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SPORTS

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Colorado vs. Chicago
5 p.m. Sunday, ESPN2

Friday, January 9, 2004

Ducks look for first Pac-10 win

Oregon needs to improve in several key areas if it wants to defeat Oregon State in the Civil War on Saturday

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

The Oregon women's basketball team hosts Oregon State Saturday in search of its first Pacific-10 Conference victory.

Standing in the Ducks' way is a Beaver team looking for its first ever 4-1 start to conference play. Oregon State (9-4 overall, 3-1 Pac-10) has won seven of its last nine games, including three in a row in the Pac-10.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The most intriguing facet of Saturday's 71st installment of the Civil War is how each team has been affected by single players. Oregon's struggles with the loss of senior All-American candidate Cathrine Kraayeveld to a knee injury have been well documented. Oregon State, however, has benefited from the addition of Shannon Howell.

The junior transfer from Nebraska became eligible to play Dec. 27 due to NCAA Division I transfer rules. The 5-foot-9 guard averaged 22.5 points per game over her first four contests, including 32 points in a loss to then No. 9 Stanford in her first game back.

Since Howell became eligible, Oregon State is averaging 72.3 points per game, compared to 64.1 in nine games prior.

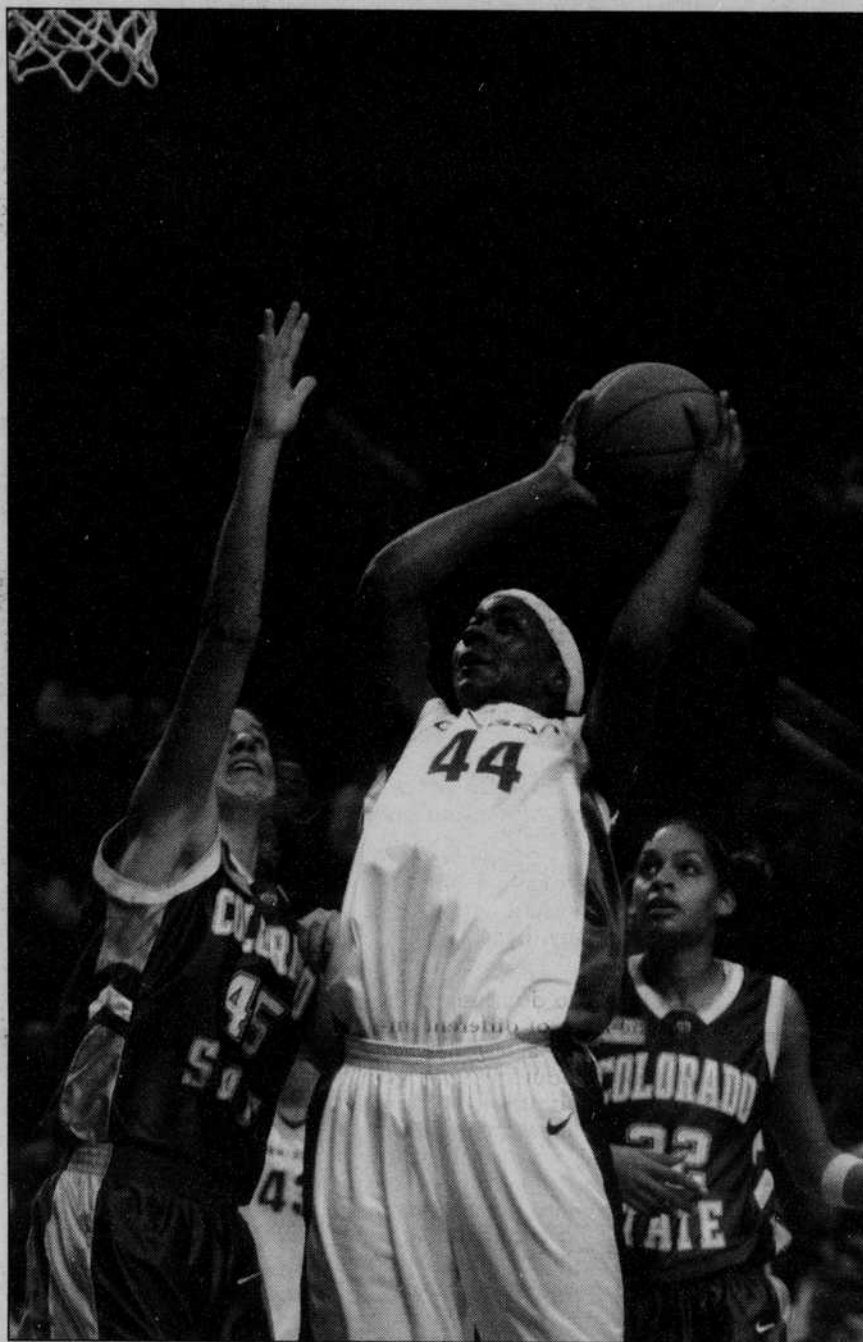
The Beavers have also been getting solid contributions from their trio of seniors in the starting lineup. Guard Leilani Estavan, forward Hollye Chapman and center Brina Chaney are all averaging more than eight points per game and supply teammates with leadership.

