

■ In my opinion



BRIAN SMITH
LEFTY SPECIALIST

Slick hands let wins slip for women's basketball

I'm sure the Oregon women's basketball team hates Willie Nelson.

"On the road again, just can't wait to get on the road again."

Yeah, that one.

It certainly isn't playing in the team's headphones.

After all, the road hasn't exactly been kind to Oregon.

It's almost a cliché thing to say, but the key to the Ducks winning on the road is literally in their hands — more specifically, what they can keep in their hands.

The basketball.

The numbers speak for themselves.

Four losses, 85 turnovers.

One win, six turnovers.

Granted that win was against Oregon State, whose defense, according to Oregon State head coach Judy Spoelstra, wouldn't be able to stop a quintet of sports writers of any age, skill or fitness level.

The other four losses were against UCLA, USC, Arizona and Arizona State — the four best defenses in the conference. Against Arizona State, the Ducks committed 25 turnovers, one less than their season-high of 26 against Arkansas.

But if you look at the Pacific-10 Conference statistics, the Ducks rank second behind Stanford in total turnovers this season with 278. In conjunction, the Ducks are second in the Pac-10 in average turnovers per conference game.

It's a real feast or famine, drought or deluge situation and, unfortunately, most of the deluges happen away from Mac Court.

Aside from wearing receiving gloves or rubbing pine tar on the ball or putting photos of Mac Court in the player's duffel bags, the Ducks need to find that "something" that reduces 25 turnovers to 15 and keeps defenders from salivating every time the ball bounces.

"Turnovers against aggressive-minded teams have been a problem for us," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "I just think that we have to be aggressive ourselves with the ball."

But there's a caveat. Playing aggressive also means playing smart. Aggressive doesn't mean wild and careless. Aggressive isn't making the spectacular pass or the impossible falling-away-one-eye-closed-shot every single time down the floor.

Aggressive defenses give the Ducks problems.

My advice? Have patience, young grasshoppers.

But also play smart, aggressive basketball.

All of which Oregon can do at home against any given team on any given night.

Which is why Thursday's matchup against UCLA should be different for a few reasons.

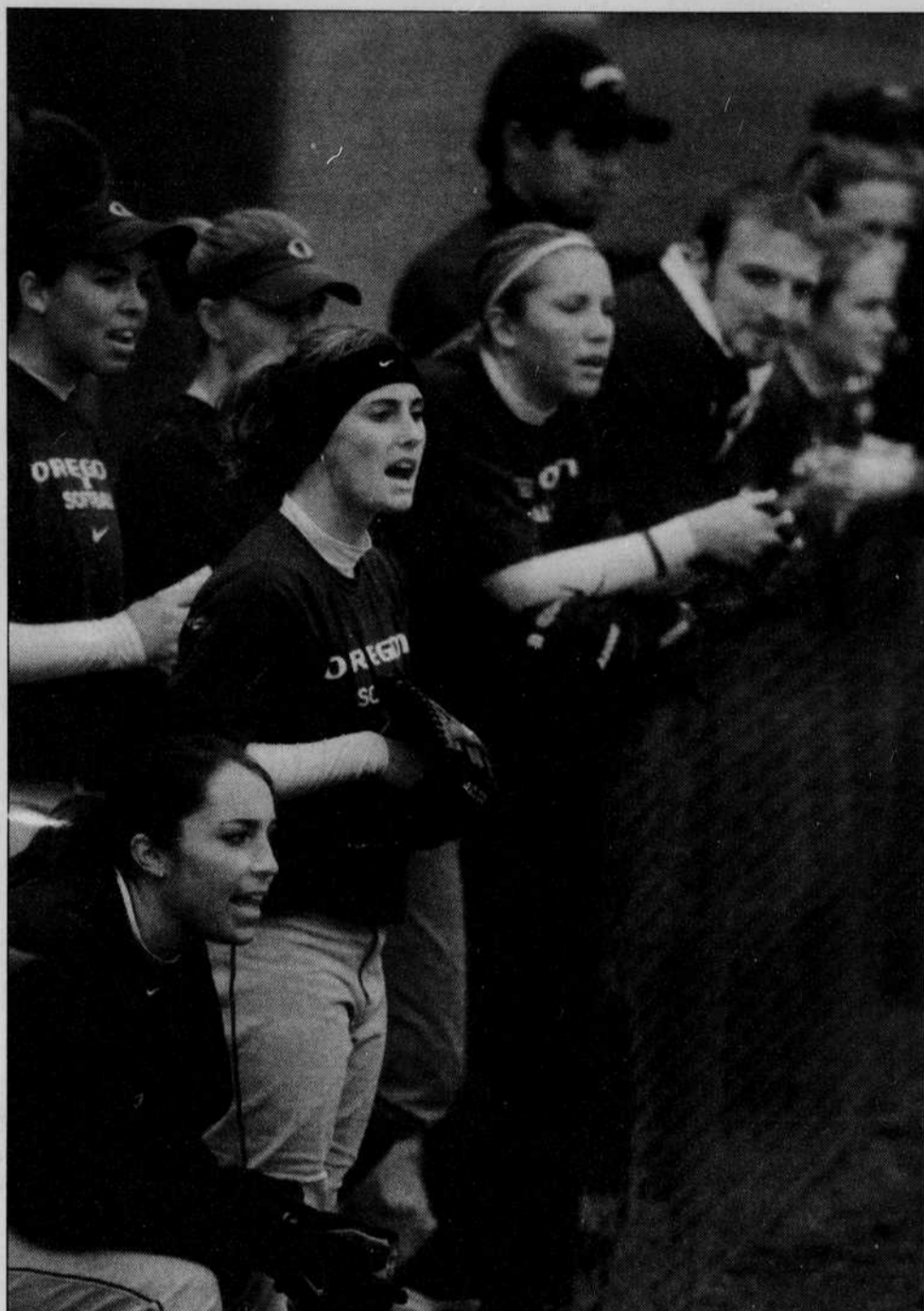
Mac Court, for one.

