

# Duck tennis swings at home, on the road

The Oregon women's tennis team has its first home matches, and the men try their luck on the road in Utah

## Tennis

**Ryan Heath**  
Freelance Sports Reporter

Home sweet home. That expression has never rung more true than for the Oregon women's tennis team.

One week after losing junior Davina Mendiburu for the season with a torn ACL and slipping from 34th to 46th in the nation, the Ducks have their home opener this weekend at the Student Tennis Center.

"I think the first road trip has prepared us mentally for the upcoming weekend," head coach Nils Schyllander said. "We know what type of tennis we want to play and what we need to in order to do so."

Last weekend, the Ducks lost to unranked Colorado but rebounded to defeat No. 45 Illinois 4-3, despite most of the team fighting a flu bug.

Health will be an important factor in this weekend's matches, as the women are set to play both Portland and Idaho on Saturday, at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., respectively.

"I think we have the mental toughness to play two matches and do it well," Schyllander said. "But it is unfortunate that (Mendiburu) is hurt. It makes it harder to rotate to give some players a rest."

The Ducks will be led by No. 28 Daria Panova as she looks to stay undefeated in the regular season. Senior Monika Gieczys, junior Courtney Nagle and freshman Jamie Marshall are all 1-1.

While the women are battling at home, the Oregon men's tennis team will be competing in Provo, Utah, against Brigham Young and New Mexico State.

The No. 75 Ducks also welcome back their No. 1 singles player, Manuel Kost from an abdominal injury that kept him sidelined for most of January.

Without Kost, the Ducks went 1-1 to start the regular season with a dominating 7-0 victory over Idaho

and a close 5-2 defeat at the hands of New Mexico.

"I'm expecting to see more competition like we saw on Sunday against New Mexico," head coach Chris Russell said. "We are prepared for that kind of battle."

On Saturday, the Ducks take on the BYU Cougars and the No. 7 doubles team of Carlos Lozano and Erik Nyman. Ducks Oded Teig and Sven Swinnen are used to facing ranked opponents, with victories against No. 59 Brent Salazar and Ryan Stotland of New Mexico in the regular season and a win over No. 2 Michael Calkins and Amer Delic of Illinois in the pre-season.

"I'm looking for us to stay within our game plan this weekend," Russell said. "We seem to start out well, but we need to stick with the game plans longer."

The Ducks play New Mexico State on Sunday. The women begin their home season at 10 a.m. Saturday at the Student Tennis Center, behind McArthur Court.

Ryan Heath is a freelance writer for the Emerald.

## Hager

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What is most important about the way Oregon played is that it may finally prove the Ducks can survive without Williams and Kraayeveld. Obviously, Williams is not coming back, but the specter of Kraayeveld returning this season is still lingering around McArthur Court.

That specter is dim, and the Ducks know that. So to come out to dominate like the Ducks did — evidenced by a 22-9 lead midway through the first — is encouraging.

"We aren't going to have those players back and we know it's going to be us out there," Edwards said.

If anyone could be happier than the Ducks to have the second half of the season start, I'd like to meet them.

Smith talked about the second half as almost a second season, a new beginning to the year that could help offset the first-half woes.

"This is how (the players) wanted to start," she said. "If we could play every game like this, we will climb up the Pac-10 standings one game at a time."

One game at a time is going to be tough, especially with a conference that is so unforgiving and inconsistent. But if Oregon can play like it did against the Sun Devils, there could be a move up in the standings for the Ducks. After all, they were voted the Pac-10's third-best team by the media and the conference's coaches before the season began.

The Ducks have a lot to prove. They've got eight more contests to play, and Saturday begins a stretch that will be crucial to the team's well-being.

Arizona visits McArthur Court Saturday, then the Ducks go down to Stanford and California.

The Wildcats were defeated, 71-65, by Oregon State on Thursday, so it's obvious they are vulnerable to the upset. That's an area the Ducks have seemed to thrive in this season, and Oregon will get a chance again against the Cardinal after losing by just one point, 75-74, on Jan. 11.

Momentum will be key coming out of the California contest, and if the Ducks can hold up for the rest of the season like they did against Arizona State, they could be a surprise.

But that's a big if.

Contact the sports reporter at [hankhager@dailyemerald.com](mailto:hankhager@dailyemerald.com). His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

## Sports brief

### Track heads to Idaho on Saturday

After learning earlier this week that both the women's and men's track teams would be consolidated under the direction of current men's coach Martin Smith, both Duck squads will swing back into action this weekend.

The Ducks will head to the Bodybuilding.com Invitational in Nampa, Idaho on Saturday. The

men will send 25 athletes and the women will send 17 to the Boise State-hosted meet.

The men's entrants are highlighted by Duck football speedster Samie Parker, who will compete in his first meet of the season. The women's entrants are highlighted by pole vaulter Niki (Reed) McEwan, who will attempt to capitalize on her recent success — she tied the Oregon record of 14 feet, 1 1/4 inches at the Pole Vault Summit last weekend.

—Peter Hockaday

## Women's

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play and earned its redemption, as the Sun Devils had a comfortable 15-point victory in the first clash between the two.

Arizona State (12-7, 4-6 Pac-10) had a rough night in front of the 4,216 fans at The Pit, shooting just 36.7 percent from the field. The Sun Devils went 10-of-17 on free throws but did go 6-of-12 from downtown.

Oregon's offense wasn't much better, as it shot just 38 percent from the field and went 2-of-11 on three-pointers. But the Duck defense brought home the victory with 10 steals and winning the turnover margin by seven.

"We played really good defense and that has been our focus," said senior Alissa Edwards, who reagravated her ankle injury, yet con-

tinued to play and says she will be fine. "They had to take tough shots and we just played tough."

Edwards had a solid all-around performance, adding nine points and 10 assists to the Oregon offense in her 36 minutes.

For Arizona State, sophomore Kylan Loney led all scorers with 16 points and led the Sun Devils with four assists. Freshmen Amy Denson and Kristen Kovessy also scored in double figures for the Sun Devils.

Oregon's next test comes Saturday at noon, when it faces Arizona (13-6, 6-4 Pac-10.) It will be quite the matchup, as the Wildcats were upset by Oregon State on Thursday, and the Ducks look to continue the successful homestand.

Contact the sports reporter at [jessethomas@dailyemerald.com](mailto:jessethomas@dailyemerald.com).

## Men's

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leads until the very end, when Hollins' free throw with 39.7 seconds left tied the game at 81. The Ducks ran out the clock, but Ridnour lost the ball with five seconds left, giving UCLA one last shot to win the contest. But Ryan Walcott missed a three pointer and the game went to overtime.

The Ducks won't move in the Pac-10 standings with the win, as Stanford and Arizona State upset Arizona and California, respectively, meaning that the Cardinal remain third and the Sun Devils

remained tied for fourth with Oregon. If the Ducks can beat USC on Sunday, they will either move into a three-way tie for third or hold fourth by themselves, depending on the outcome of the ASU-Stanford game Saturday.

"This win speaks volumes about our team and where we're at right now," Kent said. "This team is starting to expand. SC could be a really big game for us."

Oregon and USC will tip off at noon on Sunday. The game will be televised on Fox Sports Net.

Contact the sports editor at [peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com](mailto:peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com).

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