

2003 Pac-10 Tournament both a success and a failure

SAN JOSE, Calif. — It would be easy to call the women's Pacific-10 Conference Tournament at HP Pavilion a failure.

There have been no upsets of top seeds by cellar-dwellers, just a dismantling of Washington by Arizona in the first semifinal game Sunday. Of course, the Wildcats were ranked third, while Washington was one better.

Big deal.

Then you have attendance figures, which have failed to reach — as of Sunday's last game — the same level of last year's at McArthur Court. The session, which featured Stanford's game against California and Oregon's against UCLA Saturday, produced the highest figure. And that, at 4,188, was drastically lower than the average 5,000-plus fans that attended games last season at the tournament.

So to call the Pac-10 Tournament a failure wouldn't be completely off target.

But to say it has been a success wouldn't be to go too far off on a limb, either.

Personally, I'm not a big fan of the conference tournament to begin with. I've always felt the Pac-10 placed more importance on the regular season without it. It would have been a novel idea, but no one really wanted to see 2-26 Washington State make it into the NCAA Tournament.

But if you're going to have it —

and I actually felt last season's was somewhat exciting — San Jose is the perfect place to do it.

HP Pavilion has been a benefit to the teams. Unlike Mac Court, there are more than four locker rooms that can house teams, so the shuffle that took place last year is a thing of the past.

The fans haven't been terribly loud, aside from the Stanford fanatics that have made their presence known. Without those rambunctious Cardinal fans, figures, like I said, have been down. At least, though, each of the nine remaining teams has had equal amount of fan support.

The people who have benefited the most from the facilities and fan support have been the players. There is no home court advantage like the one Oregon enjoyed last year.

Stanford has come closest to feeling at home, but there are no

Cardinal logos inside the palace, and each team has been treated equally. The same could be said for last year's tournament, but in essence, the Ducks benefited by staying in Eugene.

Throw Oregon in a neutral-court situation like this, and well, you could see what happened.

The Ducks struggled early on, played well for the middle part of the contest against UCLA, and couldn't make a shot in the final 10 minutes. Play UCLA at home — a second time at least — with a healthy Cathrine Kraayeveld, and the Ducks probably would have come out on top.

That's why having the games at a neutral site offers every team the same chance. It's always a benefit to allow the have-nots a chance to beat the best, even if that is Washington State (writer's note: I hope that never happens. The Cougars are not ex-

actly a fun team to watch).

Ironically, as I am writing this in the media room at HP Pavilion, the televisions airing Pac-10 highlights on Fox Sports Net show Washington State. Scary.

The Pac-10 and HP Pavilion have a contract to keep the tournament in San Jose through 2005. It would probably be wise to extend that contract after next season's tournament, but it looks as though there may have been enough dissent among the media and coaches to bring it back to campus sites beginning in 2006.

With that in mind, the next couple of years — much like this one — should be interesting and a benefit to women's collegiate basketball on the West Coast.

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



Hank Hager
Behind the dish

Sports briefs

Football adds another

The Oregon football team announced it will add James Finley, a touted wide receiver from Los Angeles, to its list of 2003 signees.

Finley was ranked as the third-best wide receiver and one of the top 20 in the nation two years ago by SuperPrep magazine.

— Peter Hockaday

Tracksters qualify for NCAAs

It was made official Monday:

Oregon will send five athletes to this weekend's NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships in Fayetteville, Ark.

On the men's side, seniors Samie Parker and Adam Kriz qualified in the 60-meter dash and the weight throw, respectively. On the women's side, three pole vaulters — seniors Becky Holliday and Niki McEwen and junior Kirsten Riley — will make the trip to Arkansas.

Holliday and McEwen are the highest-ranked Ducks heading into the Indoors. Holliday is 2nd and McEwen is 3rd in the nation, as the former has jumped a mere half-inch higher than

the latter in indoor competition.

Parker is the highest ranked of the men. He ranks 13th in his event, while Kriz is 15th in the weight throw.

The Ducks will compete Friday and Saturday at the Randal Tyson Track Center.

— Peter Hockaday

Women struggle at tourney

Oregon, fielding two teams as it hosts the 2003 Oregon Duck Invitational, is currently 8th and 10th in the 11-team field after the opening two rounds Monday.

Oregon's 8th-place team is led by

freshmen Therese Wenslow, who shot a 3-over-par 75 in the first round, followed by a 9-over-par second to tie for 16th in the first day of the two-day tournament. Freshman Erin Andrews is tied at 23rd with a combined 14-over-par after the first two rounds, followed by junior Lacy Erickson, who currently holds down the 39th spot overall. Freshman Michelle Timpani is tied at 48 with a 21-over-par. Rounding out Oregon's 8th-place team is sophomore Johnna Nealy, currently tied at 53.

The tournament, held at Shadow Hills Country Club in Junction City, will continue; its final round is set

for today, beginning at 8 a.m.

— Scott Archer

Montgomery suspended

Stanford men's basketball head coach Mike Montgomery was suspended for the first Pacific-10 Conference game of next season for grabbing an official in a game in late February.

