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Ducks take on Pac-10 foes

Softball travels to California for the first of three weekends on the road to face the Golden Bears and Cardinal

By Mindi Rice
Senior Sports Reporter

The time has finally come for the No. 15 Ducks to begin the heart of their Pacific-10 Conference season.

Oregon (27-8 overall, 1-0 Pac-10) heads to sunny California to play the No. 3 Golden Bears on Friday and the No. 11 Cardinal on Saturday and Sunday.

It is the first of three consecutive weekends when the Ducks play Pac-10 games on the road. The following weekend Oregon travels to Corvallis for two games, then the Ducks play Washington and UCLA on April 16 through 18.

"We're certainly more used to being on the road than we are to being at home," head coach Kathy Arendsen said. "I don't think the road is an issue."

The Ducks are certainly no strangers to playing on the road. Of the 35 games Oregon has played this season, only seven have been at the Ducks' Howe Field.

One game of that seven was Oregon's conference opener. The Ducks opened Pac-10 play on March 26, hosting Oregon State in the first of three regular season meetings between the teams.

In the midst of a week of home

games for Oregon, the Civil War was the most emotional for players, coaches and fans.

The Beavers came to town and brought the rain. The weather alternated between heavy showers and a light mist for most of the seven innings, not helping along the speed of the game.

DUCK SOFTBALL

The Ducks took an early lead against the Beavers, scoring two runs in the bottom of the first inning. Oregon State answered back with six of its own in the top of the second. Oregon added one run in the second, but when the Beavers scored two more runs in the third, the Ducks got discouraged.

Oregon found a groove with three consecutive singles in the bottom of the seventh, eventually putting together a ten-batter, six-run inning to earn the 9-8 comeback win.

"I think we needed (this win)," pitcher Ani Nyhus said after the Oregon State victory. "I think that there's a lot of people who are doubting who we are and think that last year was a fluke. I wasn't here last year, so I have a whole lot to prove."

Most recently, the Ducks are coming off a doubleheader sweep of Portland State on Wednesday.

Oregon won the first game, 5-2, behind the bat of junior third baseman Ashley Richards and the pitching of senior Anissa Meashintubby and Nyhus.

Richards went 3 for 4 with three RBIs in the game. Meashintubby pitched five solid innings, allowing just two runs and earning the victory. Nyhus relieved Meashintubby for the final two innings, striking out two of the six batters she faced.

In the second game, catcher Jenn Poore scored the Ducks' lone run with a home run in the sixth inning. It was enough to carry Oregon as Nyhus threw a complete-game one-hitter, allowing the only hit to the first batter she faced and striking out 12.

Nyhus has thrown a no-hitter and a one-hitter in her past two starts, against Utah State and Portland State, respectively.

"We just need two good, quality wins in to make sure that we're strong throughout," Poore said before the Portland State games. "It will really help us out when we go down (to California). Those are two good teams we're going to play this weekend."

All eight of the Pac-10 softball squads are ranked in the top 25 nationally in the NFCA/USA Today poll. Arizona State is the lowest ranked at No. 24, while No. 1 Arizona, No. 2 UCLA and No. 3 California top the list.

"I think Pac-10 is very easy to get excited for," Arendsen said.

First pitch is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 1 p.m. on Sunday.

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

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Tennis hosts top-ranked teams

The Oregon women's tennis squad travels to California while the men host two Pac-10 teams

By Clayton Jones
Freelance Reporter

The Oregon men's tennis team looks to rebound and enjoy the comforts of home for the first time in almost a month. The men take on Arizona schools, while the women's team travels to California to battle San Diego, San Diego State and Tulsa this weekend.

The men's team, coming off losses to No. 9 Stanford and No. 34 California last week, will face No. 21 Arizona today and No. 37 Arizona State on Sunday. Head coach Chris Russell expects his 47th-ranked Ducks to return to form.

DUCK TENNIS

"We're hopeful we can play the type of tennis we did against Washington," said Russell. "These are both winnable matches, but neither team gives away much so we have to be prepared and come out energized and

create breaks for ourselves."

The doubles matches, according to Russell, are key for the rest of the day's matches.

"Our doubles energy needs to be high if we expect to win," said Russell. "It sets the tone for our singles play."

Arizona (11-6 overall, 2-5 Pacific-10 Conference) comes into the match having won its past three by a combined score of 19-2. The Wildcats will be led by 64th-ranked sophomore Roger Matalonga, who has a 16-5 singles record and a 15-3 doubles record with his partner, junior Colin O'Grady.

Sunday's opponent, Arizona State (7-8, 1-7), is coming off a loss to rival Arizona but has won three of its last four matches. Though it has a 1-7 conference record, its lone win came against fifth-ranked UCLA.

The women's team travels to San Diego on the tails of a three-match winning streak with hopes to improve its record-breaking year.

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