

Rugby celebrates opening win against Cardinal

Oregon's Club rugby team comes back from a 15-7 Stanford lead to win, 24-18, in Palo Alto on Saturday

By Kirsten McEwen
Freelance Reporter

Any time Oregon beats Stanford, it's worth celebrating. At least that's the Ducks' mentality.

On Saturday, Oregon's Club rugby team defeated the Cardinal. After outscoring Stanford 17-3 in the final 40 minutes, Oregon celebrated a comeback win against one of its toughest opponents.

"We were pretty close in skill lev-

el, but their team had a size advantage," Club rugby coordinator Pete Bayly said. "But we played together as a solid unit to finish off the game."

Playing under fair conditions at Stanford's recently completed million-dollar rugby stadium, the game was uneventful for the first 10 minutes until Stanford scored with a penalty kick.

Two minutes later, Oregon, coached by Justin Roome, countered Stanford's three points with a try and took a 5-3 lead.

Stanford scored two more tries before halftime, and the Ducks found themselves behind at the end of the first 40-minute half by a score of 15-7.

Bayly said that although his team was behind at halftime, it was the second half that made the difference.

"We started off the second half a

little slow," Bayly said. "After the first ten minutes, we picked it up and played solid defense and sound offense."

Oregon slowly erased Stanford's lead and allowed the Cardinal to score three points in the second half. With 16 minutes left in the half, Oregon scored the go-ahead point and held the score at 24-18 until the match ended. Forward Noah Evans played a key role in Oregon's 17 second-half points and Mike Estis controlled Oregon's backline all game.

Bayly hopes Oregon's win over Stanford will not only help the team gain momentum coming into league play, but that it will put the Ducks on the map.

"With this win, we hope to catapult ourselves into a position where a berth in the Sweet 16 Tournament is possible," Bayly said.

The Ducks will participate in their last "friendly" match against Idaho State at Oregon's Southbank Field on Jan. 31. Oregon competes in its first league game Feb. 14 at home against Central Washington. Five other teams — Central Washington, Oregon State, Washington, Washington State and Western Washington — will compete against Oregon in the Pacific Northwest Rugby Football Union.

Oregon practices twice a week at 3:30 p.m. on the turf field by the Student Recreation Center and still welcomes interested students to join the team.

"We are always recruiting," Bayly said. "Anyone who wants to come out has the opportunity to do so."

Club hockey loses I-5 Cup

In front of a crowd full of students representing Oregon sorori-

ties and fraternities that turned out for Greek Weekend, Oregon's Club hockey team dropped two more games, putting their record at 0-16-0.

The Ducks blew two consecutive two-goal leads in the third period against Washington to lose the I-5 Cup at Lane County Ice Arena. Both games ended with the Huskies winning by a score of 3-2.

Oregon plays at home this weekend at 7:30 on both Friday and Saturday nights against Eastern Washington at Lane County Ice Arena. The Ducks will then hit the road for the last time this season on Jan. 29 to play California and Stanford. They will return home for their final league games on Feb. 6 and 7 against Central Washington.

Kirsten McEwen is a freelance writer for the Emerald.

TROUBLES

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Jackson and James Davis came to Eugene.

No one in an Oregon uniform has ever defeated the Sun Devils at Wells Fargo Arena.

"We've had a couple big leads and kind of blown it a couple times down there," Oregon forward Luke Jackson said. "It's just one of those places. They got the best of us the

"You don't attack Ike (Diogu) on defense. Ike's going to get his points. You just need to make sure he doesn't have a monster game, but I think you need to make Ike play defense."

