

■ Duck volleyball

No. 12 Bruins dismantle fading Ducks

Kelly Russell was Oregon's only attacker to record more kills than attack errors in Thursday's match

BY STEPHEN MILLER
SPORTS REPORTER

Oregon remains two key attackers short and without a win in its last five matches.

The Ducks (9-9 overall, 1-7 Pacific-10 Conference) found that scoring 20 points in a game was an impossible task as they lost in three games to UCLA (30-16, 30-18, 30-18) on Thursday.

Junior Kelly Russell had a career night in terms of digs as she increased her mark from 15 to 19. The outside hitter and team leader in kills landed a team-high 10 kills on 37 attempts. She was the only Oregon player to achieve a positive hitting percentage, at .108, in three games.

Twelfth-ranked UCLA (12-5, 5-3 Pac-10) held the Ducks to a combined hitting percentage of .065. The Bruins sustained a fairly consistent attack, and their .285 average can be accredited to their third league victory on the road.

"We've got players playing in positions that they don't have a tremendous amount of experience at," Oregon head coach Carl Ferreira said. "We just have to keep putting them in situations and supporting them."

UCLA head coach Andy Banachowski was satisfied with his team's performance.

"I was pleased with the way we played as a group out there," Banachowski said after the match. "It was a good team effort."

Ferreira felt that an inconsistent attack caused his team's downfall.

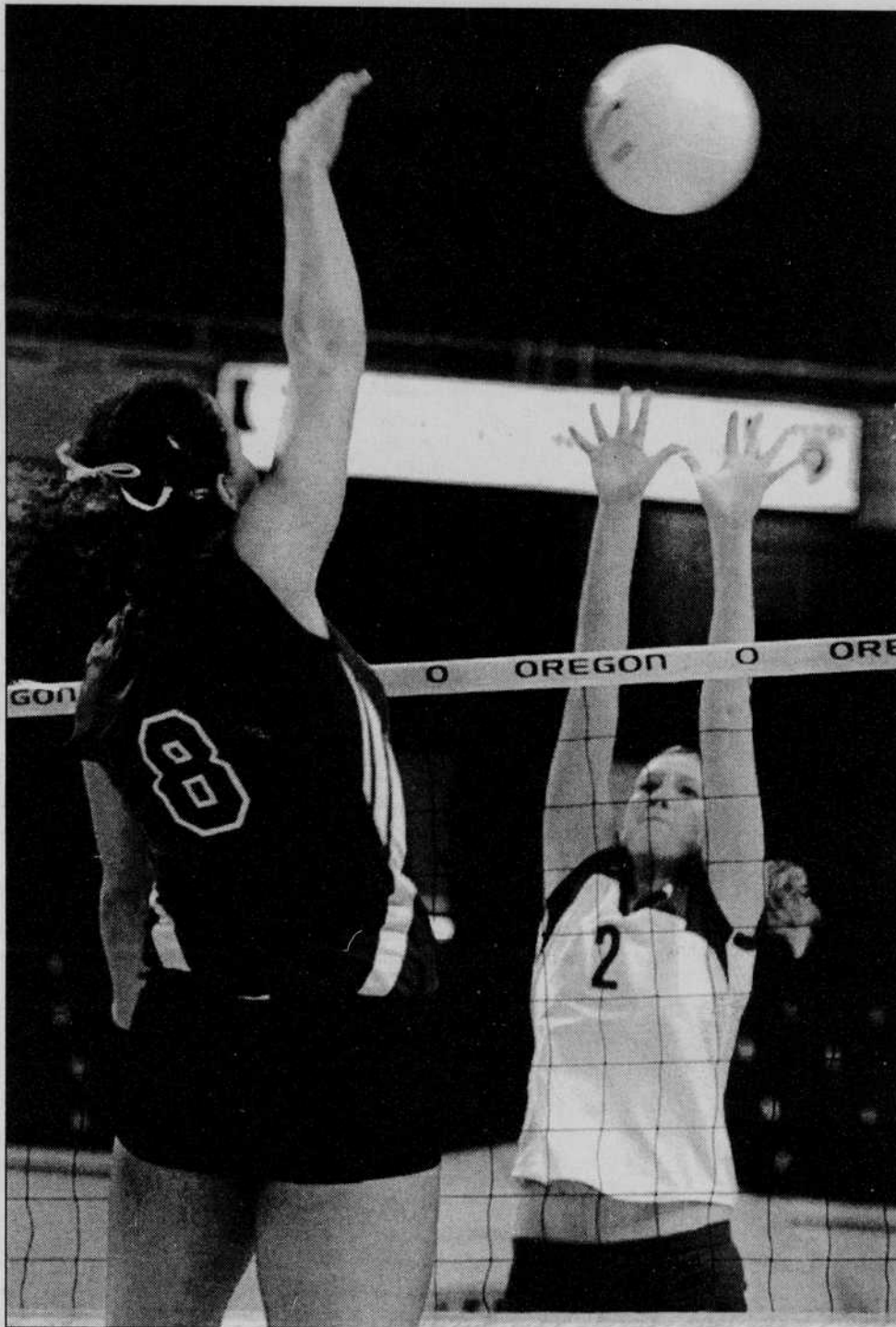
"The reason it was so hard to get any rhythm is because you have to get first ball sideouts and then a run of points, and the combination of not serving well really puts you at a disadvantage," Ferreira said. "I thought we played the whole match without a lot of momentum because we were struggling with those two things."

"I thought we passed the ball consistently, but it just came down to our attackers not having as good of a night as they probably would have liked to ... and you have to give a little bit of credit to UCLA."

