

UO set for second exhibition

The Ducks battle Western Oregon on Sunday in their final exhibition game of the year before games count

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

One down, one to go.

The Oregon women's basketball team will play its second and final exhibition game Sunday against Western Oregon at 1 p.m. at McArthur Court. The Ducks defeated Strakonice of the Czech Republic, 80-69, in Wednesday's exhibition opener.

Sunday will be the final contest where nothing matters but the chance to gain experience. Oregon opens its nonconference schedule with Valparaiso Nov. 15.

"We've been able to push each other in practice, but it's always nice to play against somebody else," senior forward Cathrine Kraayeveld said after Wednesday's game. "It kind of tests us if we can take what we've done in practice and put it into games."

Improving its defense has been Oregon's main off-season focus. Head coach Bev Smith has committed to improving the Ducks defensively after the team finished ninth in the Pacific-10 Conference in points and field goal percentage allowed last season.

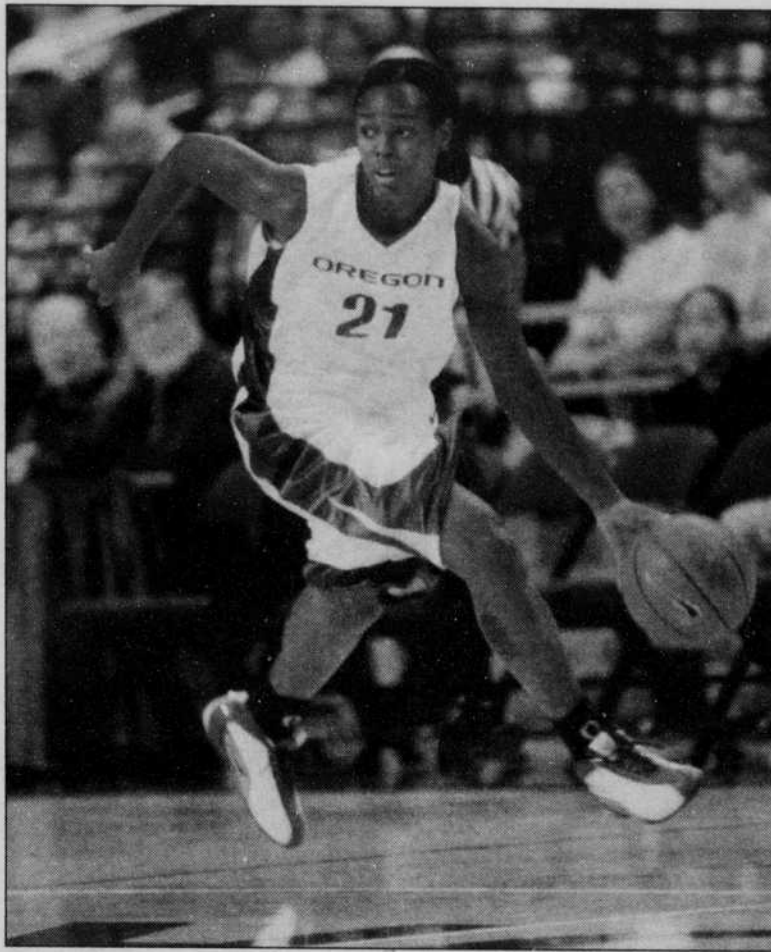
Sunday's game will offer another chance for Oregon to work out the kinks after struggling with Strakonice's transition offense.

"Getting back, making sure we run to the ball ready to take control and make (Strakonice) play some half-court offense (was important)," Smith said.

"When we did that I thought we were much more effective. We have to work and be much more precise and much more aware in defensive transition."

The second point of emphasis for the Ducks has been rebounding. Oregon finished dead last in the conference last season, grabbing just under 34 rebounds per game. The Ducks out-rebounded an undersized Strakonice team 42-33 on Wednesday.

The third aspect Oregon will work on in the game is offensive execution. The Ducks were sixth in the conference in scoring with just fewer than 66 points per game last season, but Smith



Danielle Hickey Senior Photographer

Brandi Davis said the Ducks are playing with more chemistry this season.

said the team is now capable of scoring "within the 70 to 80 point range."

After Wednesday's exhibition, players and coaches have reason to be excited about Oregon's offensive potential. Junior point guard Corrie Mizusawa dished out 15 assists — which would have been a school record if game statistics had counted — and dazzled fans with her crisp reads and no-look passes.

"She's done a great job of creating for herself and looking for the open person," Kraayeveld said. "She's a true point guard and I think we've missed that in the past couple years. We're really excited for what she's going to offer this year."

Junior guard Brandi Davis will once again be a reliable scoring option for Oregon. After sharing the team lead in scoring with Carolyn Ganes last season at 10.9 points per game, Davis dropped 16 points on Strakonice, knocking down 4 of 6 from three-

point range.

Davis said that this year's team has exhibited better chemistry than in seasons past.

"We've come to an understanding about each other and we can definitely play well together," Davis said. "We have great things to come in the future."

Oregon will not have all of its weapons available Sunday. Freshman forward Jessica Shettlers sat out of Wednesday's game with what Smith referred to as a "stress reaction just above the ankle." Smith said the 6-foot-6-inch Shettlers should be on crutches for a week or two before returning to action.

