

SPORTS

Best bet
NCAA Basketball:
UNC Greensboro at Kansas
4 p.m., ESPN2

Friday, November 22, 2002

Ducks look
to tear apart
the BulldogsOregon enters its season opener against Gonzaga
at home with confidence and history on its side

Women's basketball

Jesse Thomas
Sports Reporter

In the past 25 years, the Oregon's women basketball team has only lost one season opener at home.

Gonzaga has that to stress about as it enters McArthur Court at 5 p.m., and the Bulldogs have never beat the Ducks. In fact, they have never even come close.

A 14-point loss in 1990 is as close as it has gotten for the Bulldogs. The last meeting of these two teams was 1996, where Oregon dominated in a 52-33 victory on the road.

But the Ducks said tonight's game is just another chance to throw 100 points on the board.

"We approach it like any other game played here in Mac Court, and we defend this with everything that we have," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "Any game we play at home has to be something that we all really want to do, feel that we are capable of doing, and demand that we do it."

Oregon enters its season opener after gliding through its first exhibition games with ease. The Ducks dominated their first two opponents by a combined score of 214-97.

Gonzaga has been known over the past few years as a powerhouse killer and has played the Cinderella part well, but it doesn't seem to faze Oregon in the slightest.

"It's not really important to us what they bring," senior Shaquala Williams said. "We have our standards, and what we want to do every game, and if we do those things, we feel like it doesn't matter what they do."

"We want to establish Mac Court as a place that nobody wants to come to," said the star senior, who was named as one of the top five point guards in the nation by ESPN.com. "And the best way to do that is to win."

The Ducks have been satisfied with their offensive flow this season and feel they are ahead of where they were at the end of last season.

Oregon has been in practice all week and likes the way things look. The Ducks have put a lot of focus on defense, rebounding and ball movement.

The Ducks focus on three main aspects every game, which

Turn to **Women's**, page 6A

Cougar offense overpowers UO

The Ducks start fast but wane
as Washington State hands
Oregon its 16th Pac-10 loss
as the season comes to a close

Volleyball

Hank Hager
Sports Reporter

Entering Thursday night's volleyball match at McArthur Court, Washington State had been a thorn in Oregon's side, defeating the Ducks in 23 straight, dating back to 1991.

Make it 24 straight.

The 13th-ranked Cougars, led by Chelsie Schafer's 13 kills, defeated Oregon in three straight (30-27, 30-23, 30-18) in front of 765 at The Pit.

The loss sends Oregon (11-20 overall, 1-16 Pacific-10 Conference) into tonight's match against Washington looking for its second conference victory, a win that has eluded the Ducks since its only conference victory over Oregon State on Nov. 1.

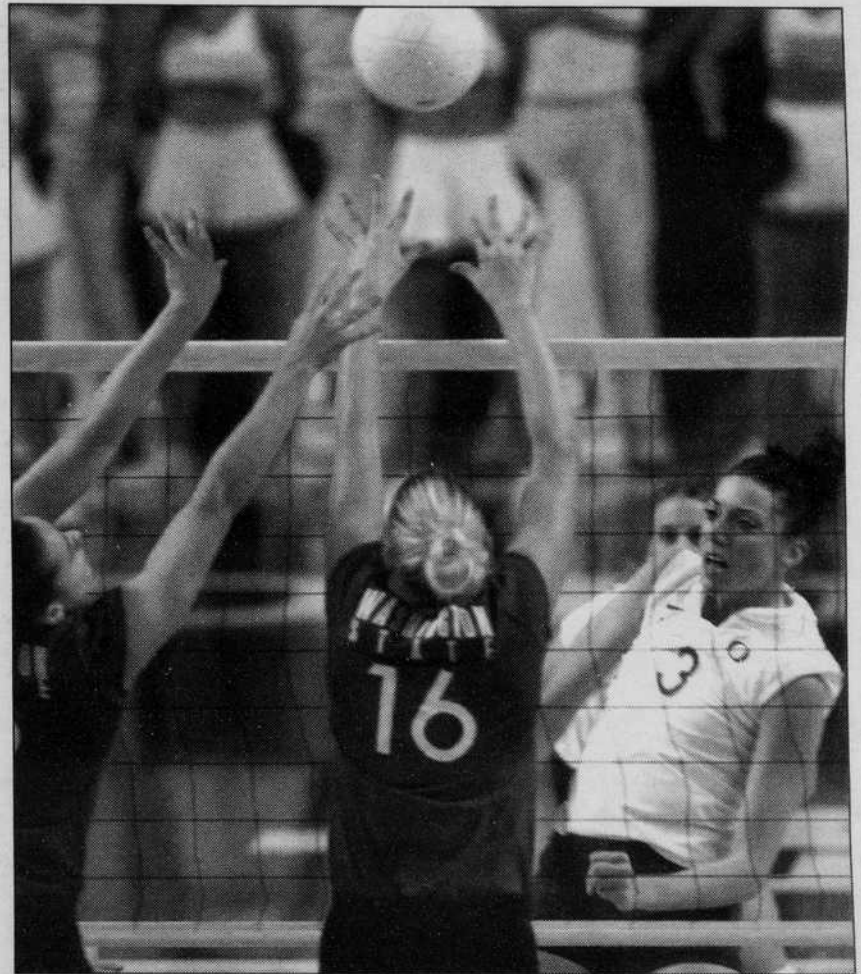
"We started off really good — our offense was flowing and was going through everything so well, but we kind of let up toward the end," freshman Jodi Bell said about the loss.

Freshman Dariam Acevedo led Oregon with 13 kills, while senior Lindsay Closs had eight. Her seventh kill of the match, coming in the third game, put her at the 400-kill mark for the season.

