

# WARM

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during the last three games. On Saturday the Ducks held a 33-32 advantage over Arizona State, which has the best rebounding margin in the conference.

## Moving on

The first half of the conference schedule came to a close Saturday with the Ducks winning only two of nine games.

Besides blowout road losses to then-No. 9 Stanford and Washington, Oregon had a chance to win every game. The Ducks are confident they can improve in the second half.

One reason to have confidence in the Ducks is freshman Eleanor Haring. The 6-foot-1 forward is one of Oregon's most athletic players and has stepped up on both sides of the ball.

"We went through some tough spots and we've really rebounded back," Haring said. "I think last weekend was a sign. Although we didn't get the wins, we really played hard. We know we're (really) close and it will be interesting to see how the last half of the season goes."

Oregon had an outside chance of competing for the Pac-10 title until Cathrine Kraayeveld was lost for the season on Dec. 2 with an anterior cruciate ligament tear in her right knee. Since then, Oregon has had to scratch

and claw for every basket and every rebound. While the Ducks came out strong in several games, not having anything come easy usually took its toll by game's end.

Oregon lost to California, UCLA, Arizona and Arizona State by a combined 16 points.

Despite their struggles, Smith said she's happy with the way the team has stayed together.

**"We went through some tough spots and we've really rebounded back. I think last weekend was a sign. Although we didn't get the wins, we really played hard."**

**Eleanor Haring**  
Oregon forward

"Given the rough road that we've had, what we're really satisfied with as a coaching staff is that (the players) haven't given up," Smith said. "We're looking uphill, but they've got that grit and they've got that enthusiasm to turn the second half around."

Contact the sports reporter at [jonroetman@dailyemerald.com](mailto:jonroetman@dailyemerald.com).



Erik Bishoff Photographer

Eleanor Haring (54) and the Ducks are close to an elusive third Pac-10 win. They almost defeated Arizona and Arizona State last week.

# HAGER

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I couldn't think of anything intelligent to say on Oregon's 24-point loss to Arizona. There were some positives, but mostly there were negatives. The Ducks will move on. Arizona will move on. They'll meet again and there will be a different result.

Maybe.

The Oregon women's basketball team is 2-7 in Pacific-10 Conference play. That speaks for itself.

So, what did I do? Well, I did the same thing any red-blooded American male who can't think of a

column would do.

I turned on ESPN's "SportsCenter." Ah, the last bastion of inspirational television. It's a show like no other, and it's on so often it doesn't matter if you work the morning, afternoon or late shift. You just can't miss it.

I've found myself inexplicably drawn to it since I first got cable TV when I was 11. I know why I watch — I just can't figure out why I do it so often.

Lately, though, I've found myself shying away from the big show. I still watch, but not with the same gusto I once had. I can't seem to keep the remote from clicking to Comedy

Central or Fox Sports Net.

It's almost beginning to seem as though the show is becoming a caricature of itself, a cartoon that pushes the limits of respectability. Even though it's always been known for its brash nature, the show seems to be mimicking its reality show brethren on the non-cable television channels.

The information is still fresh, and the analysts know what they're talking about, but the next laugh always seems to be around the corner. The problem is, it's becoming a forced laugh.

I'm still waiting for the day when Stuart Scott makes a sock puppet

because, well, ratings suggest that males aged 8 to 15 prefer him to make an ass of himself than to actually present sports news in a clear and informative fashion.

Maybe it's just that "SportsCenter" considers itself dominant over Fox. Maybe the show is trying to pull in new viewers. Maybe after 25 years there needs to be some things done to keep it fresh.

There's a lot of maybes in there, and only the executives of the show really know what the answer is.

But in the meantime, give Dan Patrick some more air time, kick Scott off the show and bring back Keith

Olbemann.

I'll still be watching, but I am growing skeptical of the so-called worldwide leader in sports.

Bring back CNN/SI. Now that was a sports channel that had some gusto.

"SportsCenter," for all its newfound issues, is still the best highlights show on the air today.

As Homer Simpson would say, "Ooh, 'SportsCenter.'"

Now if I can just find that damn bag of pretzels.

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## SPORTS BRIEF

### Nets fire Scott, name Frank interim head coach

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — After watching his uninspired New Jersey Nets go through the motions of an embarrassing 21-point loss to the Miami Heat on Friday and hearing that Byron Scott was unsure of whether the team was listening, Nets president Rod Thorn began to realize a change was necessary.

Finally, at 10 Sunday night, hours after a victory over the Celtics, Thorn did what he couldn't bring himself to do

last March, last summer and last month he fired Byron Scott. The Nets terminated ties with the winningest coach in their NBA history on Monday morning, less than a week after the team was sold to Brooklyn developer Bruce Ratner.

Scott coached the team to two straight NBA Finals but could not survive a 22-20 start, even though it was good enough to lead the Atlantic Division. The Nets promoted lead assistant Lawrence Frank to interim coach for the remainder of the season. The first-time head coach is now the youngest in the league at 33.

Thorn said he had made the decision and new ownership had no input.

"This was a very, very difficult thing to do on a personal level," said Thorn, who gave Scott his first head coaching job in 2000. "Sometimes your team needs a new voice. This is Byron's fourth year here; it happens at different times to virtually every coach ... that your message just isn't received and taken on the court."

"The Miami game was the nadir, so to speak, for us," added Thorn, who said he considered other coaching candidates in and outside of the

organization before deciding on Frank. "We didn't compete at the normal level I think this team competes."

Thorn was also adamant that no player — especially Jason Kidd — had any input on the decision. The relationship between Scott and Kidd has been speculated about since last summer, when reports had the point guard demanding Scott be fired or else he would not re-sign as a free agent.

Several sources have maintained that Kidd never made such a demand and they also denied an early

afternoon report Monday from The Associated Press that Kidd had talked to management on Saturday to discuss a coaching change.

"I didn't talk to anybody about any change," said an angry Kidd, who played golf with Scott and Thorn during an off day on Thursday in Miami. "Far from it. Somebody made an error. You can check my phone records. I didn't call Rod. Why would I need to tell Rod (to make a change)? That's his job. I'm not doing his job."

— Ohm Youngmisuk  
New York Daily News

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