

SPORTS

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Best bet
NCAA basketball:
Kansas vs. Texas
6 p.m., ESPN

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Ducks' NCAA aspirations dealt blow

Oregon dropped its seventh Pac-10 game of the season; the Ducks must now win their final four games to earn a berth to the NCAA Tournament

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

One must give Oregon credit.

When the Ducks miss, they miss big.

Oregon went long on three-point attempts, but came up short in an 86-75 loss to Arizona State in front of a sold-out McArthur Court on Saturday night.

The Ducks attempted a school record 38 three-pointers and connected on 14.

"We didn't make enough three's," Oregon forward Luke Jackson said. "We thought they might zone us because they did it before up here. We just didn't handle it very well."

Oregon (12-9 overall, 7-7 Pacific-10 Conference) didn't handle it at all. That led to the Ducks' third loss at Mac Court this season — the most in a single season since 2000-01 — and second in a row in Eugene.

The discrepancies on the statistics sheet between the two teams were big. Arizona State corralled 40 rebounds to Oregon's 27. The Ducks committed 27 fouls — 18 in the second half — which led to 36 Arizona State free throw attempts.

The Sun Devils made 26. Ike Diogu had 13 attempts, hitting on nine. He made three more than the Ducks even attempted.

In other words, it was a cold night in Eugene.

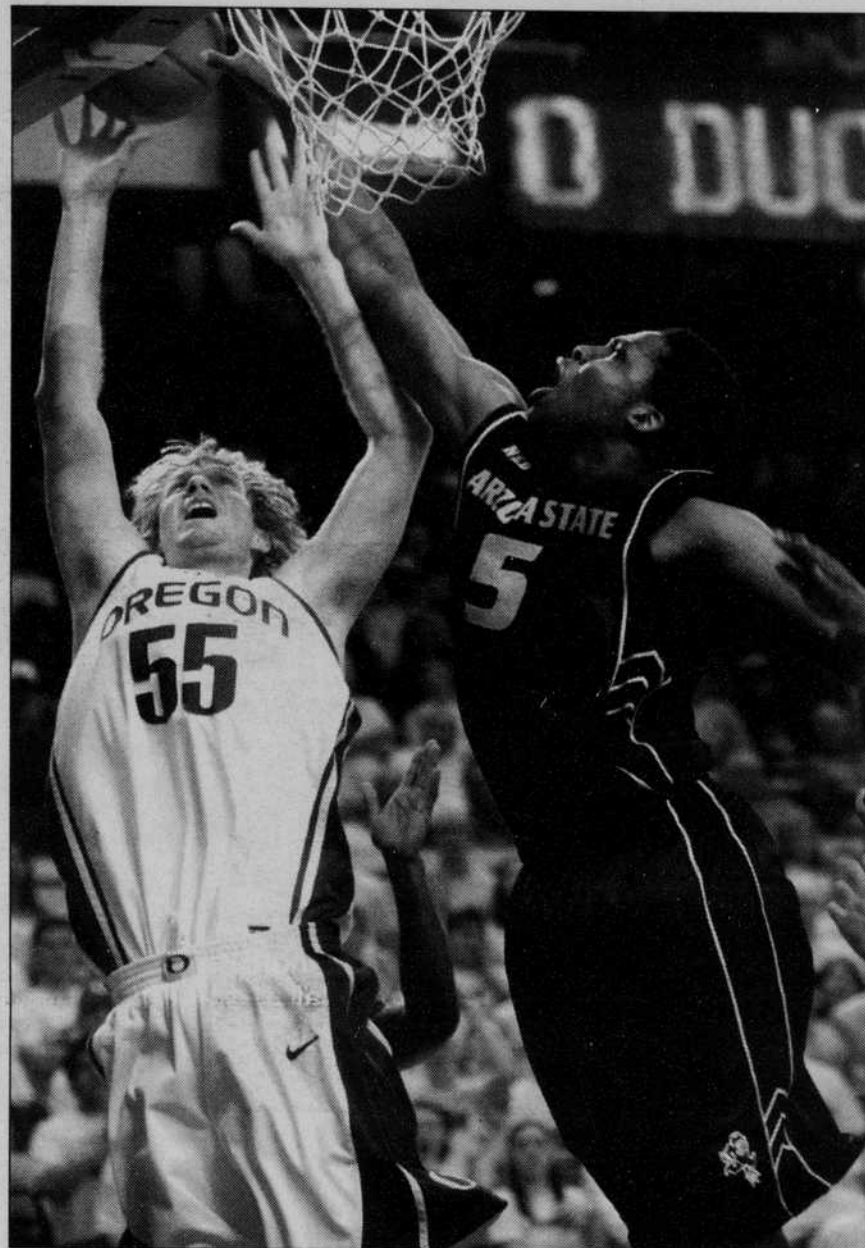
"With everything at stake on the line, I expected us to play sharper basketball," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said. "The blame falls on me for not having my team ready to play. As big as this game was, I thought we could have given a better effort. Ultimately, they wanted it more than we did and played key basketball at key times."

As much of a step forward the Ducks took against Arizona in a loss Thursday, they took an even farther step backward Saturday.

The presence of Aaron Brooks in the first half did little to quell offensive jitters. Despite jumping out with nine points — on three three-pointers — in the first two minutes, the Ducks succumbed to Arizona State down the stretch.

The Sun Devils (10-14, 4-11) came back and took a one-point lead five minutes in. Four minutes later, Arizona

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Erik Bishoff Photographer

Arizona State's Ike Diogu had 23 points and 12 rebounds in the Sun Devils' win.

