

NICHOLE BARKER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Athletic trainer Tom Embree and Kedzie Gunderson assist Oregon shooting guard Chelsea Wagner off the floor after she sustained a knee injury in the second half.

## Oregon women prevail through ailments, injury

BY STEPHEN MILLER  
SPORTS REPORTER

There was something in the air Thursday night, and it wasn't just the competitiveness that ferments in McArthur Court for every Oregon-Washington rivalry game.

Shooting guard Chelsea Wagner drained a career-high six three-pointers for Oregon. However, an injury to her left knee in the second half filled the Ducks' night with bittersweet emotions.

Twelve minutes into the second half, Wagner jammed her knee on defense and the primary spark of Oregon's outside game had to be helped off the court. The Ducks were unaffected and carried out an 86-77 win over the Huskies.

"I think our team handled it very well," Smith said. "We'd been through it before and we decided to get after it and go forward."

Wagner's mid-game departure wasn't the first symptom of adversity for Oregon. Corrie Mizusawa — who leads the Pacific-10 Conference in assists — was sidelined with a fever after starting 43 consecutive games. The Ducks were forced to tap into their bench for the second straight game.

"Corrie is a very important person for us," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "She has been a reason why we have been so deep, with her play and her leadership."

Redshirt freshman Kaela Chapdelaine filled in at the point for a career-high 35 minutes and a game-best five assists. The only negative statistic in her first career start were her five turnovers, four of which she committed in the first half.

"Kaela has played at the point, so I think she felt good with the minutes

she had," Smith said. "I think it speaks of our depth and our grit."

That grit showed when Oregon went through its lowest moment of the season. Wagner's injury brought back memories of Cathrine Kraayeveld's season-ending injury last year.

Wagner, a junior, went downstairs and then immediately returned to the bench to root for her teammates.

"That's all I really wanted to do," Wagner said. "Everyone supports me so I wanted to be up there to support them."

"As soon as I went down, they regrouped and pulled it together and finished off the game."

Smith believes that Wagner's encouragement from the sideline kept the team from falling apart.

"She came back and gave us a big lift by just being on the bench with us," Smith said. "It was a moment that really helped our team pull together."

Without Mizusawa and her ability to find open players in the paint, the Ducks seemed to emphasize the perimeter game more.

Earlier in the contest, Wagner was carrying the team from behind the arc. She scored 20 points in 21 minutes on 6 of 8 shooting with all of her shots coming from three-point range.

Smith gave Wagner "a lot of credit for being in the right place and being able to drill those (three-pointers)," despite Wagner's modesty about her shooting abilities.

At the same time, Wagner said she will try not to fret about the severity of her injury.

"It's something that I'm going to have to deal with."

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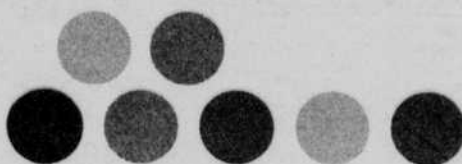
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