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Panova leads UO with win in Seattle

The Russian star battles through injuries to capture her third straight Pac-10 singles title

By Alex Tam
Freelance Reporter

Winning is becoming common ground for Oregon junior Daria Panova.

After battling through an injury to her upper back and left index finger that left her status questionable before the tournament, Panova triumphed to win her third straight Pacific-10 Conference Women's singles title this weekend.

DUCK TENNIS

The Russian native defeated Daniella Bercek from UCLA in straight sets, 6-4 and 6-3, to capture the 2004 Pac-10 Indoor Championship, held at the Nordstrom Tennis Center in Seattle.

Head coach Nils Schyllander told his star player after her match that he is proud of her storied career at Oregon.

"She is probably the toughest person I've met in my life and the toughest I will ever meet," Schyllander said. "She is so relentless when it comes to competing. She is a world-class competitor."

The list of accomplishments continues to grow for Panova after being named the 2003 Pac-10 Women's Player of the Year and winning both the indoor and outdoor championships last year.

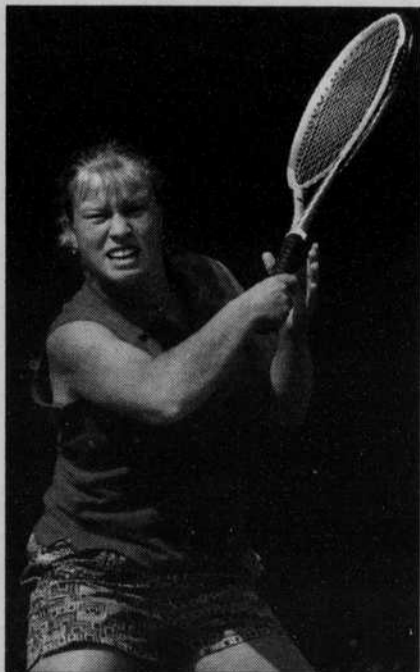
"Daria is a warrior for us," Schyllander said. "She is as tough as nails and always rises to the occasion."

The success did not stop there for the Ducks.

Senior Davina Mendiburu secured the Flight IV singles title after defeating California's Monica Wiesener in a hard-fought three-set match, 2-6, 6-1 and 6-4. It was one year ago that Mendiburu underwent reconstructive knee surgery after tearing her anterior cruciate ligament.

"This was (Davina's) first tournament since the surgery," Schyllander said. "If she

