

■ Women's basketball

Offensive attack woes cost Ducks game in Arizona

BY BRIAN SMITH
SPORTS REPORTER

The Oregon women's basketball team didn't have an answer for Pacific-10 Conference Player of the Year candidate Dee-Dee Wheeler on Thursday.

The Arizona senior guard scored a game-high 23 points as Oregon lost its third Conference game of the season, 69-60.

In front of 2,065 fans at the McKale Center in Tucson, Ariz., the Ducks handcuffed themselves by committing turnovers, showing an unwillingness to shoot the ball in the second half and failing to get rebounds — especially on the defensive end.

"Their aggressiveness was the story," said Oregon head coach Bev Smith. "We can't hope to make a run when we can't get any defensive rebounds."

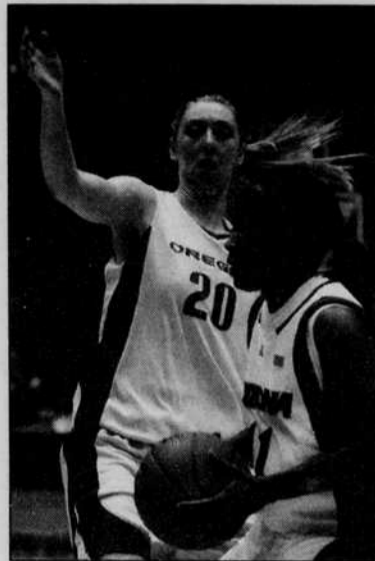
For the first 13 minutes, Oregon (12-5 overall, 5-3 Pac-10) held Arizona (13-5 overall, 5-3 Pac-10) to 30 percent shooting. Meanwhile, the Ducks shot 56 percent during the same stretch and built a five-point lead, 20-15, when senior Brandi Davis — wearing number 30 instead of her normal 21 after leaving her jersey in Eugene — hit a three-pointer from the corner with 10:35 left.

In addition, Oregon held Arizona's junior center Shawntinice Polk to seven points — all in the opening 20 minutes — and three rebounds in a foul-plagued first half.

"That was one of my best games I've played against her," Oregon senior Andrea Bills said. "(Especially) getting her into foul trouble, but their transition game and our turnovers hurt us."

For the third time this season, the Ducks committed 20 turnovers in a Pac-10 road game, leading to 21 Wildcat points.

Thirteen of those points came in the first half and fueled a 24-12 run in the last nine minutes by the Wildcats, en route to capturing a 39-32 lead going into halftime.



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Arizona senior guard Dee-Dee Wheeler scored a game-high 23 points in the win.

"We had a hard time matching up with them because of our size," Arizona head coach Joan Bonvicini said. "But they probably thought the same thing about us and our quickness. We just wanted to put pressure on them and anticipate the ball."

While Arizona did have problems matching up with Oregon's size, the Wildcats used their speed and aggressiveness to out rebound the Ducks 35-26, including an 18-8 advantage on the offensive glass.

"We didn't play to our best ability knowing how fast they were," Bills said. "They were quick going to the offensive boards, and our guards didn't get a body on them."

Arizona's Natalie Jones led all players with 11 rebounds to offset her 0 of 10 shooting night from the floor.

Early in the second half, the Ducks cut the lead to three after four quick points by Kaela Chapdelaine and Eleanor Haring. But even with Polk on the bench with her third foul, Oregon did not get closer to Arizona the rest of the game.

