

# Ducks face 'tough' teams in Arizona State tournament

The No. 20 Ducks battle three teams ranked in the top 25 in Oregon's second preseason tournament

By **Mindi Rice**  
Senior Sports Reporter

The Oregon softball team has a tough road to travel in Phoenix, Ariz., starting today.

In the Ducks' opening game of the Fiesta Bowl Tournament, No. 20 Oregon (2-2) faces No. 14 Cal State Fullerton, which has yet to play. The Titans ended their season at home last year against Oregon when the Ducks beat Fullerton, 2-1, in the NCAA Regionals last May and came up one game short of the Women's College World Series.

Immediately following the 10:15 a.m. game against the Titans, Oregon plays No. 15 Texas A&M (3-0).

"This is our toughest weekend before the (Pacific-10 Conference) season," Oregon head coach Kathy Arendsen said. "You know this is going to be a grudge match for Fullerton. Texas A&M has a very good ball club. They're underrated and they're in the top 15."

The Ducks have a later start on

Saturday as they face Ohio State at 4 p.m. and Cal State Northridge at 6 p.m. Oregon closes the tournament Sunday at noon against No. 11 Texas.

"After last weekend, we kind of know where we are at," infielder Erin Goodell said. "This weekend, we're playing some really tough teams which is good for us. We need that with our tough competition in our conference."

Seven of the eight Pac-10 teams are ranked in the USA Today Top 25 poll, with Oregon State receiving votes. All eight teams are ranked in the ESPN.com/USA Softball poll.

Oregon has everyone healthy for this weekend's tournament. Pitcher Amy Harris injured her wrist during the offseason, and Arendsen said she expected Harris to get a few innings in during the Phoenix tournament.

The return of Harris will complete the Ducks' pitching staff. Returning from last season are senior Anissa Meashintubby, junior Lindsey Kontra and Harris, a sophomore. Meashintubby is No. 7 all-time at Oregon in shutouts, while Harris is Oregon's all-time single-season strikeout leader. Adding depth to the rotation this season is junior transfer Ani Nyhus.

"I'm looking for five strong wins (for the team)," Nyhus said. "I think

that with the expectations that we have for ourselves, we need to go out there and do something like that. Every team out there is going to be hard to beat."

The Fiesta Bowl Tournament is Oregon's second tournament of the season. Last weekend, the Ducks traveled to Miami, Fla., for the Florida International Tournament.

Oregon opened its season with a 11-6 loss to No. 7 Georgia, then turned things around for a 9-1 victory against Florida International.

The Ducks started Feb. 7 with a second loss, 3-0, to Florida Atlantic. They rebounded again with an afternoon 8-0 win against Iowa State.

Nyhus and infielder Beth Boskovich were named to the all-tournament team.

"Last weekend we figured out what we need to work on," Goodell said. "If we can maintain our intensity level all the way through the tournament, I think that will help up be more successful."

After Oregon returns from Phoenix, the Ducks will have four tournaments remaining before the Pac-10 season starts at the end of March.

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## TURNOVERS

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Later, when corrected, Platt said, "That's a lot worse."

The Ducks committed just four of the 26 turnovers in the last eight minutes of the game, but they were costly. The first came by Platt just under the eight-minute mark, allowing Bobby Jones to score two of his 18 points to cap a 15-0 Husky scoring run.

Three minutes later, Platt committed another, leading to yet another Washington lead after the Ducks had fought back.

The final, almost the nail in the coffin, came with 2:07 left, midway through a 6-3 Washington run that put the Huskies ahead for good.

"Second half, we had way too many dumb plays down the stretch," Crosswhite said. "When you're up by 10, you've got to dig in and put teams away."

The final two points of the game came rather ominously. Washington's Nate Robinson inbounded the ball with six seconds left and dribbled the length of the court before dunking the ball.

The Ducks didn't like that and said so. Words were exchanged before the teams left the floor.

"That was maybe a little uncalled for by Nate," Washington forward Mike Jensen said. "But they rubbed it in our face in Eugene."

And from Oregon's perspective? "I just told Nate, 'You're a tremendous player with too much class for that,'" Kent said.

On a cold night by Jackson, the Ducks had four players score in double figures, led by a season-high 19 from Andre Joseph. He was 5 of 7 from beyond the three-point line,

but also committed three turnovers.

Platt had a career-high 15 points and Crosswhite equaled his output.

"It's tough to lose regardless, but when it's in our control, it's even harder," Platt said.

In control was exactly the position the Ducks were in with 14:08 left. Four Platt points, sandwiched two three-pointers by Joseph and Jackson, put Oregon up by nine.

The Ducks eventually extended that lead. But the Huskies chipped back.

Jones had three points in a nine-minute span, the third coming on the front end of two free throws made after an intentional foul by Oregon forward Jay Anderson.

"I thought (Washington) really turned the game around when we had the intentional foul," Kent said. "I have to look at tape to see what happened, but why we would chuck them, I have no idea. The momentum clearly was in their favor."

"To me, this is about senior leadership on the floor. They've been in these situations before. They understand it. We had some major breakdowns on the floor by some veteran players we need to clean up."

Robinson led the Huskies with 20 points while Jones and Brandon Roy had 18. Jensen led all players with 10 rebounds.

Oregon forward Jordan Kent suffered a sprained right ankle early in the second half during a scramble for the ball. He is questionable for Oregon's game Saturday in Pullman against Washington State.

That game begins at 2 p.m.

"If we don't defend, we'll be in more ball games like this down the stretch," Kent said.

Indeed.

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## POLO

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the Griffith Memorial Tournament, held Jan. 22 through Jan. 25 in Eugene at Courtsports.

Sixty-five players participated in the event, with several Ducks winning their divisions. Ted Haley placed first in the men's singles B division and he,

along with partner Lindsey Baptiste, took home first place in the mixed doubles B division. Dar Afshar and Dan Goetsch also finished in the top five in their brackets.

"We had a really good showing as far as sportsmanship and playing well," said Coordinator Alexis Karlson-Martini. "We had a good all-around tourney."

Karlson-Martini said that the racquetball

club is still looking for people to join and that it welcomes players at all levels. The team practices Tuesday and Thursday mornings at the Eugene Family YMCA. More information about the Club can be found in the Club Sports Office, located on the ground floor of the EMU.

Kirsten McEwen is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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