Senior guard Kayla Steen and sophomore guard Chelsea Wagner have been nursing injuries, while freshman guard Kaela Chapdelaine will miss the season as a medical redshirt.

Contact the sports reporter at jonroetman@dailymerald.com.

Northwest rivals await Ducks

The Ducks look to snap a 13-match losing streak against Washington State and Washington

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

The Oregon volleyball team travels to the Evergreen state this weekend in search of its first Pacific-10 Conference win of the year.

The search begins tonight against Washington State and continues Saturday against No. 11 Washington in what head coach Carl Ferreira calls "the hardest Pac-10 trip of the year."

Tonight's match against Washington State is possibly Oregon's best remaining opportunity for a conference win. The Cougar roster features 12 freshmen and the team had lost six consecutive matches entering Thursday's contest with Oregon State. If the Ducks are to be competitive, however, their first order of business will be dealing with the rowdy fans at Bohler Gym.

"It's a fun collegiate volleyball atmosphere in Bohler," Ferreira said. "The fans get packed in there tight,

they're on you and they very much assist the home team."

The Cougars drew a season-high 1,789 fans Oct. 17 against the Huskies. Freshman middle blocker Kristen Bitter said even though roaring crowds can be intimidating, opposing fans can also be used as a shot of adrenaline.

"It can be motivating," Bitter said. "You can take some of the crowd's energy and use it against (your opponent). I heard Washington State has a great volleyball atmosphere so I'm excited to see it."

Washington State may be without the services of outside hitter Kristen Carlson, who injured her left knee in a match against Idaho on Oct. 28. The freshman left-hander, who is sixth in the Pac-10 with 3.9 kills per game during conference matches, is listed as questionable.

The Cougars swept the Ducks 3-0 on Oct. 11 at McArthur Court. After emotional matches against UCLA, USC, Oregon State and Washington, Ferreira said the Ducks failed to come out as an intense group.

Oregon travels to Bank of America Arena on Saturday to take on Washington (15-7, 6-7). The Huskies are led by junior outside hitter Sanja Tomasevic, who is

eighth on the active career kill list with 811. Tomasevic sat out with an injury during the Huskies' 3-0 win over the Ducks on Oct. 10 at Mac Court.

Oregon enters the weekend on a 13-match losing streak. Ferreira said the Ducks need to cut down on their errors if they want to capture a conference win. The Ducks were burned by 16 service errors Oct. 30 against Oregon State.

Ferreira attributed the Ducks' service difficulties to a lack of mental focus.

"It's 100 percent mental," Ferreira said. "(Serving) is the only activity that happens in the entire match where you actually stop and get to hold the ball. Every other skill is a rebound skill off the body that requires pure (athleticism)."

Junior outside hitter Lauren Westendorf said eliminating errors is one step toward Oregon's goal of playing a complete game.

"We're just focusing on playing a consistent level of volleyball," Westendorf said. "Against USC and UCLA we played at a really high level. We definitely showed ourselves as capable of playing as a top-10 team."

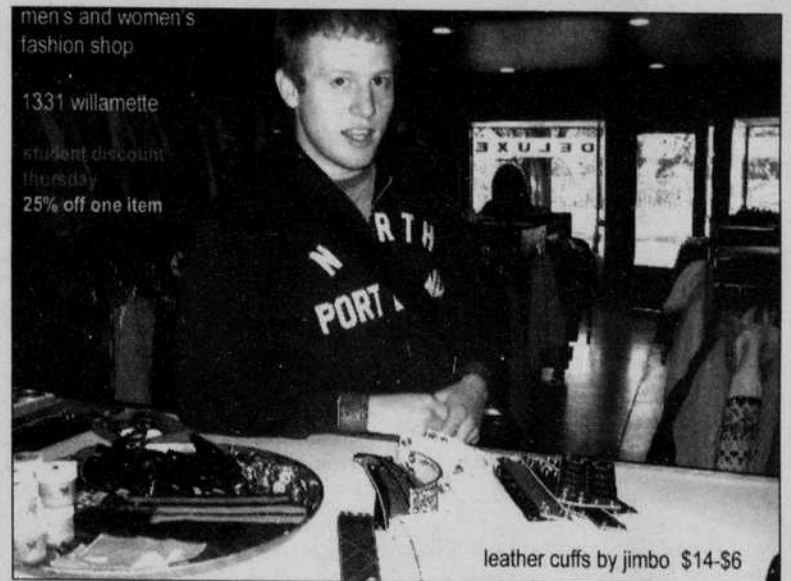
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November 7 and Monday, November 10 to give blood in support of the Ducks.

Students, staff, alumni, fans, and friends are invited to roll up their sleeves and donate to the local blood supply in the 1st Annual Civil War Blood Drive.

One FREE Civil War Blood Drive tee shirt will be given each hour of the campus blood drive.

Stop by the EMU from 11 A.M. to 5 P.M. on Friday,

Questions? Call the Student Alumni Relations Board at 346-2107 or contact Lane Memorial Blood Bank at 484-9111.

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