

Oregon hits the road again looking for different results

Oregon heads to Boise State and Arizona State this weekend in search of its first Pac-10 win

By Scott Archer
Freelance Reporter

It's back to the road. Again.

The Ducks hit the road today for a matchup with Boise State (5-3, 2-2), followed by a match against No. 19 Arizona State (7-5, 3-0) on Sunday.

DUCK WRESTLING

Oregon is currently 1-7 overall and 0-3 in Pacific-10 Conference play, remaining in search of its first league victory.

The Ducks are hoping to improve on some impressive individual performances from a week ago and to turn those into something positive as a team this weekend.

"The guys are frustrated," head coach Chuck Kearney said. "(The past two matches) we could have won if we won the 125 and 157-pound weight classes."

That's been the mantra all season long.

Oregon has finished several matches with results split at 5-5 ties. However, the points earned by the opponent in those matches have catapulted them above the Ducks.

It is those close matches that have stalled the Ducks. Oregon has yet to have all wrestlers compete to the best of their abilities on the same day.

Oregon must also balance preparations for the Pacific-10 Conference Tournament and the NCAA Tournament.

"(It's getting close) to the Pac-10 and National Tournaments," Kearney said. "And those deserve attention."

The Ducks are also facing a short week during which they won't make any practice schedule adjustments, Kearney said. The team wrestled Cal State-Bakersfield on Sunday and returned to the practice mat Monday in preparation for this weekend's matches.

Boise State features one nationally ranked wrestler in 197-pound sophomore K.C. Walsh, who is ranked 13th overall. Walsh boasts a team-best record of 20-6. He has four major decision victories and two pins

on the year.

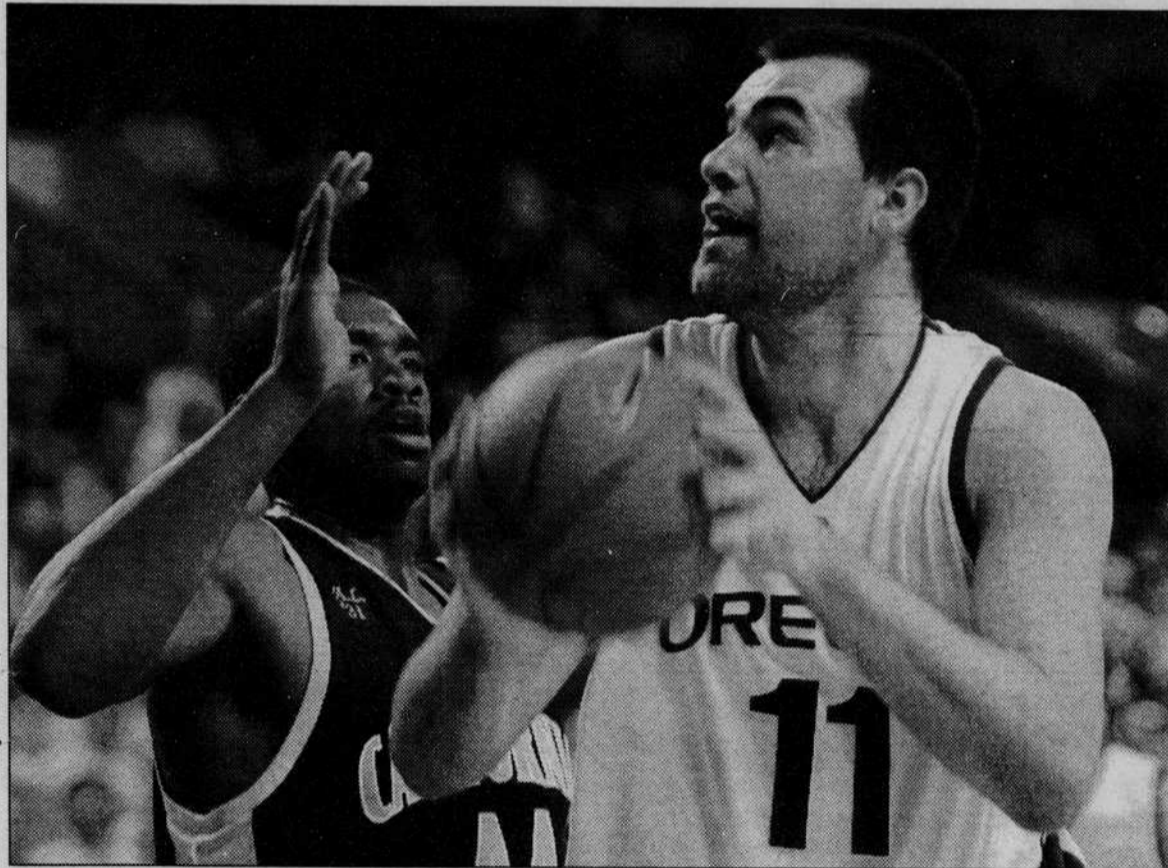
After today's match the Ducks will head south to face No. 19 Arizona State, against whom the Ducks are 3-17 all-time. The Sun Devils have earned successive wins over Stanford, Oregon State and Cal State-Fullerton.

