

ATTENTION

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Saturday, she did essentially the same thing, allowing the Cardinal's only hit to the second batter of the game. The batter was caught stealing, allowing Nyhus to face just 21 batters for the second time in four days.

"I'm so proud of her," catcher Jenn Poore said. "She's worked really hard. In the fall she had some injuries, and she's just been focused on her mechanics. It's important because we have a couple pitchers who

aren't feeling as well, so (Nyhus) has stepped up and carried us through these games."

Before Sunday, Nyhus had not lost a game since March 21 when the Ducks dropped the first game of a doubleheader against Missouri, 8-0. She made nine appearances in that span.

"Coming off the loss that she had (to Missouri) — to put those home runs behind her, and the upset and disappointment that she must have been feeling at that time, to come back and bounce back so strong, throw so many scoreless innings in a

row and lead us to three wins is just incredible," assistant coach Mike White said.

Nyhus allowed six hits in her three shutouts, one each to Portland State and No. 11 Stanford and four hits to No. 3 California. She struck out 33 batters in the week, walked two batters and had a 0.28 ERA. She leads No. 15 Oregon (29-9 overall, 3-1 Pac-10) with a 1.56 ERA this season.

The junior transfer from Central Arizona College will find out at the end of April — when the Canadian team returns from three weeks in

Australia and New Zealand — if she is on the final roster for the Olympic squad.

Offensively minded

Despite losing the heart of their lineup — including third-team All-American Andrea Vidlund — to graduation after last season, the Ducks have stepped up their offensive power.

Poore, Oregon's leader in batting average (.359) and on-base percentage (.457), regularly leads off for the Ducks. All four Oregon players who have started all 38 games have a

batting average above .300. As a team, the Ducks are hitting a comfortable .293 — an improvement from last season's .258 average.

"It's not just one or two people hitting well," Poore said. "If our three, four and five hitters aren't hitting well, then the bottom of the lineup is hitting well. It's more spread out evenly this year. We do pretty much the same things (as last year), but I think people are more confident this year."

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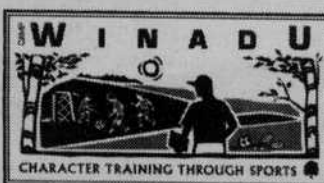
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