

Women start season on wrong foot, still win

Oregon struggles, but comes away with a season-opening victory over Gonzaga

Women's basketball

Hank Hager
Sports Reporter

Gonzaga proved how much of a difference an NCAA team can make on a team's schedule.

After two exhibition games, the Oregon women's basketball team took on the Bulldogs on Friday night in front of 4,265 at McArthur Court. Oregon (1-0 overall) defeated Gonzaga, 83-72, but it wasn't quite up to the Ducks' style of play.

"It's not what we got tonight, it's how we got it," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "It's not up to the standards we want to be at."

The win represents Oregon's sixth season-opening win in its last seven tries, but was not an all-out victory.

The Ducks did not dominate Gonzaga (0-1) as expected, instead outrebounding the Bulldogs by two, 36-34, and shooting just 35 percent (6-of-17) from 3-point range. After defeating its exhibition opponents by large margins, the Ducks fell back a bit, mostly on the defensive side of the ball.

"I don't think we came out as hard as we should have," junior

Cathrine Kraayeveld said. "We just weren't into it the way we should have been."

From the field, Oregon was 29-of-61, a 48-percent clip. However, the Ducks allowed Gonzaga to control the ball offensively, specifically in the second half when the Bulldogs shot 50 percent (18-of-36).

Gonzaga's Shannon Mathews was a thorn in Oregon's side, finishing the night with 24 points on 10-of-20 shooting. She ended the first half with 15 points, something that concerned Smith.

"We need to take some defensive pride," Smith said. "We have to get

"It's not what we got tonight, it's how we got it."

Bev Smith
Oregon head coach

back and understand defense and work ethic. We need to do some soul-searching there."

Yet, for all of Oregon's miscues, there were more positives than negatives, highlighted by the score at the end of the night. Sophomore Brandi Davis came off the bench to lead the team with 18 points, while senior Shaquala Williams — despite a slow

second half — was close behind with 17 points.

Kraayeveld led the rebounding charge with 11 boards, while senior Alissa Edwards and Davis were right on defensively, each recording four steals.

"Coming off the bench, I came in and did what I needed to do and to help the team as best as possible," Davis said.

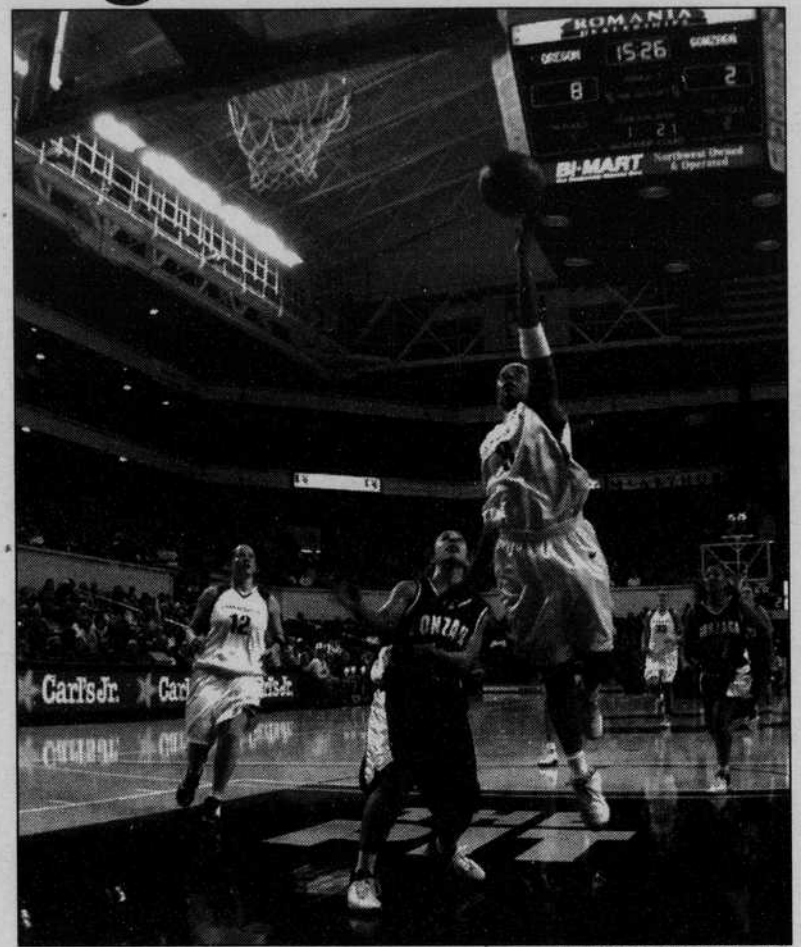
Comments from the other side were positive for the Ducks. Head coach Kelly Graves, whose Bulldogs finished in last place in the West Coast Conference, suggested the Ducks may have a bright future ahead of them.

