

Ducks take Bruins to two overtimes; fall 3-2 to end year

Oregon ends the season with two home losses against USC and UCLA but comes close on Sunday

By Jesse Thomas
Sports Reporter

To end the season so close to the next step, with so much heartbreak — it was truly a dour weekend for Oregon soccer.

It took two overtimes for the No. 2-ranked team in the country to defeat a team that was supposed to finish last in the conference according to a preseason poll.

DUCK SOCCER

UCLA defeated Oregon, 3-2, in double sudden-death overtime at Papé Field on Sunday afternoon in the Ducks' final regular season game.

Oregon played like it was the final game of the season. The Ducks refused to die, taking the game down to the final seconds of each half and striking when they needed to.

"It was a tough game," senior team captain Lindsey Werdell said. "I think people are pretty happy with the way we played. I mean, it sucks losing in double overtime."

Werdell and her defense continually stopped a dominant UCLA offense

that accounted for 21 shots and 10 shots on goal. But the true star was redshirt sophomore Nicole Garbin.

Garbin scored both goals for Oregon, moving her season total to seven. The Wailuku, Hawaii, native's performance was brilliant in both when she scored and how she scored.

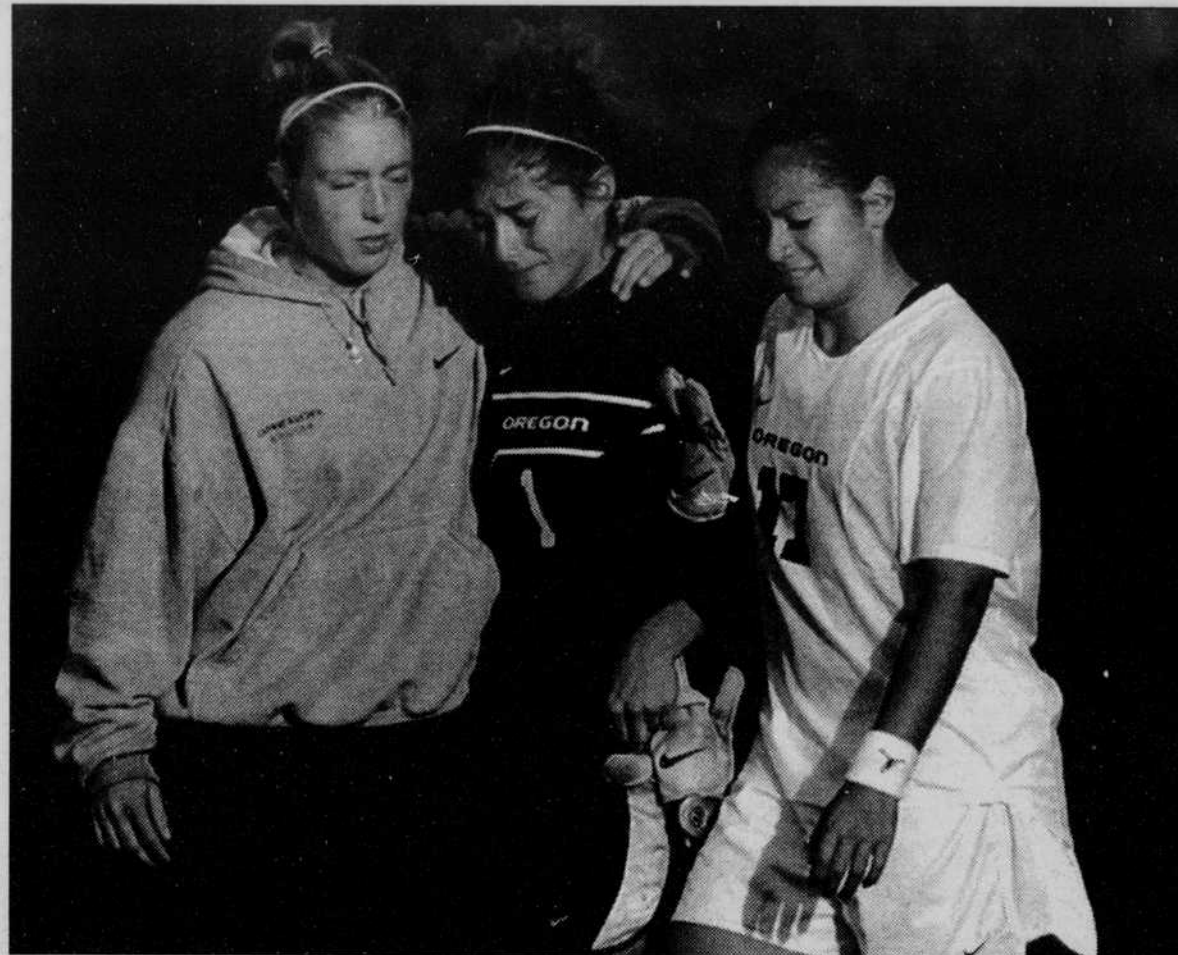
After UCLA scored first in the 39th minute off a header by midfielder Whitney Jones, Oregon was awarded a free kick five minutes later. Defender Carlie Ashcraft tapped the ball to Garbin, who faked her defender by tapping the ball with her right foot, just behind her left foot.

