

UCLA's defense distracts Oregon in 63-57 victory

The women's basketball team blows a 14-point lead in the second half, dropping its Pac-10 record to 0-4

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

It appeared that the Oregon women's basketball team was well on its way to ending its four-game losing streak against UCLA on Sunday.

"There's no doubt about it, we just didn't handle their pressure. I thought we did a good job the first couple of times (against the press) ... you have to keep the focus and you can't let them come back into the game."

Bev Smith
Oregon head coach

A fast-break layup by junior center Andrea Bills gave Oregon a 41-27 lead with 12:41 remaining and sent the McArthur Court crowd of 3,612 into a frenzy.

That would be the end of Oregon's good fortune, however, as the Ducks fell victim to UCLA's pressure defense.

Implementing a full-court press, UCLA went on a 20-4 run that was capped by an Amanda Livingston hook shot, giving the Bruins a 47-45 lead that they wouldn't relinquish. The Ducks had several opportunities down the stretch, but when the buzzer sounded, Oregon had lost 63-57 and faced a 0-4 Pacific-10 Conference record.

Oregon head coach Bev Smith said the Ducks resembled a "deer in headlights" during the Bruin run.

UCLA was aided by Oregon's 20 turnovers, several of which came on sloppy passes while attempting to break the Bruin press.

"There's no doubt about it, we just didn't handle their pressure," Smith said. "I thought we did a good job the first couple of times (against the press) ... but you have to keep doing it, you have to keep that discipline, you have to keep that focus and you can't let them come back into the game."

This wasn't the first time Oregon has suffered a significant meltdown during a game this season. During their first loss of the season at Portland on Dec. 4, the Ducks were blown off the Chiles Center floor by an eager Pilot team that set the tone early with a 20-2 run.

During Friday's game against USC, Oregon quickly fell behind on the strength of a 17-2 Trojan run. The Ducks pulled to within six late in the first half but could never fully recover.

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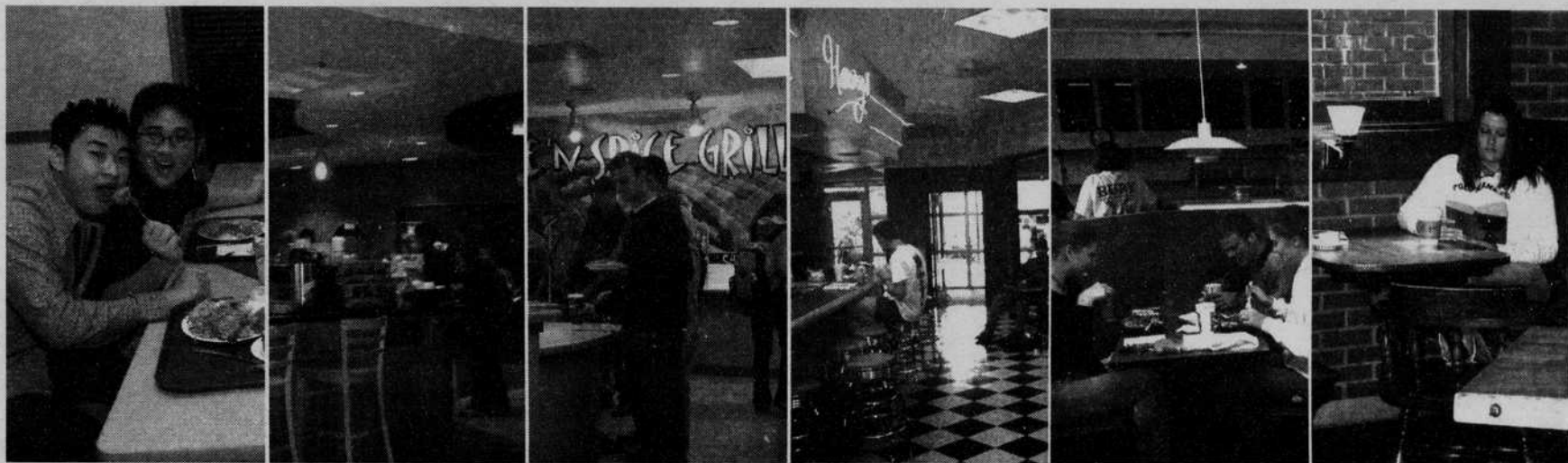
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