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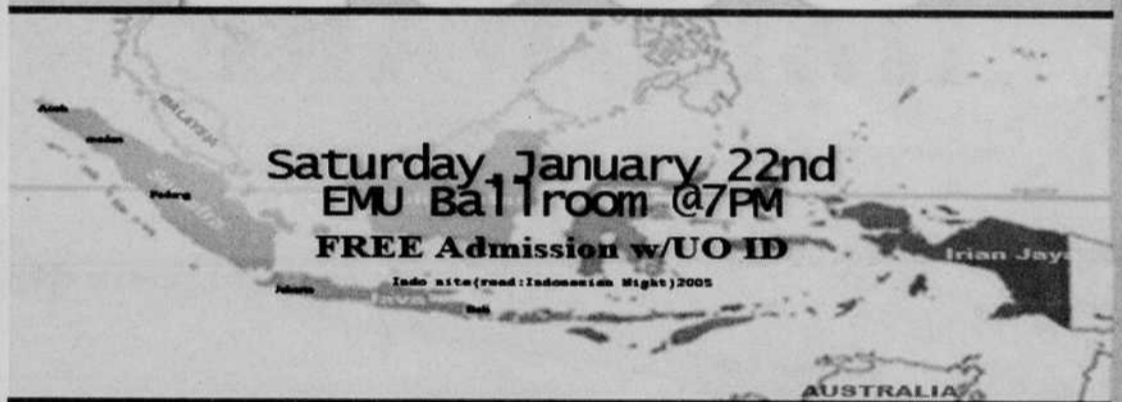
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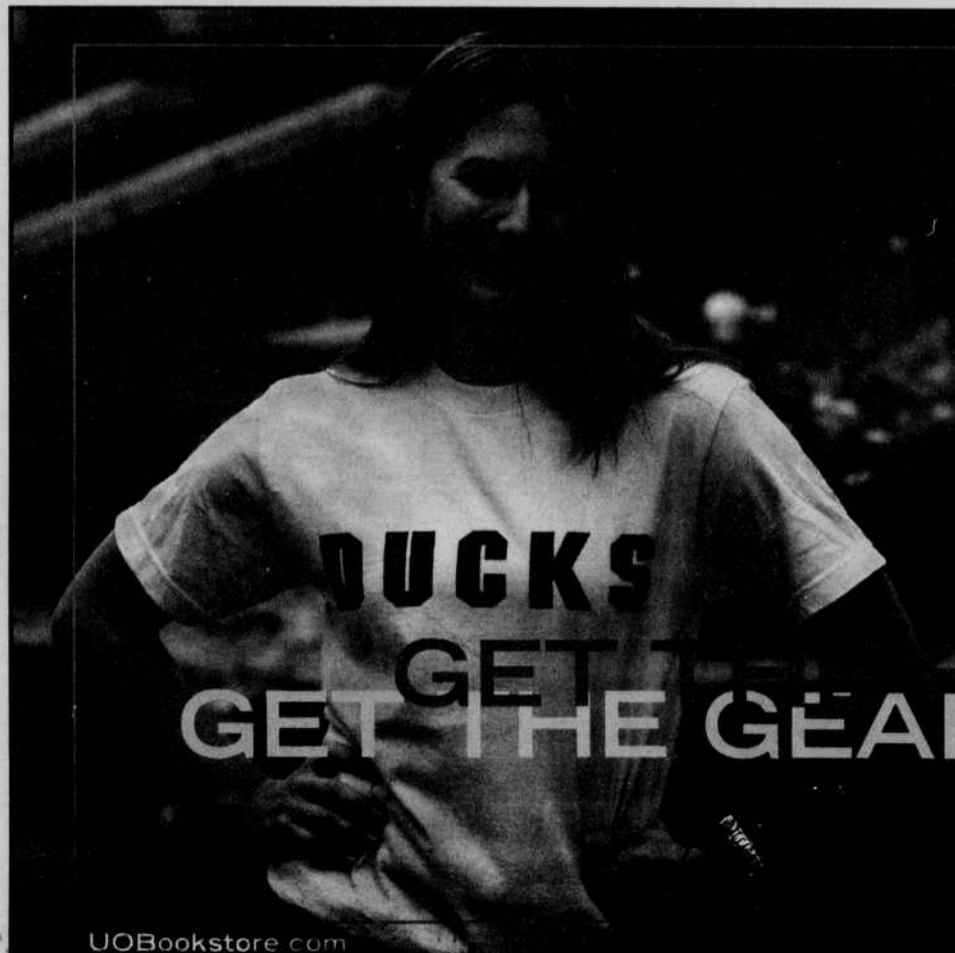
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