"It's one of our plays that we practice," Garbin said. "It came all in slow motion, I just turned and looked and it was in the back of the net."

Garbin's trickery came from 8-yards center and tied the game with just 32 seconds left in the half.

The second half was strikingly familiar to the first, and neither team could gain an edge early. Oregon's defense continued to demand respect as it cleared out shot after shot by the Bruins and survived a three corner-kick stand by UCLA at one point.

In the 81st minute, forward Iris Mora gave the Bruins a 2-1 lead after Oregon goalkeeper Dominique Lainez charged in on her. Mora chipped the ball over Lainez's head and watched it slowly trickle into



Mark McCambridge Photographer

Manager Sarah Peters (left) and midfielder Nicole Garbin (right) comfort goalkeeper Dominique Lainez after Sunday's loss.

the goal.

And when it appeared it was all over, Garbin struck again. At 88:55, Garbin scored from five yards left on a slide tackle type of maneuver. Red-shirt freshman Andrea Valadez got the assist, along with three shots of her own.

Garbin finished the day with four shots, all of them on goal.

"Hopefully we gained people's respect from this," Garbin said. "We battled the No. 2 team in the nation. We took them to double overtime. We frustrated them out there; at times we outworked them. We broke them down. For that, we have every right to keep our head up."

With three minutes gone in the second overtime, Mora scored again for UCLA to end the game.

Oregon also came up short against USC on Friday night at Papé Field. The Trojans struck 36 seconds into the game on their first play. Werdell scored Oregon's only goal off a penalty kick in the 58th minute. The Ducks

lost 3-1.

And so it comes to an end. Oregon finishes 9-11 overall and 3-6 in the Pacific-10 Conference. The chances of advancing to the NCAA tournament are minimal, and the Ducks will likely have to wait another season.

But the Ducks finished with a close loss in their only double-overtime game of the season. It was against the second-best team in the nation.

Oregon has proved its point.

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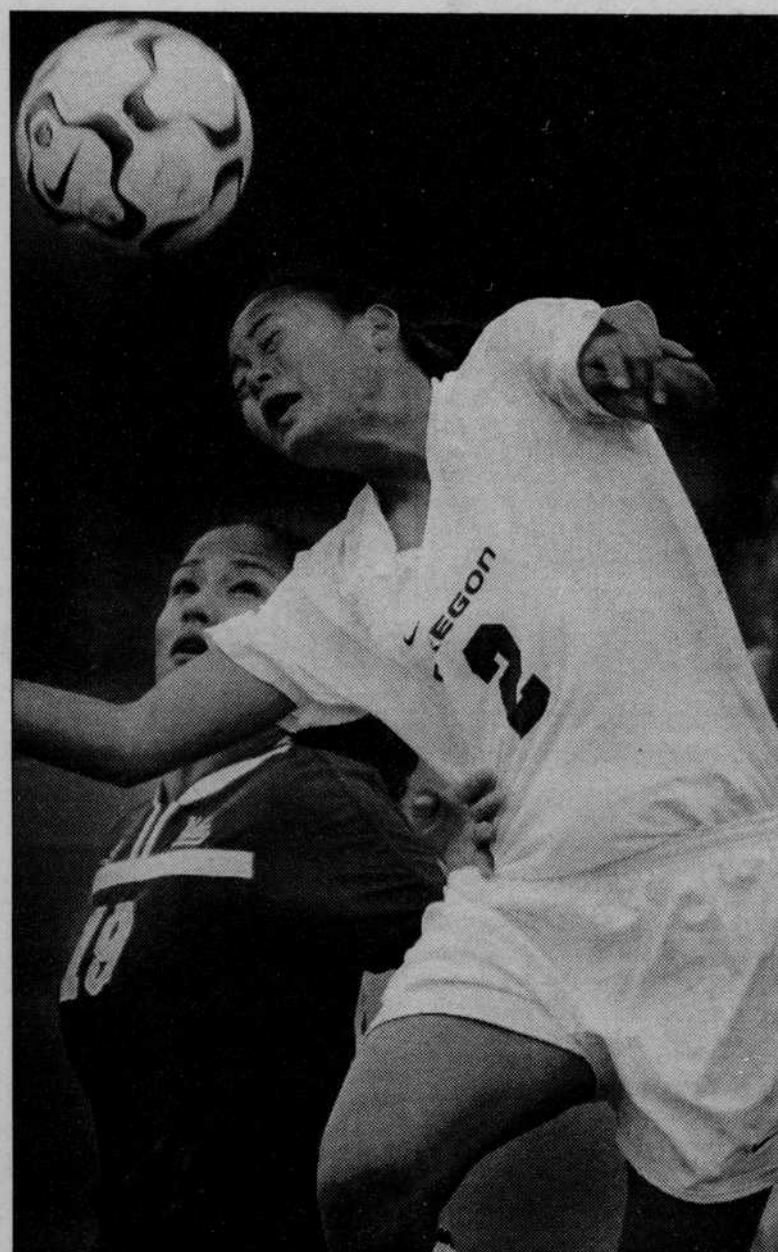
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Oregon's Cristan Higa (2) battles UCLA's Jill Oakes in Sunday's heated contest.