"Oregon is a good team," he said. "You've got to give them credit. Oregon will have a good year."

The Ducks began the game on a roll, jumping out to an 8-0 lead before the Bulldogs put two points on the board with a Mathews tip-in at 15:49. Oregon jumped out to a 16-6 lead on the strength of a 3-pointer by sophomore Kedzie Gunderson, but from that point on, it was obvious the Bulldogs were not going to just roll over and die.

Mathews' sharp offensive night began at 9:55 with her first 3-pointer of the game, followed up one minute later with a carbon-copy shot.

Contact the sports reporter at hankhager@dailyemerald.com.



Mark McCambridge Emerald

Shaquala Williams (3) nets two of her 17 points at McArthur Court on Friday night.

Hockaday

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fourth quarter, and Oregon is losing to Fresno State, 24-15. On fourth-and-1 from the Bulldog 4-yard-line, Duck head coach Mike Bellotti makes a gutsy call to go for it. Onterio Smith runs up the middle for a yard and the first down, and Oregon scores three plays later in a game the Ducks would eventually win, 28-24.

But what if Oregon hadn't scored

on that drive? What if Smith had been stopped, and the Bulldogs had won the game?

Oh, how nice that would have been.

The Ducks would have realized early that this team was no match for the Oregon teams of recent years. They would have loosened up. Heck, they might have even beaten Arizona State or Oregon State or maybe even Washington State.

Expectations suck. The Ducks had medium-sized expectations

heading into the season, but Costco-sized those expectations by going 6-0. Admit it. Even though Oregon hadn't played any good teams, you thought they were as good as Duck teams of the past. They creamed their preseason opposition not named Fresno State, and looked like a national power doing it.

But then the losses, and the expectations came crashing down with much more weight than had the Ducks been 5-1 or 4-2.

Sure, Oregon didn't get many

breaks. Yes, the Ducks were hampered by the loss of Onterio Smith (but wasn't it almost inevitable, when he started the season with 28 carries in a meaningless game against Mississippi State?).

But there are no excuses. The defense faded mid-season. The offense really faded at the end of the year.

And on Saturday, it all came crashing down in a disgusting loss in Corvallis. Contestants eating brains on Fear Factor look like they're having more fun than the Ducks were

on Saturday. According to Fife, those brains taste better, too.

Now, the Ducks are forced to adopt the mantra normally reserved for schools like Arizona, Duke and Kansas.

What time is the basketball game tonight?

The answer, by the way, is 7:30. See you there.

Contact the sports editor at peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

Civil War

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on six rushing attempts. Senior Allan Amundson had his best game in an Oregon uniform, rushing for 77 yards on 11 attempts.

"A loss always hurts. A loss like this hurts a lot worse," said Amundson, who averaged fewer than three carries per game prior to Saturday. "It's tough to swallow, but I had the time of my life."

It's been a broken record this season, but Oregon met its doom in the

third quarter. The Beavers (8-4, 4-4) led 24-17 at the half and padded their lead with two third-quarter scores, the latter on Jackson's third touchdown of the game. In their last three games, the Ducks have been outscored 30-7 in the third quarter, with their only score coming on an interception returned for a touchdown.

With the game seemingly out of reach in the fourth quarter, senior Keenan Howry gave the Ducks a glimmer of hope with a 63-yard punt return for a score, reminiscent of his touchdown return in the 2001 Civil War in Eugene, when the Ducks won

17-14. "Next year, a few years from now, nobody's going to remember what I did," Howry said. "They'll just remember that we lost."

After Howry's punt return cut the Beavers' lead to 38-24 with 5:51 remaining, Oregon's attempted onside kick was recovered by Jackson. On Oregon State's ensuing drive, Anderson hit James Newson for a 40-yard score to seal the victory.

Jackson gave Oregon State a 17-3 lead early in the second quarter with his second touchdown. Jackson took a pass from Anderson, broke an at-

tempted tackle by Oregon's David Martin and jolted 69 yards into the end zone. His first score was a 16-yard run with 4:15 left in the first quarter.

The Ducks made it 17-10 when Fife hit Howry for an 84-yard bomb midway through the second quarter. After Oregon State punted out of its own end zone, Oregon took possession at the OSU 37. Five plays later, Fife ran 11 yards for a touchdown, bouncing off two defenders, to tie the game at 17.

But penalties hurt the Ducks on their next drive, forcing them to punt from their own end zone. Ore-

gon State took advantage, as Anderson hit Shawn Kintner for a 10-yard touchdown with 28 seconds remaining in the first half, and the Beavers never looked back.

With Thanksgiving break this week, the Ducks will take some time off before regrouping next Monday, and perhaps preparing for a bowl game.

"We're excited about playing in a bowl game," Amundson said. "We don't want to end on this note."

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