"The Beavers are very tough," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "They've got a very experienced and veteran team. I think they're on a mission as seniors."

Oregon (8-6, 0-4) will need improvements in three main areas of its game if the Ducks are going to be competitive against Oregon State or anyone else in the conference, for that matter.

The first area of concern is rebounding. Oregon is averaging only 31.3 rebounds per conference game, while opponents have snatched 40.5 boards per contest.

"It just has to do with hard work," freshman forward Jessica Shetters said. "We get into position sometimes but we don't really push people out like we're supposed to."



Adam Amato Photo Editor

Andrea Bills (44) leads Oregon with 12.2 points per game and 8.4 rebounds per game.

The second order of business is the way Oregon handles pressure defense. The Ducks have struggled with turnovers when opponents have turned up the heat, including a blown 14-point second-half lead against UCLA Sunday.

"I don't think that it's the other team's pressure that's getting to us," senior guard Kayla Steen said. "I think it's our own mental mistakes that are getting us."

Finally, the Ducks need to avoid getting off to a slow start. In four of its six losses,

Oregon has buried itself in a first-half hole that it wasn't able to crawl out of. The Beavers are 6-0 when leading at the half, magnifying the importance of a good start for the Ducks.

Even if Oregon rebounds, handles pressure well and gets off to a good start, beating the Beavers will still be a challenge. After being picked to finish eighth in the Pac-10 Preseason Coaches Poll, Oregon State is one game out of first

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Oregon State gets key boost from seniors

Three seniors lead the Beavers into Mac Court Saturday with their best Pac-10 start in eight years; they look first their second win in Eugene

By Mindi Rice
Senior Sports Reporter

Oregon State women's basketball is third in the Pacific-10 Conference with a 3-1 record two weeks into conference play.

After a 15-15 finish in the 2002-2003 season, the Beavers were picked in the Pac-10 media and coaches polls to finish eighth.

But three of Oregon State's seniors are trying to prove the coaches wrong.

Led by Leilani Estavan's 10.7 points per game, Hollye Chapman's 6.4 rebounds per game and Brina Chaney's 2.5 blocks per game, the seniors have helped the Beavers to their best conference start in eight seasons.

"There's a lot of maturity on this team," head coach Judy Spoelstra said Tuesday. "We're right where we want to be, right where we thought we would be."

Right where they want to be with a 9-4 overall record, two consecutive conference Player of the Week awards — including one for Estavan — and their only conference loss to then-No. 9 Stanford.

The three starting seniors — Estavan, Chapman and Chaney — have played in all 13 games, while Estavan and Chaney have each started every game.

Estavan is Oregon State's starting point guard. While her points-per-game average is down slightly from last year's 12, Spoelstra said the senior from Los Angeles is playing things right.

