

SPORTS

Sports Editor:
Peter Hockaday
peterhockaday@dailymerald.com

Best bet
NCAA men's basketball:
Missouri at Kansas
6 p.m., ESPN

Monday, February 3, 2003

UO loses nailbiter at Mac

The women hang with Arizona, but can't pull out a last-minute victory against the Wildcats

Women's basketball

Hank Hager
Sports Reporter

On an otherwise somber Saturday, the Oregon women's basketball team showed a flair for the dramatic.

The only problem for the Ducks was that No. 24 Arizona had the same flair.

Shawntinice Polk tied an Arizona single-season record with her 15th double-double as the Wildcats edged Oregon, 71-66, in front of 4,126 at McArthur Court.

Polk dominated the Ducks with 23 points and 15 rebounds, helping push the Wildcats to their first-ever season sweep of Oregon. The teams began playing in 1981.

"It's a good win," Arizona head coach Joan Bonvicini said. "It's a good way to go back to Tucson."

While much of the talk after the game centered on the play of Polk, there was the feeling that Oregon (8-12 overall, 4-7 Pacific-10 Conference) was a much different team than the one that lost by 29 to Arizona on Jan. 2.

After all, the Ducks were outrebounded by just eight Saturday, compared to a 23-board difference in January.

"Oregon is a much better team than a month ago," Bonvicini said. "Their freshmen have improved."

"We've come a long way," Oregon freshman Carolyn Ganes said. "The first time we played them, we were going through hard stuff as a team."

While Polk provided much of Arizona's offense, the Ducks were able to neutralize the Wildcat shooters. Arizona connected on just 8-of-23 three-pointers and shot 42 percent from the field.

"We're understanding the importance of our defensive intensity," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said.

Had the Ducks come out strong from the start, the final result could have easily fell Oregon's way.

Arizona (14-6, 7-4) began the first half on a 7-0 run, and led 11-2 at the 17:57 mark.

After sophomore Brandi Davis knocked down a jumper at the start of the second, the Wildcats went on an 11-0 run in the next three minutes before Ganes answered with a layup.

"The first four minutes (of the second half) were a little bit unsettling because we didn't have the same aggressiveness and mentality as Thursday," Smith said in reference to Oregon's 68-52 victory over Arizona State.

The Ducks held close to the Wildcats for much of the second half, posting a tie at 63 with four minutes left.

But four consecutive points by Polk pushed Arizona to a four-point lead with less than one minute remaining.

Ganes then answered back with a tip-in and free-throw make after a foul by Arizona's Krista Warren, pulling the Ducks within one.

With the Ducks trailing and the clock winding down quickly, senior guard Alissa Edwards purposely fouled Arizona guard Dee-Dee Wheeler. Wheeler knocked down both of her free throws, setting up a potential game-tying three-pointer for the Ducks.

At least that's what they wanted.

"We thought we were going to go for the three," Smith said. "They played it very well. We didn't get the shot we wanted."

With less than 20 seconds left on the clock, Davis pulled up for a jumper just in front of the three-point line, and hit the rim with the shot. The ball fell into the hands of Warren, and from that point on, all Oregon could do was foul.

Arizona's Natalie Jones sank both her free throws to ice the game for the Wildcats.

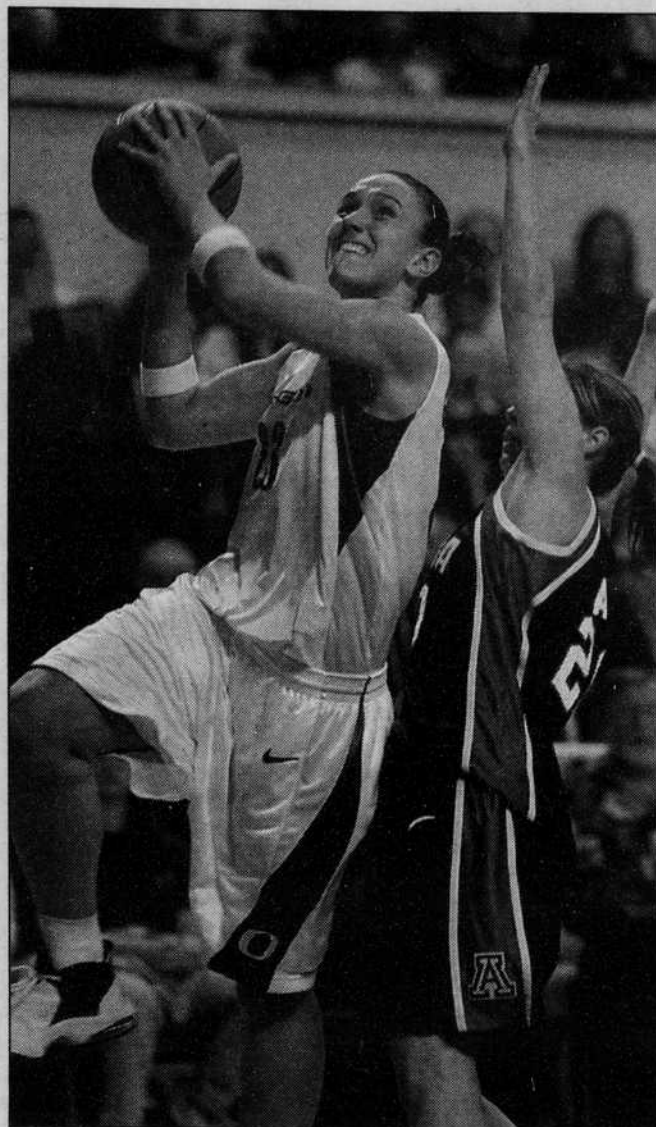
"I was trying to get to the basket and get fouled," Davis said. "It really wasn't the shot I wanted. It's a lesson learned. I'm still young."