Ernie Kent
Oregon head coach

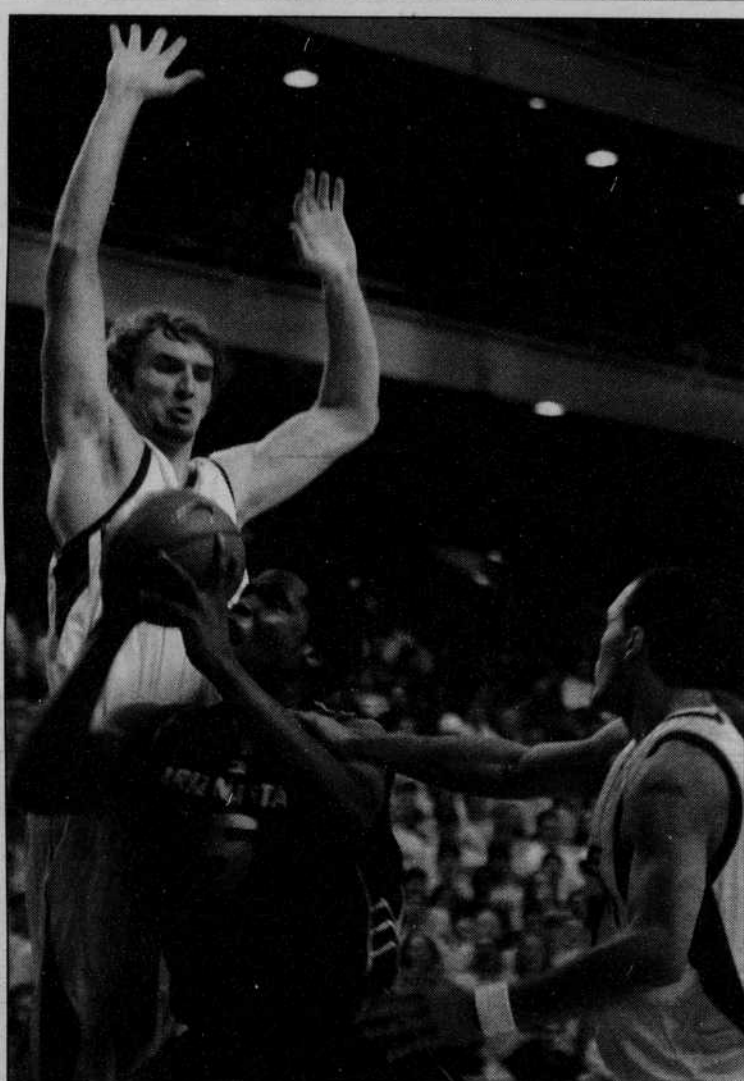
last three years, but we're going down there trying to get a win and we feel like we can do that."

The game is the first of two that will keep the Ducks in Arizona for three days. After taking on the Sun Devils, Oregon will face off against No. 14 Arizona in Tucson on Sunday.

When looking back at the season at the end of the year, the road trip through the desert could be a pivotal weekend for Oregon. The Ducks have never swept the Sun Devils and Wildcats on the road during the same trip.

Since the Pac-10 added Arizona and Arizona State for the 1978-79 season, Oregon has been swept by the Arizona schools 13 times. The Ducks have split the road swing 12 times.

That pinpoints why the upcoming games take on meaning for the Ducks. With two games left in the first half of the conference season after this week, two wins would be vital. Two losses



Arizona State's Ike Diogu leads the Pac-10 this season with 23.1 points per game. He scored 17 points and grabbed 14 rebounds last season against Oregon.

Emerald

could also be heartbreaking.

Should the Ducks sweep in Arizona, they would be 5-2 in conference play and in good position for the California and Stanford visits to Eugene next week. If Oregon splits, it would be 4-3 and presumably in the same position in the conference standings it is now — fourth.

In the event the Ducks lose both, it would shift them to 3-4, making the games against the Golden Bears and the Cardinal virtual

must-wins.

"We know how important each game is and we're definitely going down there to win two games," Jackson said. "We feel like if we keep both these teams off the board and kind of neutralize what they do in transition, as far as pressuring us, I think we feel like we can win two games."

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THOMAS

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He wasn't even playing three minutes a game and spent much of last season on the injured list. But McInnis was averaging 11.9 points, five assists per game and playing a consistent 32.5 minutes on average.

The trade helps Cleveland because James doesn't have to worry about

playing the point guard spot. Cavaliers General Manager Jim Paxson got rid of Miles because of his inconsistency, attitude and the effect that attitude could have had on James.