Montgomery will miss the Cardinal's Jan. 2, 2003 game against Washington State after he grabbed an official's arm Feb. 27 against Arizona State. Montgomery was arguing a call, and was assessed with a technical on the spot.

— Peter Hockaday

Sailing

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"I've never seen kids so pumped up to work hard," Yioulos said. "They've been busting their humps all year."

One Duck who exemplifies dedication is junior skipper Matt Sperry. Sperry has improved to become one

of the Ducks' most reliable skippers.

"He's such a great leader," Yioulos said. "He gets better all the time."

The Ducks spent the weekend in Bellingham, Wash. for the Jeff Mixdorff Memorial. Remember all that stuff about the sun shining with a gentle breeze? Forget all that. The temperature in Washington dropped into the low 30's with driving snow.

"It was the coldest stuff I've ever sailed in," Yioulos said. "It was the most ridiculous thing I've ever seen."

Despite the weather, the Ducks finished seventh out of 13 teams. Yioulos, along with freshman crew Jennifer Dornier, came in fourth in the "A" division, while Sperry, who doesn't mind the cold, and freshman crew Ben Gordon finished

eighth in the "B" division.

"I love sailing in all weather," Sperry said.

Two weeks earlier, the Ducks took second at the Portland State Invite.

As the season continues, the Ducks strive to one day be mentioned in the same breath as Northwest Intercollegiate Sailing Associa-

tion powers Washington and Portland State.

"There's nothing better than going out on a Thursday or Friday," Sperry said. "It's one of the best ways to wind down from a stressful school week."

Jon Roetman is a freelance writer for the Emerald.

Men's

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of ASU's 91-77 win Thursday.

Oregon won the season's first meeting with Arizona State on Jan. 4, a 94-73 win at McArthur Court.

In other first-round games, No. 1 Arizona (25-2, 17-1) will face off against No. 8 UCLA (9-18, 6-12) at 1:20 p.m., while No. 2 Stanford

(23-7, 14-4) will play No. 7 USC.

No. 3 Cal (20-7, 13-5) will meet No. 6 Oregon State (13-14, 6-12) in the final first-round game at approximately 9:10 p.m. All games will be broadcast on Fox Sports Net.

The tournament winner will receive the Pac-10's automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament.

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Women's

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to pull in nine rebounds as the Wildcats out-rebounded Stanford, 32-31.

"Our posts made up their mind they weren't going to let Polk beat them tonight," Powell said.

"They doubled and triple-teamed her early," Bonvicini said.

The win gives Stanford its third straight Pac-10 Championship, although Arizona State upset the Cardinal, 70-63, last season in the finale of the Pac-10 Tournament.

"After our experience last year, why should we expect anything?" Suminski said when asked if the Cardinal was expecting to come in and dominate the tournament from the outset. "We've worked hard for what we've earned."

The win also improves Stanford to 4-1 when being held to less than 60 points this season, the team's only loss coming to Tennessee on Dec. 18. On the flip side, the Cardinal held an opponent to 50 points or less the eighth time this season. Stanford has won all eight of those contests.

Contact the sports reporter at hankhager@dailymerald.com.

CLASSIFIEDS

Horoscope by Linda C. Black

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (March 11). This will be a good year to build a strong foundation. Take the time to do it right, and follow all the rules. They may seem annoying at first, but you'll end up with a better structure. To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging. **ARIES** (March 21-April 19) _ Today is an 8 _ You may have been worrying a little more than usual lately. This helps you avoid a difficulty you could easily have gotten yourself into if you weren't watching. **TAURUS** (April 20-May 20) _ Today is a 7 _ You only like carefully calculated risks that are working down to no risk at all. Keep figuring until Thursday, and you'll be ready to make your move. **GEMINI** (May 21-June 21) _ Today is a 6 _ You may be intellectually superior, but how are you doing emotionally? Stick to your routine and you'll be fine. And don't look down; look straight ahead. **CANCER** (June 22-July 22) _ Today is a 6 _ You may be kept from doing what you want, but nothing can stop you for long. Go back to making lists and plans. The right moment will come. **LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22) _ Today is a 7 _ Let somebody else argue your point. They'll do it better than you could. Provide all the information they need, and keep your costs under control.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) _ Today is a 6 _ There are plenty of great ideas floating around, but which one will really work? The others need you to tell them _ after you crunch the numbers. **LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) _ Today is a 7 _ Be careful with the words you choose. Watch your listener to see if you're getting the response you expect, especially if you're negotiating in an unfamiliar language. This should be interesting. **SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) _ Today is a 7 _ You're becoming even more imaginative and creative, although those endeavors don't seem to be paying off yet. Keep practicing. **SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) _ Today is a 7 _ You may feel as if you're being tested, and you're right. If you continue to see and relay the truth, you'll pass with flying colors. **CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) _ Today is a 7 _ Something that's been bothering you needs to be resolved. It's interfering with your ability to do what's required. Choose. **AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) _ Today is a 7 _ Pass on an "opportunity" that's too good to be true, especially if it involves banding rules. Instead, go for the option that requires more work. It'll pay better. **PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20) _ Today is a 7 _ Others may have thought you were shy, but that's not the case any longer. Make your opinion known, even if you're the minority.

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