Davis led the Ducks with 21 points, while Ganes — battling Polk all day down low — pitched in with 15, and added seven rebounds.

Overall, Oregon shot 41 percent from the field and connected on just 5-of-17 from beyond the arc.

"It's a good lesson for us and we'll see them in the Pac-10 Tournament," Davis said.

Contact the sports reporter at hankhager@dailymerald.com.



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Kedzie Gunderson and the Ducks lost a heartbreaker to Arizona.

Ganes, Bills battle Arizona's Polk in tough loss

The three young post players set the tone for the game and for future matchups between UO and UA

Jesse Thomas
Sports Reporter

It was a battle of the big women, set in the middle of McArthur Court.

It was a war reminiscent of that in the NBA between the Spurs' "Twin Towers" and Shaquille O'Neal.

And as Oregon's version of the Towers, freshman Carolyn Ganes and sophomore Andrea Bills were introduced to Arizona's version of Shaq — Shawntinice Polk.

Prior to Saturday's matchup between Oregon and Arizona, Polk ranked first in the Pacific-10 Conference in rebounding

and field goal percentage, and second in scoring and blocked shots.

The 6-foot-5-inch center leads the Wildcats in almost every statistical category, as she averages 17.3 points, 11.2 rebounds and 2.1 blocks per game.

"She is just a very, very impressive presence on the floor," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "She knows her strengths and how she can score and has a great deal of confidence. Defensively, she can do some things as well, and our best defense was to just attack her."

And in front of 4,126 fans at McArthur Court, the battle was won by Polk. She finished the afternoon with 23 points, 15 rebounds and four blocked shots. It was the 15th double-double of the season for the freshman, which ties the school

record set in 1982.

But Ganes and Bills made nothing easy for the Wildcats on either end, and the war was on for the entire 40 minutes.

"I had to work for everything and I was going up against some great post players," Polk said. "Playing against them has given me a lot of experience and they did not give me anything easy."

"It is a war," Arizona head coach Joan Bonvicini said. "Ganes is a great player and she is really tough."

Ganes took quite a beating from Polk, garnering three fouls, yet had a solid performance of her own. The 6-foot-3-inch freshman shot 6-for-12 from the field en route to 15 points and seven rebounds in her 26 minutes.

Bills had a strong first half but couldn't repeat in the second and finished with eight points and eight rebounds.

The bulk of the battle was waged in the last 20 minutes, and Polk set the pace, scoring a quick seven points to start the second half.

After a blocked shot by Bills, Polk ran the length of the floor to get the ball in the post, where she converted and was fouled to make it a three-point play.

"Going into the game, our focus was to try and somewhat shut down number zero-zero," Ganes said. "She is an excellent player and when she gets inside, there is not too much you can do about it."

The war was officially on.

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Men turn over a loss Sunday at Southern California



Adam Amato Emerald

Andre Joseph (35) had 18 points in Oregon's loss to USC on Sunday, but followed a team trend by notching five turnovers in the game.

Oregon can't overcome 20 first-half turnovers, and the Ducks lose their third Pac-10 road game in four tries

Adam Jude
Senior Sports Reporter

The statistical problems are glaring. A combined eight points and 11 fouls from five post players, a season-high 26 turnovers, 33.3 percent second-half shooting, and a 45-28 rebounding deficit.

Emotionally, the problems for the No. 22 Oregon men's basketball team weren't quite as clear Sunday in a 91-76 loss to USC at the Los Angeles Sports Arena.

"Mentally, we were completely shut down," head coach Ernie Kent told KUGN-AM after the Ducks' third loss in four Pacific-10 Conference road games.

The loss snapped a five-game winning

streak for the Ducks (15-5 overall, 5-4 Pac-10), who are now tied with Arizona State for fourth place in the conference.

After a slow start, Luke Ridnour paced the Ducks with 21 points, though he had a team-high six turnovers. Andre Joseph added 18 points and five turnovers. Luke Jackson, playing with his cut ring finger wrapped, came off the bench to score 17.

Oregon's big men, however, were practically invisible against USC (8-9, 4-5). Robert Johnson picked up his fourth foul with 16:10 remaining, sending him to the bench for more than 10 minutes, and Ian Crosswhite went to the bench at the 12:22 mark after his fourth foul and didn't return until there was 4:35 left.

Johnson finished with two points, four rebounds and five turnovers in 14 minutes. Crosswhite, who had a career-high 22 points and 12 rebounds in Oregon's

96-91 overtime win over UCLA on Thursday, didn't score until the final 30 seconds, when the game was already out of reach.

"You can't blame them, but they know they have to step up," Kent said of his post players. "They had no legs, and I thought mentally they were extremely out."

Five Trojans scored in double figures, led by Errick Craven, who had 18 points, 10 rebounds and eight steals. Rory O'Neil added 12 points, 12 rebounds and five blocks.

"USC took it to us in every area they could," Kent said. "If they played this well every night, their record would be different. They could easily be 8-0, 9-0 right now."

The Ducks shot 51.9 percent in the
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