



Oregon needs senior libero Katie O'Neil, seen here against Oregon State, to stay healthy and help develop a young group of defensive players. O'Neil has missed action this season after suffering a concussion.

ERIK R. BISHOFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Volleyball team remains positive despite injury

After losing the first Pac-10 game of the season, the Ducks look for back-to-back wins in Washington

BY STEPHEN MILLER
SPORTS REPORTER

Oregon coach Carl Ferreira had one chance to get his players comfortable with the Pacific-10 Conference at home before the team had to start packing.

The suitcases have been unpacked, and the Ducks aim to drop the 0-1 record they have been lugging around when they face the Huskies and the Cougars back-to-back in Washington.

Ferreira was pleased with his team's efforts and reaction to Lauren Westendorf's injury and the loss to rival Oregon State last week.

"It is really important that we respond in a positive way after the injury of Lauren," Ferreira said. "I felt we did an excellent job of that against the Beavers."

The Ducks immediately showed bench depth when they sent in sophomore outside hitter Erin Little to fill the large shoes left by Westendorf. Little produced 13 kills in three games.

Sarah Mason, also a sophomore outside hitter, generated a match-high 19 kills despite the team's setback.

"No one is going to replace Lauren's output," Ferreira said. "But our players embrace the challenge and are extremely motivated to play our rivals to the north."

Four Oregon players finished with

double-digits in kills last week, for the first time this season. Washington has accomplished the feat three times this year, but Washington State hasn't reached that point once.

Oregon (8-3 overall, 0-1 Pac-10) at Washington (10-0, 2-0)

No. 2 Washington hosts an unranked Oregon team at the Clarence S. "Hec" Edmundson Pavilion tonight at 7 p.m.

The Huskies lead the all-time series 44-19. They have won six straight matches and 16 of their last 17 against the Ducks. They rank first or second in the Pac-10 in six of the seven main statistical categories. Washington is coming off big wins against USC and UCLA last week.

"We're making progress," Washington coach Jim McLaughlin said. "It's exciting that we're getting a little bit of recognition nationally, but the important thing is that we've got to stay centered on what we're doing and continue this learning curve."

Oregon's service game against Washington will be one aspect that dictates its success. The Ducks have 107 aces on the season and average 2.74 per game, which is best in the Pac-10 and third in the nation. The Huskies are second in the conference

with 1.76 aces per game (58 total). Oregon's senior libero Katie O'Neil will have to be reliable at receiving balls on the defensive side of the net.

The Ducks shattered the Pac-10 record for service aces in a match after they landed 22 in a non-conference match against Seton Hall on Sept. 18. The previous record was 12, which Oregon has achieved twice.

Both teams average approximately the same amount of kills per game, though Washington holds a slight advantage at 16.58 to Oregon's 16.56.

Oregon at Washington State (3-11, 0-2)

The Cougars will be looking to pounce on their 31st victory against the Ducks to break the 30-30-1 all-time series record between these two squads. Oregon is more focused on breaking the 24-match winning streak that Washington State has against the Ducks.

Oregon's blockers will need to contain the Cougars' tandem of sophomore outside hitters Jennifer Todd and Kelly Rosin. Both players were starters in 2003. Todd has recorded 63 kills in her last five matches. Rosin, a native of Springfield, has 199 kills this season and is 10th in the league in kills per game (3.83).

Washington State welcomes the Beavers to Friel Court tonight and the Ducks on Saturday.

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Jones: MLB, give us a chance

Continued from page 11A

I could hit the blackjack table. Can I borrow yours?"

Okay, Las Vegas might not be a very good idea.

But back to what's important — my sorrow about no baseball in Portland.

Now I have to endure a long, butt-numbing drive, sit in frustrating Seattle traffic and pay a ridiculous \$20 if I want to park anywhere within a country mile of the ball-

park to see major league baseball.

Despite their decision, I'm still going to rock my "Bring big league baseball to Portland" sticker on my car.

I have faith. Faith that Portland will pursue baseball more actively.

Faith that the Northwest has room for two professional baseball teams.

Faith in a baseball god that will restore my damaged baseball soul.

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