Ducks close to 'being a great team'

If there was anyone to blame for Oregon's loss to the team with the worst record in the Pacific-10 Conference — Arizona State — on Saturday, Luke Jackson made it clear who it was.

Jackson said it four times, all in different contexts, but his point was clear.

"I take full responsibility for this loss," he said.

So if there was ever any question of who is the leader of this team, Jackson answered it. If there was ever any question as to whether Jackson truly cared, it was clear through his somber, slow tones after the game.

But it was something else that Jackson said that stuck. Something that put this season and what lies ahead in clear perspective.

"This team is so close to being a great team,"



Jesse Thomas
Go the distance

Jackson said.

Too true.

Right now, Oregon ranks 'good' at best on the success scale. The 'great' spot is reserved for a Stanford or an Arizona.

That's not to say that Oregon can't be great.

The Ducks have shown a hint of greatness at times this season.

But the difference between the good teams and the great teams is like the separation between the National Invitation Tournament and the NCAA Tournament.

Oregon has lost three of its last four games and now must go on the road to play two tough schools in the Bay Area. One of them is the best in the country.

With every Oregon loss, the window that casts light on a respectful postseason closes a little bit more. That window is nearly shut.

Oregon will not make the NCAA Tournament this year.

Hear me out.

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Women's tennis takes a split in Northwest

The Oregon women lost their first dual match of the season against No. 5 Washington in Seattle Saturday

By Alex Tam
Freelance Reporter

The nine-match winning streak came to a halt for the Oregon women.

After defeating Washington State in a close 4-3 victory Friday, the Ducks (9-1 overall, 2-0 Pacific-10 Conference) on Saturday suffered their first loss of the season, 5-2, to No. 5 Washington.

All year long, the women have been making it

a habit to take the first point of a dual match by winning at least two of the three doubles contests. From then on, they have carried that momentum into the remaining six singles matches to finish off their opponent.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

That trend was broken by the Huskies.

Oregon head coach Nils Schyllander talked during the week leading up to the match-up about how the matchup was a chance to showcase his squad against a nationally ranked team. The Ducks took their shot and started the match off well by taking all three doubles contests.

However, the women were not able to overcome the Huskies' strong singles, featuring three of the country's top-90 players.

Doubles were led by Oregon's 16th-ranked duo of junior Daria Panova and senior Courtney Nagle, who upended Washington's 29th-ranked team of Claire Carter and Dea Sumantri, 8-4. The team of Panova and Nagle improved their doubles record to 6-2.

"I thought we played awesome doubles," Schyllander said. "In singles, Washington stepped up when they needed to. I felt it was a winnable match — it just didn't go our way. We let a good

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Oregon's slow start gives win to 'Cats

The Ducks were outscored 43-20 in the first half in the loss

By Mindi Rice
Senior Sports Reporter

Few things went Oregon's way in Tucson, Ariz., on Saturday.

Guard Brandi Davis was 3 for 3 from behind the three-point line, but she didn't

play until the final 10 minutes of the game for what head coach Bev Smith called "disciplinary reasons."

Every player who came off the bench — and everyone available did — scored for the Ducks, but Oregon's first points didn't come until 5 minutes, 8 seconds into the game.

For every time that Oregon (12-14 overall, 4-12 Pacific-10 Conference) lost a lead and a victory in the final minutes this season, there were games like the Ducks' 84-58 loss to Arizona on Saturday, where they found themselves facing a 23-point half-time.

The Ducks don't know which is worse: a slow start or a bad finish.

"At the start, we dug ourselves a 10-foot ditch with a 6-foot pole," Smith said. "We made some runs, but it was too late."

In the end, it was the slow start that got Oregon. The Wildcats (20-7, 12-4) had an 11-0 lead before Oregon forward Kedzie Gunderson's long jumper forced the McKale Center crowd to take their seats — something fans only do upon the opposing team's first points. Oregon brought the game to within 10 at one point in the first half, but the closest the Ducks got in the final 20 minutes was a 58-37.

"I take my hat off to Arizona," Smith said. "They played very well, and that's the way they've been playing lately. Our slow start weighed heavily on us. The shots we did get became more important and put more pressure on us. (Andrea) Bills' fouls put us in a difficult match-up situation."

Bills, Oregon's starting center, picked up her second foul 1:50 into the game. She sat for much of the first half after getting the early fouls and ended the game with six points and three rebounds in 14 minutes.

Early foul trouble and a poor offensive start led Smith to quickly send out her reserves. The entire bench saw action and scored points, while two starters — Corrie Mizusawa and Yadili Okwumabua — didn't score.

Perhaps the game was a bright sign for Oregon's future. The three freshmen — Jessica Shettters, Ashley Allen and Cicely Oaks — who have not had extensive playing time this season saw plenty of action. Shettters scored all six of her points in the second half, and Allen had a career-high six points. Oaks also had a career-high with four points in eight minutes.

Mizusawa, the Ducks' starting point guard, added three assists to her season total while playing on a partially torn left lateral meniscus. Mizusawa has 161 assists this season, tying Lauri Landerholm for No. 3 on Oregon's all-time single-season list.

The Wildcats sent seniors Aimee Grzyb and Jessica Duger off with a 14-0 home season, the first time in Arizona history that the Wildcats had a perfect home season.

"To go undefeated at home is a great achievement," Arizona head coach Joan Bonvicini said. "It was a goal of ours from

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