The Ducks' 27 total kills were outweighed by their 28 attack errors.

The Bruins saw Brynn Murphy — their leading attacker — and sophomore Nina Meriwether record 13 kills each. Murphy posted seven kills in the third game alone. Meriwether, a middle blocker, hit at a game-high .522 clip and committed only one attack error in 23 attempts. She took advantage of Oregon's defense several times with a quick shovel-spike into the open court.

"She plays at such a high level out there that it gives her a lot more court to hit to," Banachowski said. "She's a great blocker, and she's going to become a great player for us."



LAUREN WIMER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

UCLA's Rachell Johnson (8) spikes the ball past Oregon's Kim McNally (2) in the Bruins' three-game sweep of the Ducks. The loss drops Oregon to 1-7 in the Pacific-10 Conference.

Krystal McFarland gave the Bruins 39 assists and provided Meriwether with accurate passes. She came down on a teammate's foot in the third game and had to come out.

Libero Chrissie Zartman posted a match-high 24 digs the Bruins.

Neither squad served an ace until the second game — the only two service aces both teams saw all night. UCLA committed 10 service errors to Oregon's nine.

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■ Duck soccer

First goal of Pac-10 season still a kick away

Outscored 11-0 in conference play this season, Oregon looks to reverse its luck this weekend

BY BRIAN SMITH
SPORTS REPORTER

Oregon will be at home for the second straight weekend as the Ducks take on surprise contender Washington State tonight and No. 7 Washington Sunday at Papé Field.

The Ducks are still in search of their first Pacific-10 Conference victory of the season. In their first three matches, the Ducks have been outscored 11-0.

While some of the problems can be attributed to the ongoing battle with injuries — Oregon's top scorer from last year, Nicole Garbin, is out with a major knee injury, and one of the Duck's top scorers this year, Caitlin Gamble, is questionable for the remainder of the season with a stress fracture — another problem has been hesitation from the offense to fire shots on goal.

"We're getting chances, creating chances," Oregon head coach Bill Steffen said. "(Our players) have the green light (to take a shot), and I think that sometimes we end up passing the ball too much."

In addition to injuries, a red card issued to forward Mele French will keep another one of the Ducks' top scorers out for tonight's match against Washington State. She received the red card last Friday against Oregon State.

French has two goals on the season and leads the team with five points.

Cristan Higa, along with Kami Kapaku and Andrea Valadez, will be looked upon to ignite the Oregon offense. Higa has started 50 games in her career and has five shots on goal and one assist this year.

Oregon (3-9-1 overall, 0-3 Pac-10) vs. WSU (7-5-2, 2-2)

It's safe to say that the Cougars have been a surprise in the Pac-10. They were predicted to finish ninth in the preseason

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Cardinals outdo Astros, face Red Sox in World Series

Clemens and the rest of the Houston squad gave away a 2-0 lead to St. Louis, losing 5-2 in Game 7 of the NL championship series

BY BEN WALKER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ST. LOUIS — The best team in baseball this year now gets a chance to prove it in the World Series.

Albert Pujols hit a tying double, Scott Rolen followed with a home run and the St. Louis Cardinals suddenly erupted against Roger Clemens, startling the Houston Astros with a 5-2 win Thursday night to take Game 7 of the NL championship series.

In a matchup where the home team won every time, the Cardinals broke through with two outs in the sixth inning. It came in a span of only two pitches, as the Cardinals took the lead for good, and Busch Stadium became a rolling sea of red.

Jeff Suppan overcame a lead-off home run by Craig Biggio to win an apparent mismatch against Clemens. The bullpen combined for three scoreless innings, shutting down Carlos Beltran and Co., with Jason Isringhausen working the ninth for his third save.

After posting 105 wins and running away with the NL Central, the Cardinals advanced to their first World Series under manager Tony La Russa and first overall since 1987.

Next up: the Boston Red Sox in Game 1 on Saturday night at Fenway Park. The two teams met in the 1967 and 1946 Series, where St. Louis won both, each time going the full seven games.

Pujols led the way, hitting .500 with four homers and nine RBIs. Overall, the teams

combined for 25 home runs, the most in any post season series.

Larry Walker singled home an insurance run in the eighth, and the club sporting the famed birds-on-the-bat logo captured its 16th pennant.

For the Astros, it was total disappointment.

They have never reached the World Series since their expansion season of 1962, the same year Clemens was born.

But The Rocket could not hold an early 2-0 lead in his record fourth start in a Game 7.

While Rolen and Pujols did the major damage in the sixth, Roger Cedeño surely deserved some credit for rattling Clemens.

Cedeño opened the sixth with a pinch-hit single, his 11th hit in 25 lifetime at-bats against Clemens, and immediately began dancing off first base. Clemens made three pickoff throws and stepped off the rubber three times trying to hold Cedeño close.

Cedeño moved up on a bunt, and again his

leads attracted Clemens' attention before the speedster took third on Walker's groundout. That brought up Pujols and brought Astros manager Phil Garner to the mound.

With the count at 1-2, catcher Brad Ausmus again went to visit Clemens. Pujols lined the next pitch into the left-field corner, cocking his arm as he eased into second base with a tying double.

The crowd was going crazy by then, and Rolen seized the opportunity. Clemens tried to throw a first-pitch fastball by Rolen, but instead the All-Star slugger rocketed it just inside the left-field foul pole.

While Rolen ran hard around the bases, and several Cardinals spilled out of the dugout to meet him, Clemens could only stare ahead.

An inning earlier, Ausmus preserved a 2-1 lead by picking off Tony Womack at first base with two runners on.

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