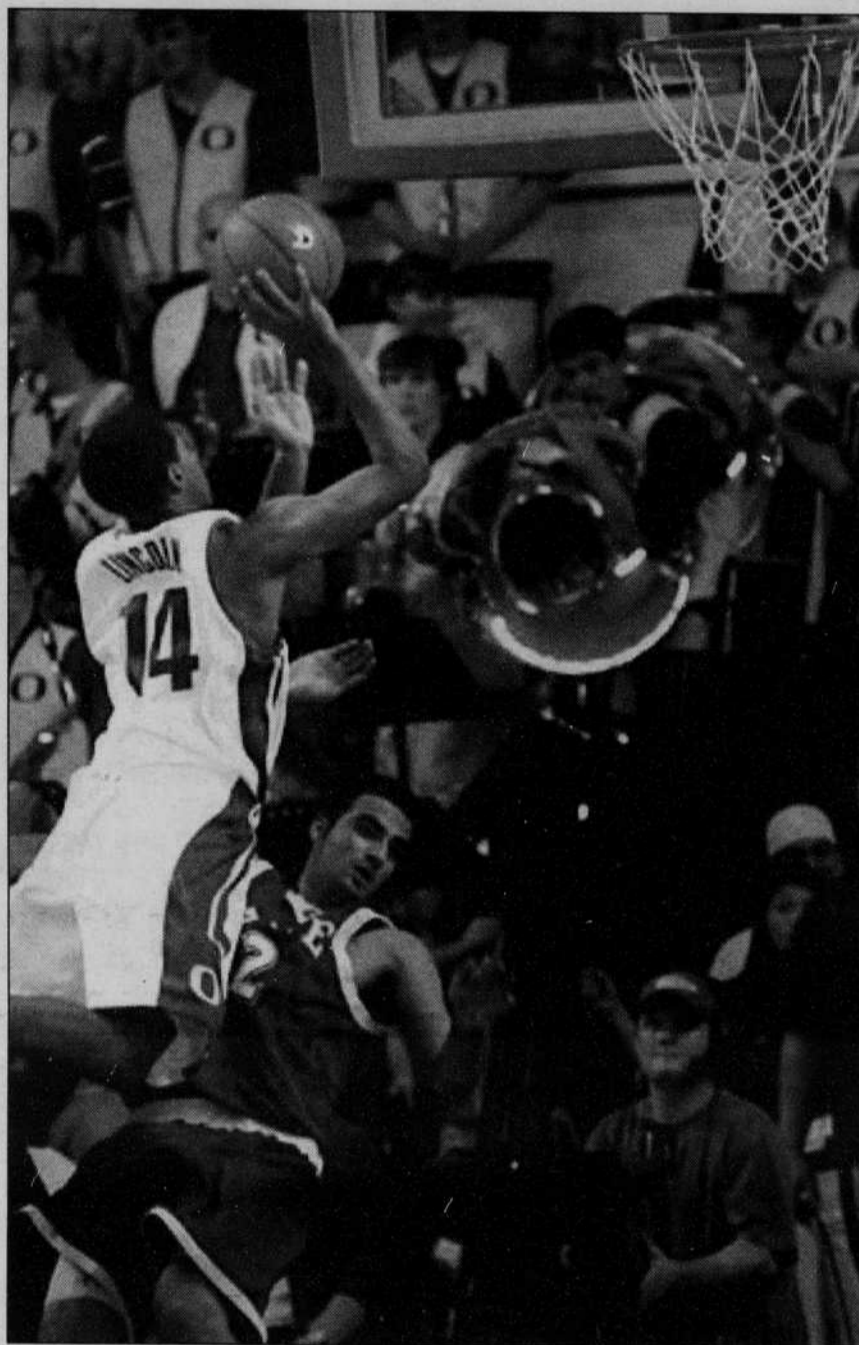
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Adam Amato Senior Photographer

Daria Panova almost did not enter the Pac-10 Indoor Championships due to injury, but defeated UCLA's Daniella Bercek to win it all.

Oregon crashes through Cougars



Erik Bishoff Photographer

Brandon Lincoln was given a charge on this play, but it didn't stop the Ducks from a convincing win.

The Ducks took just 37 shots against Washington State, but still won by 15 at home

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

Let's put Oregon's game against Washington State on Saturday into context.

Washington, coming off a 10-point loss to the Ducks on Thursday at McArthur Court, traveled to Corvallis and stunned Oregon State, 103-99, in overtime.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Contrast that with the Ducks' game against Washington State. It was a contest that paled in comparison to the speed the Huskies exhibited against the Beavers.

Oregon (8-4 overall, 3-2 Pac-10) could have only dreamed of 103 against the Cougars. The Ducks battled, pushed and drove to a 60-45 defeat of Washington State in front of 9,087 at McArthur Court.

Statistics would do no justice to the style of game Washington State (8-8, 2-4) forced upon the Ducks. However, they would provide an interesting window through which to view how Oregon got its third win of the Pacific-10 Conference season.

The Ducks, to the amazement of head coach Ernie Kent, took just 37 shots, making 21. They turned the ball over 17 times, but many of those came during a 9:02 span late in the second half.

During that stretch, the Cougars scored just nine points. A win is a win, no matter how slow, ugly or sluggish it may have been.

"The reality of how we played tonight is how we should play every night," Kent said. "Washington State's style of play really allowed us to grow as a basketball team."