Arizona State has eight nationally ranked wrestlers. No. 11 Christian Staylor (125-pound class), is followed by No. 9 Mike Simpson (133 pounds), No. 13 Patrick Williams (149 pounds), No. 17 Brian Stith (157 pounds), No. 20 Ron Renzi (174 pounds), No. 6 Nick Frost (184 pounds) and No. 7 heavyweight Cain Velasquez.

Following this weekend, the road-weary Ducks will have a chance to relax from competition for a while. Oregon has had a match every weekend since the beginning of the term and even had a busy winter break.

Oregon will return home Feb. 15 to challenge Oregon State in its last home match of the season.

Scott Archer is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.



Adam Amato Senior Photographer

Ian Crosswhite was a big reason California's Amit Tamir scored just two points and shot 0 of 8 from the field.

MEN

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him touch the ball. If he got me in the post, I knew there was someone coming to double team him just about every time so I knew I had help."

Anderson had one of his best games of the year in his 30 minutes, the most he's played all year. He scored nine points and grabbed four rebounds.

Anderson said he was amazed Tamir didn't get a field goal. He wouldn't have bet on that before the start of the game.

"I was pretty sure he was going to hit at least one right in my face," he said.

It was a battle of the big men all night long. Oregon (10-5 overall, 5-3 Pac-10) knew about the hype that was surrounding Tamir and freshman forward Leon Powe entering this game.

The plan was to shut those two down. The plan worked.

"This was the best job we have ever done in defending Tamir," Oregon

head coach Ernie Kent said.

Powe finished with 12 points and seven rebounds, far below his averages of 15.5 and 9.7 rebounds per game. Powe struggled early on with traveling calls, and he was given a technical at the end of the first half.

"They just stayed on us; they had some good defense," Powe said. "I just told my teammates you got to hit when I'm open, because I (would) be open and they (would) be hitting me when I got people on me."

Powe leads the Pacific-10 Conference in rebounding with 9.7 per game. Among active players on the California roster, Powe ranks fourth in career rebounds with 152 in his freshman season. The three players above him are all seniors.

Forward Ian Crosswhite had his way on both Powe and Tamir in the low post. Crosswhite finished with 16 points and six rebounds.

He was able to dominate in the second half when Cal's post players got in foul trouble.

"They got two prolific big guys in Powe and Tamir," he said. "Powe had three fouls and coach said take it to

them and Tamir to get them in foul trouble," Crosswhite said.

Crosswhite had his moments of flash on offense. After a timeout with 14 minutes left in the second half, he faked like he would pass and then had a 360-degree spin move to help boost an Oregon offense that struggled at certain points.

Crosswhite also made clutch free throws with 1:23 left to put Oregon back up by nine points.

Oregon won the rebounding battle, 33-26. Entering the game, Cal was averaging almost four more offensive rebounds per game than its opponents but was minus three against Oregon.

Anderson finished 3 for 5 from the field and had one three-pointer with 3:02 left in the first half. Crosswhite said he was upset that he missed eight shots in shooting 6 for 14 from the field.

"Thirty minutes was the most Anderson has played all season and he did a fantastic job," Kent said.

Contact the sports reporter at jessethomas@dailymerald.com.

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