

Women can't catch a break during winter break

December... that month that most of us look forward to and the one that gives us a break from the stresses of our everyday lives at Oregon.

A month full of joy, presents and putting on weight. A month of hot buttered rum, red wine and our chance to take three weeks off. For the most of us, that is.

For the Oregon athletes, they get no break. And for the Oregon women's basketball team, they couldn't catch a break.

The Ducks could never get ahead of the game. And now, with the start of Pacific-10 Conference play, the Ducks, who at one time were flying



Jesse Thomas
Go the distance

high, have began a downward spiral. To start, Oregon is now three players short of where it began. First it was senior Shaquala Williams, originally suspended for disciplinary reasons, then suspended for good just five days later.

So they lose their star, All-American candidate, poster child, less than a month into the season. Big deal. The Ducks lose three of their next four games.

Then, on Dec. 23, Oregon says good bye to sophomore forward Amy Parrish, who leaves the team because of medical reasons. Not a huge loss, though, as Parrish was only a contribution from the bench to cheer on her team.

And Oregon's most recent downfall is the loss of junior All-American candidate Cathrine Kraayeveld. She developed a staph infection in her right knee and is expected to miss at least six

weeks, or the next 12 games. Kraayeveld has led her Ducks in points, rebounds and field goal percentage, and ranks in the top 10 of the conference in the three categories.

Also, during December, the team watched as senior Alissa Edwards encountered a severe ankle sprain, which she plays on. Sophomore Kedzie Gunderson wears a face mask, because of a broken nose. Both injuries occurred in the same play in the game against Montana.

Oregon is clearly a very bruised, very battered basketball team that is searching for a way to start winning again. And they have yet to find it.

In the last five weeks, the Ducks have gone 4-5 and have been outscored by their opponents, 704-654. Oregon has lost two straight and started 1-3 in conference.

Oregon has been defeated by a combined 69 points in its last

three losses. Would you like more ugly statistics, which prove how much Oregon desperately needs to get its act together fast? Well, you are going to get some whether you like it or not.

Oregon is getting outscored by an average of seven points per game, with an average of 67.8 points per game. The Ducks have a 1-6 record when they score fewer than 70 points in a game.

Oregon has been outrebounded in each of its last five games, and the Ducks average about four fewer rebounds than their opponents. When Oregon can win the battle of the boards, it has gone 3-0 in such contests.

Oregon also loses the assist margin and turns the ball over an average of almost three times more per game than its opponents.

What do the Ducks have going for them? The free-throw shooting has

been steadily increasing and the Ducks do average more blocks per game than their opponents.

And with Oregon's next two games at home, it looks promising, as the Ducks are over .500 when the play in the confines of McArthur Court.

Overall, the numbers show that Oregon has become locked into a tailspin and for any chance at the NCAA Tournament, they need to do a 360 degree turn, and fast.

Every team goes through its hard times, and the ones that become champions are the teams that recover. Oregon still has a lot to prove to its fans, to the media, but mostly to itself. The numbers are what they are, but there are still 14 regular season games left to change that.

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

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"Hats off to Arizona," Smith said. "They really crashed the boards, and we didn't meet their intensity. We weren't very aggressive, and we allowed Arizona to get into their game."

Oregon shot just 40 percent from the floor, but was 9-of-19 from beyond the arc.

However, the Ducks were played poor defense, evidenced by Krista Warren's 18 points and nine rebounds, and Shawntinice Polk's 16 points and 11 boards.

Overall, Oregon was outrebounded, 50-27, and just generally outskilled by the Wildcats.

"Polk is a very good player, and

we didn't make her pay a price when she had the ball," Smith said. "We didn't battle hard enough down low, and our post players need to realize that they have to come with more firepower."

If anyone on Oregon did capitalize — at least on offense — against the Wildcats, it would've been Bills and freshman Carolyn Ganes. The duo combined for 30 points, with Ganes leading the way at 19.

Oregon's loss to Arizona also marked a milestone. The win was Arizona head coach Joan Bonvicini's 200th with the Wildcats and was her 525th career victory in 24 seasons with Long Beach State and Arizona.

Oregon must now regroup and look for its second and third wins of the Pac-10 season. But it won't come easy.

The Ducks host California Thursday at McArthur Court at 7 p.m. Ore-

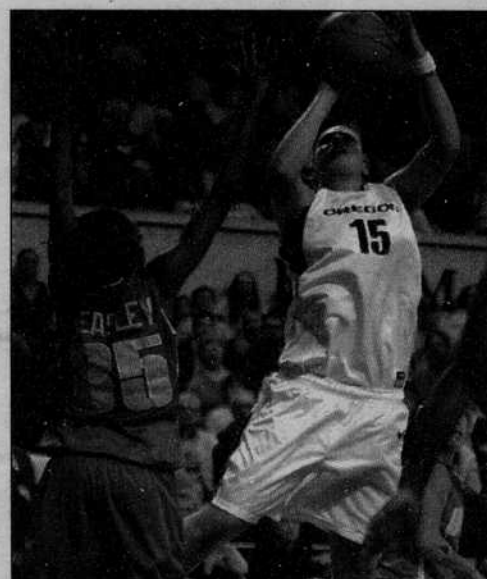
"Hats off to Arizona... they really crashed the boards and we didn't meet their intensity."

Bev Smith
head coach

gon swept the Golden Bears last season, but struggled in a 65-53 victory in Berkeley.

The true test will be against No. 6 Stanford Saturday at 7 p.m. at The Pit. The Cardinal have won the last three contests between the teams, and recently returned star forward Nicole Powell to the lineup.

Contact the sports reporter at hankhager@dailyemerald.com.



Oregon center Carolyn Ganes (15) and the other Duck forwards and centers have been trying to make up for the absence of Cathrine Kraayeveld, but have struggled without her.
Jeremy Forrest Emerald

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