"You want somebody who can score for you, run the offense, have a lot of basketball savvy, high basketball IQ, hustles everyday in practice and is a leader," Spoelstra told the Daily Barometer. "All those kind of things — that's (Estavan)."

She's 40 assists from breaking the Oregon State all-time career assists record. She needs 63 points to become one of 13 Beavers to score 1,000-plus points in their career.

Chapman might beat her to the 1,000-plus point list, however. The senior from Cottage Grove is 45 points shy of the 1,000-point mark and averaging an identical 10.7 points per game, compared to Estavan.

"Chapman is somebody we have really tried to push scoring and shooting a lot more," Spoelstra said.

The forward scored a career-high 355 total points in 30 games her junior season. Through 13 games this season, she and Estavan lead the team with 139 total points.

The final piece of the senior puzzle is Chaney, a Bothell, Wash., native. The center was second in the Pac-10 last season with 70 blocked shots and has 32 already this season.

"Chaney is an outstanding leader," Spoelstra said. "She takes care of the little things off the floor for the players."

She needs just five more blocked shots to become the

Turn to **SENIORS**, page A9

Oregon, Oregon State looking to get back on winning track

The Ducks and Beavers are both coming off tough losses on Sunday in Los Angeles

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

Saturday marks the third game of the Pacific-10 Conference season for the Ducks, but more importantly, it begins an important stretch for head coach Ernie Kent's team.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

That is, Oregon takes on Oregon State in Corvallis, which is the first of three

games in two weeks against Northwest foes. After the Ducks take on the Beavers, Oregon hosts Washington and Washington State next week.

The three teams represent a recipe of success for the Ducks, who have gone 24-7 over the past five seasons against them. That, however, is not on the Ducks' minds.

Throw out Oregon's 9-1 record against the Beavers in the past five years. That has no bearing on the game that will begin at 7:30 p.m. at Gill Coliseum.

Bear in mind, the Beavers are still winless in conference play, having lost to UCLA and USC last week.

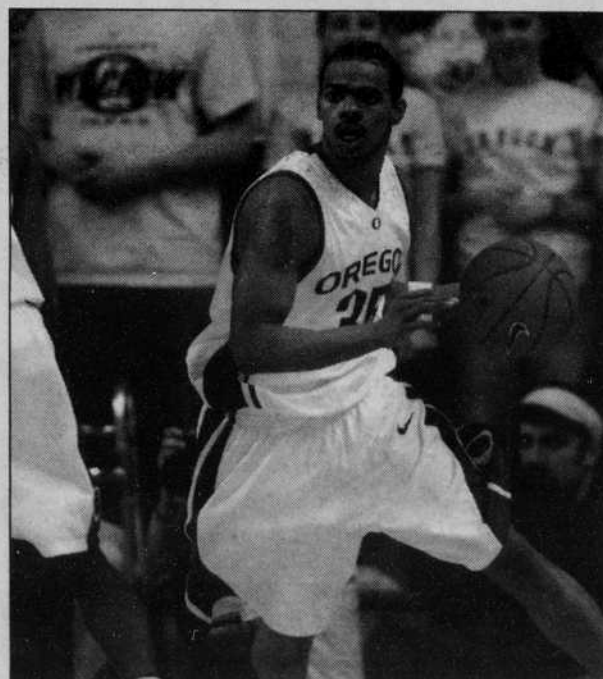
"I think that would make any team

dangerous," Oregon guard Brandon Lincoln said. "They definitely are hungry and they definitely will come out and fight hard. Looking at us as a team, we just want to come out, play hard and get some things done. We just want to compete with them."

Oregon (6-3 overall, 1-1 Pac-10), too, is coming off a shaky outing against the Bruins, losing 81-74, but trailing at one point by 22. The Ducks also will be without the services of point guard Aaron Brooks, who injured his hand in the first half. Lincoln will be making his first career start in an Oregon uniform.

The Ducks, to say the least, are still

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Andre Joseph (35) and the Ducks will play their first game without point guard Aaron Brooks when they visit Oregon State on Saturday. Emerald