in the game following Oregon's at Arco Arena, a perfect example of March Madness was presented.

Fourth-seeded USC was shocked by the 13th-seeded UNC-Wilmington Seahawks, 93-89, in overtime. The Trojans, who advanced to the Elite Eight in 2001, are now finished after round one.

"You can't play the second game until you win the first and we did that," UNC-Wilmington head coach Jerry Wainwright said.

So did the Ducks. And as a reward, Oregon gets to continue its dance on Saturday.

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Wake Forest leaves Pepperdine behind

■ The Demon Deacons hold off a late charge from Pepperdine to advance to the second round

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — What could have been the first thriller of the 2002 NCAA Tournament turned into another blowout as Pepperdine went cold down the stretch and Wake Forest capitalized for a 83-74 win Thursday morning.

Wake Forest will meet Oregon on Saturday in the second round.

The Demon Deacons were led by Craig Dawson, who scored 19 points and Darius Songaila, who notched 18.

The Deacs had several chances to put the Waves away but let Pepperdine back into the game several times. But given one last chance to bury the Waves late, Wake Forest took advantage.

"We had a great start to the game, a less than scintillating middle and a very gratifying finish," Wake Forest coach Skip Prosser said. "I thought in the last couple of minutes, we tightened up our execution and the kids did a whale of a job."

Pepperdine held its only lead of the game midway through the second half, when Wave guard Devin Montgomery scored a layup to put Pepperdine ahead 52-50.

Wake Forest battled back and got

the lead to seven points with 7:48 left. But Pepperdine went on a 7-2 run to pull the score to 70-68 with 3:55 remaining.

That's when Pepperdine went cold, as the Waves scored just four points in the final three minutes.



"We had a chance in the last five minutes," Pepperdine coach Paul Westphal said. "They made shots and we didn't."

Wake Forest got off to an early lead in the first half and scored the game's first nine points.

The Demon Deacons led 19-8 when the Waves rattled off nine points in three possessions — two three-pointers from Montgomery and a three-point play from Glen McGowan.

"We came out a little tentative for the first five minutes, but then we got in our groove and stayed with them."

After Wake Forest got the back to nine points, Pepperdine ended the first half on another run, outscoring the Deacons 12-6 down the stretch to make the score 38-35 at the half.

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