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## CRASH

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14 on the strength of 5 of 7 shooting. James Davis kept his hot hand going, moving into fourth place on the Ducks' all-time three-point shooting list after making two.

He's now got 195 for his career, passing Jamal Lawrence.

"They made us play better," Joseph said of Washington State. "They made us accountable for every offensive possession."

A low spot for the Ducks did come during the 9:02 span that held them at 58 points until Mitch Platt scored on a layup with 58 seconds left in the game.

During the span, the Ducks took five shots. For much of that time, the Ducks were without most of their starting five. Still, Oregon was in control at that point and Washington State never challenged for the lead.

"The rhythm of the game just got a little out of sync," Kent said. "We were just turning the ball over too much with the group we had out there."

Shami Gill led the Cougars with nine points and a game-high 13 rebounds. Washington State lost for its fifth time in seven games. The 45 points tied for the third-lowest amount the team has scored in a game this season.

The Cougars did control the offensive boards, grabbing 18 to Oregon's six. At halftime, the Ducks were comfortably controlling the glass, limiting Washington State to 12, including six offensively.

"The bottom line is, we need to block out better," Jackson said.

Not to be overlooked, it was Oregon's fifth straight victory over Washington State and its 13th win in its last 14 games against the Cougars.

Not bad.

That's a win, no matter how you slice it.

**Contact the sports editor at hankhager@dailyemerald.com.**

## CONFIDENCE

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focus on using their momentum for the upcoming week.

Oregon heads back on the road to face Arizona State on Thursday and Arizona on Saturday. The road trip in the desert is never easy on the Ducks.

Kent said Oregon must focus on defense, but Joseph has a different idea.

"If we can play offense like we have in the past two games, we'll be alright," Joseph said.

In the past two games, Oregon has averaged 72 points as a team and is shooting better than 50 percent from the three-point line. The Ducks have shot better than 54 percent from the field and are handing out a total of 35 assists as a team.

**Contact the sports reporter at jessethomas@dailyemerald.com.**

## HAGER

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to guide Washington State. Saturday was his first visit to McArthur Court.

It wasn't pretty. The Cougars scored 18 first-half points and during the final 10 minutes of the game, when Oregon went cold, Washington State basically did nothing as well.

That's a tough night, one that has plagued the Cougars all season long. The 45 points Washington State put on the board was the sixth time this season it has failed to post 50 or more in a game. The Cougars' highest-scoring night came against USC on Jan. 10 in Spokane, Wash.

They scored a whopping 76 points.

"Offensively, we're very poor," Bennett said. "We really have no scorers."

That includes Marcus Moore, who had to leave the Oregon game early because he twisted his ankle. Last year's leading scorer at 18.2 points per game, he averaged 13.4 coming into the game against Oregon.

Moore scored five points in 26 minutes of play against the Ducks.

"Marcus likes to have the ball in his hands, and it's hard for these kids to do much because he holds onto it," Bennett said. "He just doesn't shoot it well enough to have the ball in his hands that long."

At this point, it has to be hard for Bennett to say anything else. The Cougars are in a bad spot. They haven't had a winning record since 1995-96 and haven't made the NCAA Tournament since 1994.

Suffice to say, they really have nowhere to go but up.

That will all happen when Bennett gets the chance to coach more of his "own" team. The group that was on the floor against Oregon doesn't know what it takes to win. They haven't tasted that culture during their time in Pullman, Wash.

Bennett knows that culture all too well. Despite taking over a team that has seen its fair share of losses in the past few seasons, he's beginning to instill a winning attitude — albeit a little one — into Washington State, even if its just a .500 record (8-8) at this point.

Bennett is taking baby steps this season, one at a time, and in a manner that will benefit the fans at Friel Court in the next few years. It may not always be apparent, but he knows how to get the best out of his teams, evidenced by his track record at the previous three schools.

He's brought over a sleepy, tired offense that drains opposing offenses of their rhythm. The Ducks fell into that trap, shown by their 37 total shots and 60 points.

Against a team of lesser athletic ability and propensity to shoot from the perimeter, the Cougars could have pulled out the win. For the mean time, though, Bennett's teams will suffer against the Pac-10's powerhouses.

Against a conference that likes to run more than anyone else, Bennett will have his growing pains. He will go up against teams such as Stanford, which can play the same style as the Cougars, only the Cardinal can shoot the ball.

Teams such as Arizona and Oregon will run, run and run more, forcing the few shots the Cougars take to matter that much more.

This year, Bennett will take his lumps. Next year, Bennett will take his lumps. And so on and so on …

But soon enough, Bennett will be giving those lumps instead of taking them.

**Contact the sports editor at hankhager@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.**

## TRIPS

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take two steps back as we did after the Oregon State game." Oregon held the Cougars to 50 points, marking the third time this season that the Ducks have held an opponent to 50 points or less.

"I've never underestimated Washington State," Davis said. "They're known to sneak up on you. I knew they were going to come back hungry in the second half."

The Ducks extended their 27-21 halftime lead and led by as many as 21 in the second half. Washington State pulled to within nine with 4:31 remaining, but couldn't get any closer.

Up next, the Ducks host Arizona at McArthur Court on Thursday followed by Arizona State on Saturday. Tipoff is 7 p.m. on Thursday and noon on Saturday.

**Contact the senior sports reporter at mindirice@dailyemerald.com.**