"She's had a great year," Oregon head coach Carl Ferreira said about Closs. "She's had a brilliant offensive season. I hope the Pac-10 recognizes her. She's very deserving of that caliber of an honor, and I hope she gets it."

Overall, Washington State did not dominate the Ducks as the team's record before the match would suggest. However, Oregon's inability to sustain point-scoring runs hindered it in the end. The Cougars dominated offensively, leading the Ducks' Northwest foes to an easy win in the end.

The Cougars had average games to begin the match, hitting for a .261 percentage in Game 1 and .182 in Game 2.



Adam Amato Emerald

Amanda Porter (3) watches as Washington State's Victoria Prince (16) records a block assist.

But in Game 3, they broke out, posting a .531 attack percentage on the strength of 18 kills and just one error. The Ducks, on the other hand, hit for a team-high .222 in Game 1, and a low of .019 in Game 2.

Overall, the Ducks finished the night at .137.

"I thought we started out pretty well," Ferreira said. "We knew going in that we had to be efficient in our execution. Washington State does not beat itself."

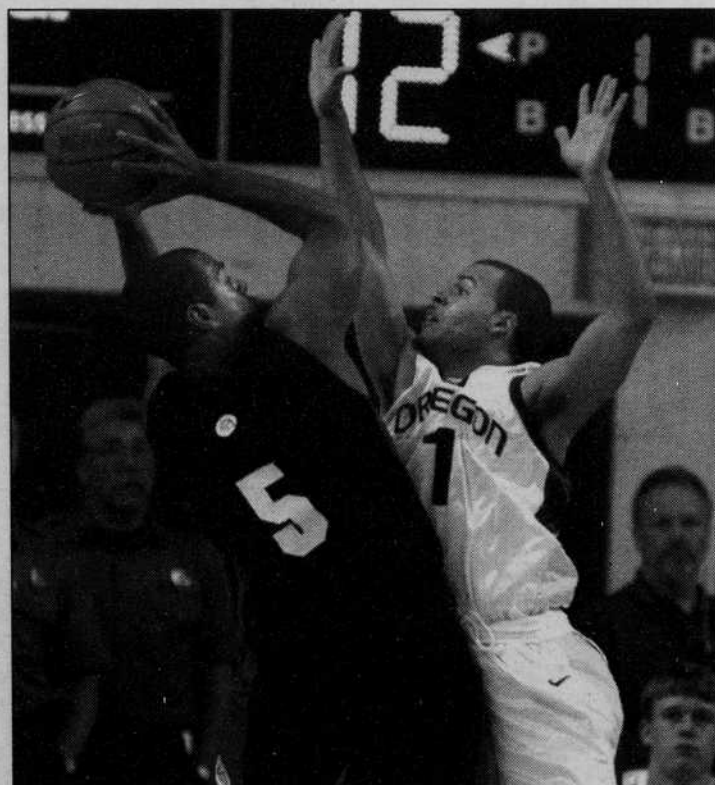
Ferreira credited Oregon's poor passing attempts and an inability to score during side-outs for the Ducks' lag offensively in Game 2 and part of

Game 3.

Down 2-0 entering Game 3, the Ducks saw Washington State pull out to an 18-6 lead, highlighted by a seven-point run midway through the set. Oregon, however, answered back, pulling to within seven points, 22-15, before allowing the Cougars to score eight of the match's 11 points.

Oregon now must turn its attention to Washington, an unranked opponent that has defeated the Ducks in three of the last four matches the teams have played.

It will be senior night as three Ducks — Closs, Sydney Chute and Amanda Porter — will wave good-bye to the McArthur

Turn to **Volleyball**, page 6A

Adam Amato Emerald

James Davis (1) and the Ducks said they will work on their defense in the season opener Sunday night against Grambling State.

Men's basketball opens season
by honoring 2001-02 Pac-10 titleThe Ducks will raise their
championship banner Sunday
night at McArthur Court

Men's basketball

Peter Hockaday
Sports Editor

As its season opens Sunday night at McArthur Court, the Oregon men's basketball team will hoist a banner commemorating the Ducks' 2001-02 Pacific-10 Conference Championship.

But once they step on the court against Grambling State, the Ducks' thoughts will turn to the 2002-03 conference crown.

"We want to let people know we're for real," point guard Luke Ridnour said.

Oregon's title defense starts in the second game of the annual John Thompson Challenge on Sunday at 5:30 p.m. The first game of the Chal-

lenge pits California-State Northridge against Jacksonville at 3 p.m. at Mac Court. The winners of both games will face each other in the championship game Monday at 7:30 p.m. after the consolation game at 5 p.m.

The Ducks should have no trouble making that championship game. Grambling State is known more for its band and its participation in the annual "Bayou Classic" than its basketball team. The Tigers, who play in the Southwestern Athletic Conference, finished 9-19 overall last season and seventh in the SWAC.

Still, Oregon will take the team seriously, the Ducks said. The Tigers have the SWAC's preseason player of the year in Paul Haynes.

"I looked at their roster; they're not very tall," Oregon forward Ian Crosswhite said. "I think it's going to be a very fast game."

The Ducks would love a fast game. Their up-tempo offense led the

Pac-10 with more than 80 points per game last season, and the Ducks scored 135 and 132 points in their two exhibition contests.

Most of all, the Ducks said their season-opener will give them a chance to work on details and defense.

"The score of the game will take care of itself," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said. "We just need to be able to come out and play defense."

"There's a lot of little things to work on to get ready for big-time games later on," Luke Jackson said.

Those big-time games are looming right around the corner. One big-time game, anyway.

Oregon and Kansas, Dec. 7.

The Ducks have only four games before their contest with the Jayhawks, a rematch of last season's Elite Eight contest. The teams will play at a neutral court that will be far from neutral — the Rose Garden, in the

Turn to **Men's**, page 6A