

UO looks to end drought

Oregon hopes to end a three-game losing streak against Portland at Mac Court tonight

Women's basketball

Jesse Thomas
Sports Reporter

It's home sweet home for the Ducks, as the Oregon women's basketball team gets to return to the gentle confines and shiny hardwood of McArthur Court.

It will be homecoming much needed, after the Ducks lost three straight away from Eugene, including one at Wisconsin-Green Bay and two at the Paradise Jam.

The Ducks host Portland tonight at 7 p.m. in hopes of improving their 1-3 start. Luckily for Oregon, the Pilots must defy history as they have never won in Eugene in 10 tries.

And overall, Oregon leads the series 16-2 with its regional rival. Yet, the past still haunts the Ducks, as they fell 77-73 to the Pilots in their last meeting at the Chiles Center in 2001.

Oregon shot a season-low 38 percent from the floor last year and found itself trailing 66-56 with 3:30 left in the game. Even with a late-game 17-8 run, which cut the Pilot lead to 74-73 with just 21 seconds left, Oregon couldn't finish the comeback.

"One of our problems last year was we went up there thinking the outcome was determined," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "We have some not-so-great history with them and we hope to change that."

Now-junior forward Cathrine Kraayeveld helped Oregon barely win the battle of the boards that night with a team-high 10 rebounds. Sophomore Kedzie Gunderson was also a spark, as she scored eight points and pulled down three rebounds in 17 minutes of floor time.

Oregon needs to change more than just the past. The Ducks have scored less than 50 points in two straight games for the first time since 1976.

Rebounding has also caused issues for the Ducks, and if Oregon can't win the battle of the boards, it usually struggles to win the game.

"If we just settle down and be aggressive and play hard without hesitation, then the process will determine the outcome," Smith said. "We just need to get back to being aggressive offensively, and solve the defensive rebounding part of it, we will be right back on track."



Adam Amato Emerald

Sophomore Kedzie Gunderson goes head-over-heels for a loose ball against Gonzaga earlier this season. Gunderson and the Ducks face Portland tonight.

And with the Ducks failing lately on their own expectations, getting back on the right track is exactly what Oregon needs. Oregon has not started 1-3 since the 1985-86 season and has not lost four in a row since a five-game drought last February.

But the adversity hasn't fazed the Ducks. "It's important for us to get a win after losing three games," Kraayeveld said. "We just need to have fun and go out there and play the way we know we can play and then we'll be fine."

Oregon will enter tonight's game in search of that second win, but without star point guard Shaquala Williams. It was announced Wednesday that Williams has been suspended indefinitely from the team because of disciplinary reasons.

Smith said she wasn't worried about Williams' suspension, despite the team's losing streak. "This is not about wins and losses, this is about standards of behavior that we have on our team and regardless of if we won or we lost, they are decisions I have to make as a head coach," Smith said. "It's just something that had to be done, regardless of the situation at hand, and now we go forward."

Contact the sports reporter at jessethomas@dailyemerald.com.

Today's crossword solution

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