If the Ducks grew any against the Cougars, it came in baby steps. Washington State head coach Dick Bennett faced off against the Ducks for the first time in his career, having come to Pullman, Wash., at the start of the season.

Oregon forward Luke Jackson said the Ducks knew what Bennett would have his team run, especially since it allowed Bennett to engineer winning teams at Wisconsin from 1992-2000.

"We knew that they were going to try to control the possessions," Jackson said. "We tried to speed the game up. Instead of playing to their game, we executed ours really well."

Oregon's 60 point total was the lowest amount the team has posted in a game this season, but the 45 it allowed was its best game — score-wise — this season. The total was also the least the Ducks have allowed since keeping Southern California to 40 on Jan. 7, 1988, in a 12-point victory.

"I was quite impressed with Oregon, particularly offensively," Bennett said. "They get the ball to the right people in a timely fashion. We just struggled to put anything in the basket."

The right people for Oregon included Jackson, who posted a game-high 19 points, and Andre Joseph, who pitched in with

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Home swing provides Ducks with confidence, vital wins

After losing two road games, Oregon returns home in fine fashion and readies for Arizona after two victories

By Jesse Thomas
Sports Reporter

There's just nothing like McArthur Court for the Oregon men's basketball team.

A record of 35-2 on their home court after beating Washington and Washington State this weekend says plenty for the Ducks.

"This was a big weekend for us and we felt like we were capable absolutely of beating both teams and we did it one game at a time," Oregon senior Luke Jackson said. "It feels good."

Entering Thursday's game against Washington, Oregon had been playing on the road for 29 days.

Five straight road games and a 2-3 record during the span was a rough stretch for a team that had been on its longest road trip in seven years.

Oregon had lost two straight to UCLA and Oregon State and was in need of a turnaround.

Enter the Huskies, Cougars and now, Oregon's renewed conviction.

"The confidence is just coming back home here to Mac Court," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said. "It's such a great venue to play in. Yet, we needed to get through the Washington games because we hadn't been here in so long. Our confidence is certainly on the rise now with these two games."

The Ducks had slipped to the bottom half of the Pacific-10 Conference standings before playing the Washington schools. Now Oregon (8-4 overall, 3-2 Pac-10) is tied for third with Arizona in the conference's standings.

It hasn't been an easy road for Oregon as of late. If the extended road trip wasn't enough, Oregon has had to deal with the loss of freshman Aaron Brooks at the starting point guard spot.

Without Brooks, Oregon has had to deal with many different lineups and become accustomed to three or four people bringing the ball up the floor.

Kent is now confident that his players are where they should be.

"Jay (Anderson) is on his game, obviously Luke Jackson is on his game, James (Davis) is on his game, Andre (Joseph) is on his game, Ian (Crosswhite) is on his game, Mitch (Platt) is getting back there right now," he said.

"Then you've got Jordan (Kent), Adam Zahn and Matt Short still needing to get on their games completely — get their confidence, get their rhythm. There's still some growth potential in this team."

It was a weekend that allowed Oregon to grow as a team in seeing two completely different styles of offense. Washington ran the ball much like Oregon is used to and Washington State stuck to head coach Dick Bennett's traditional half-court offense.

After McArthur Court helped Oregon find some of the confidence it had lost, the Ducks now must

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Hank Hager
Behind the dish

Bennett's philosophy takes time

Dick Bennett entered the 2003-04 collegiate basketball season with 453 career wins, making mountains out of mole hills at Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Wisconsin-Green Bay and Wisconsin.

With Stevens Point, he made three appearances in the NAIA Tournament. With Green Bay, he made a team that went 5-23 in the 1985-86 season into one that went to the NCAA Tournament with a 27-7 record in 1993-94.

With Wisconsin, he took the Badgers to the Final Four during the 1999-2000 season, eventually ending the season with a 22-14 record.

He retired, only to come back this season

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