The 6-foot-9 Miles is making \$4.1 million in the final year of his contract and will be a free agent after this season. McInnis was making \$3.3 million this season.

Miles' recent actions should help

him fit in well with a Portland team that is in desperate need of a revamp of attitude.

Miles, 22, was fined by the Cavaliers after missing Monday's practice. He says he forgot to set his alarm clock.

This is a mistake by the Blazers.

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CHALLENGE

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different story altogether.

Oregon has been in this situation before, however, facing the Wildcats twice last season without the services of Kraayeveld, who sat out 13 games with a staph infection in her right knee. The Ducks know what it takes to stay competitive.

"We have to make (Polk) make tough shots," Smith said. "She's going to get her points — I don't think we're going to shut her out — but she's going to have to work every minute, every second to get shots."

"It's going to be a challenge but I think our players are looking forward to it."

Oregon enters the game on a positive note after beating Washington State 60-50 Saturday. The win helped the Ducks forget about their 45-point loss to Washington two days earlier and ended a seven-game streak of scoring fewer than 60 points.

"It was pretty big for us to come back from the loss (to Washington)," Oregon forward Eleanor Haring said. "It pepped our confidence. It was really major for us."

If Oregon is going to beat Arizona it will need an offensive boost. Kedzie Gunderson and Carolyn Ganes need to pick up some of the slack, as the scoring average for each has dropped from last season.

Andrea Bills has carried the load for most of the year and is the only Duck averaging double figures in scoring (11.9). Brandi Davis has come alive of late, including a 20-point performance against the Cougars. Chelsea Wagner and Haring have also provided occasional offense.

Wagner's ability to play will be a game-time decision after suffering a knee injury against Washington.

Oregon leads the all-time series with Arizona 22-14, but has dropped the last five to the Wildcats, including a 96-65 loss in Tucson last season.

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SPORTS BRIEFS

Diener's game status remains in question

MILWAUKEE — Marquette University junior Travis Diener was held out of practice on Wednesday, and his availability for the Golden Eagles' game against DePaul on Saturday is still uncertain.

Diener injured his neck in the second half of Marquette's 84-76 loss at Charlotte on Tuesday as he attempted to pump-fake 49ers center Calvin Clemmons. Clemmons bit on the fake and came down with both legs on the back of Diener's neck, pushing his head violently toward his chest.

He was later carried from the court on a stretcher.

Diener was examined at a local hospital, diagnosed with what was termed a hyperflexion, or whiplash, fitted with a neck brace and released. He accompanied his teammates on the Golden Eagles' charter plane to Milwaukee and actually took part in some film study of the game on the way home.

Diener was re-evaluated and treated by the Marquette medical staff on Wednesday and is being listed as day-to-day.

"All things considered, and having had a chance to see on tape the forceful nature of the collision, we are extremely thankful that Travis is going to be OK," coach Tom Crean said.

— Todd Rosiak
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Improved academics needed, officials say

MILWAUKEE — More than 2,000 athletic teams in Division I potentially fall short of the NCAA's proposed

guidelines on academic performance, an NCAA official said Wednesday.

The new proposals, expected to be given final approval in the spring after a two-year effort, are part of a larger academic reform program for NCAA member schools in Division I.

For months, NCAA officials have promoted the reforms as a way of prodding colleges and universities to improve student academic performance.

On Wednesday, Todd Petr, the NCAA's managing director of research, said a pilot study of the new measures indicated that of the 6,138 sports teams in the NCAA, more than 2,000 would fall short of the new academic guidelines.

But Todd Turner, the former athletic director at Vanderbilt University who chaired a key committee that put together the new rules, said the number was an estimate based on available statistics and didn't necessarily mean all of the teams would be subject to penalty.

The new system essentially ties a team's academic record to its ability to award scholarships, recruit, and perhaps exclude the team from participating in post-season NCAA championships.

Specifically, the NCAA is setting up two different ways to measure academic progress. One is called the Graduation Success Rate, which for the first time would include student transfers. It would replace the old graduation rate, which many coaches felt provided an inaccurate picture of graduation rates because it did not include student transfers.

— Don Walker
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Sports Illustrated
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