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## Softball makes final tournament trip

After two exhibition games against Olympic teams, the Ducks face four rivals this weekend in Las Vegas

By Mindi Rice  
Senior Sports Reporter

The No. 16 Oregon softball team hopes to rediscover its winning ways this weekend at the UNLV Tournament in Las Vegas.

### DUCK SOFTBALL

The Ducks are on a three-game slide — including exhibition games against Team USA and Team Canada — after they put together a school-record, 14-game winning streak.

Oregon (17-5) dropped its home opener against Team Canada, 7-2, on Wednesday. The Ducks started slow and only managed two hits against the Canadian Olympic team, one of them a two-run home run by outfielder Dani Baird.

"Champions find ways to bring it around, and we did," head coach Kathy Arendsen said. "We finished great. We could have packed in our bags in the

fifth inning when it was 7-0 and saying 'Eh, it's about over, and we didn't. I think ultimately we ended on a real positive.'"

The Ducks surged from Baird's home run, working their at bats for more pitches. Pinch hitter Heather Munson drew a walk in the bottom of the seventh inning. Pinch runner Anissa Meashintubby stole a base in the next at bat to give Oregon a runner in scoring position with two outs. The batter hit a ground-out to Canada's third baseman for the final out.

Now Oregon heads to Las Vegas for four games. The Ducks face Southern Utah and Jacksonville on Friday, then play UNLV and Long Island on Saturday. The only team Oregon has played this season is Jacksonville. The Ducks came from behind to get a 9-8 win against the Dolphins in the bottom of the seventh in the Speedline Invitational. It was the final win of their 14-game streak.

"We need to get good momentum and good feelings going," Arendsen said. "Definitely we're looking to win four ballgames, to get all of our pitchers rolling, to play good defense and to get to hitting the ball the way we can. (Wednesday), we didn't offensively do a whole lot. We didn't make good adjustments. But we will."

Learning to make adjustments is one of the things Oregon will understand throughout this season. The Ducks consistently start three freshman, and all six newcomers get regular playing time.

"We're a pretty young team, but I think we're playing pretty old," infielder Beth Boskovich said early this season.

The Ducks' 17-5 start is the program's best start since a 22-4 mark in



Adam Amato Senior Photographer

Oregon's Dani Baird hit a two-run home run against Team Canada Wednesday. It was one of two hits for Oregon and the Ducks' only runs in the 7-2 loss.

1989. Members of the team said the squad really gelled during the season's opening tournaments.

Oregon's biggest strength is likely in the pitching circle. The Ducks returned three pitchers from last season's squad — Meashintubby, Lindsey Kontra and Amy Harris — and add a junior college transfer in Ani Nyhus.

"Our pitching staff is really strong," catcher Jenn Poore said. "We've got four really different pitchers and they've all got different strengths."

Kontra, a junior, is the only left-handed pitcher on the staff. Harris, a sophomore, broke Oregon's single-season strikeout record in 2003, finishing the season with 180 strikeouts.

Meashintubby, the staff's lone senior, did not practice this week after sustaining a shoulder injury in the Speedline

Invitational.

"Anissa is a possibility for the weekend," Arendsen said. "She's definitely showing improvement, so this is a short term injury versus a long one."

Nyhus rejoins the team for the Las Vegas trip after suiting up against them for Team Canada. The White Rock, BC., native is trying to earn one of the seven remaining spots on the Canadian Olympic squad.

After the UNLV Tournament, the Ducks have a break for finals week to study and regroup. They resume play on Sunday, March 21, when they host Missouri in a 1 p.m. doubleheader. During spring break, Oregon will play seven games at Howe Field in as many days.

Contact the senior sports reporter at mindirice@dailyemerald.com.

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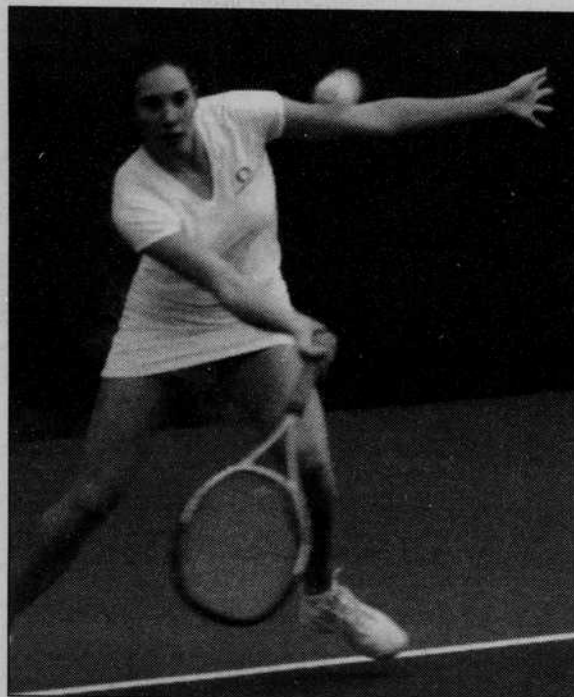
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## Tennis seeks home victories over ranked Huskies, Cougars



Erik Bishoff Photographer

Oregon's Dominika Dieskova looks to avenge Oregon's 5-2 loss to No. 8 Washington last month in Seattle.

The Oregon women have struggled this season, but hope to redeem this weekend

By Alex Tam  
Freelance Reporter

Good teams are measured by their success against great teams.

The Oregon women (9-5 overall, 2-4 Pacific-10 Conference) have so far struggled against those nationally ranked teams. They have lost five straight to top-15 schools but have yet another opportunity this weekend. The Ducks face eighth-ranked Washington at 1:30 p.m. today and No. 58 Washington State on Saturday in the Student Tennis Center.

### DUCK TENNIS

Oregon head coach Nils Schyllander said his team still feels confident even after the 6-1 loss to UCLA on Sunday.

"I thought we played pretty well (against UCLA) and there's a lot of positives to take out of it," Schyllander said. "We just got to keep playing. We're not playing that bad."

With all five losses coming on the road, the Ducks return home for the first time in a month for their last home stand of the season. One of those losses includes a 5-2 defeat to the Huskies in Seattle last month. The women, however, are a perfect 8-0 at home in dual matches this year.

Schyllander said his team is excited to be back at home and

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