UCLA's sophomore guard Noelle Quinn's absence, for another.

And then there's Mac Court.

And well, yeah, Mac Court again.

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LAUREN WIMER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

The Oregon softball team, seen here Tuesday in its scrimmage against members of the local media, gears up for another run at the Women's College World Series with its season beginning Feb. 3 at the Hawaii Paradise Classic.

■ Duck softball

UO softball sets sights on World Series title

BY CLAYTON JONES
SPORTS EDITOR

After two years of being one game away from the Women's College World Series in Oklahoma City, Okla., the Ducks are ready to make another run this season with a veteran-laden line-up and a talented freshman class.

"The first season was a Cinderella season, everything good happened," Oregon head coach Kathy Arendsen said. "The second season was trying to prove we weren't a fluke the first season."

"Now we have the taste of being in a regional finals and being so close to the College World Series, so we have set our expectations higher, and we understand the public is as well."

Senior Ashley Richards said some of the seniors realize time is running out for them to make the WCWS.

"For a lot of us, it's our last chance to do it," Richards said. "We definitely have a lot of motivation to do it this year."

The Ducks will return most of their starters, but one of their losses is a big one.

Three-year starting catcher Jen Poore has graduated and become a volunteer assistant for Oregon.

Taking over at catcher will be Richards. The Richland, Wash., native started all 63 games last season for the Ducks, 13 of them at catcher.

Arendsen said the only difference between Richards and Poore is their personalities on the field.

"Physically, they are very similar players — aggressive, strong arms and can really catch the ball well," Arendsen said. "The biggest difference

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■ Outdoor recreation review

City escape at a wilderness landscape

BY ASHLEY GRIFFIN
OUTDOOR RECREATION REPORTER

Clothing is optional — but the use of phones and cars is not.

There aren't many students who will give up their means of communication or transportation for a day, but the staff at Breitenbush Hot Springs Retreat and Conference Center expects its patrons to do just that.

Breitenbush Hot Springs is an ideal winter retreat at the edge of the Willamette National Forest in Detroit, Ore. For Eugene residents, that translates to about a two-and-a-half-hour drive through Salem and onto Highway 22.

"(We're) an escape from the city with an easy drive to the mountains, steaming hot soaking pools, nourishing organic vegetarian cuisine, hiking in the old growth forests ... we see deer every day, bear tracks and cougar tracks," said Hillary Ekberg, a staff member at Breitenbush since 2001. "The forest is calm, clear and grounding."

Keizer resident Kathy Baldwin agrees that Breitenbush has many draws.

"It's funky. It was built a long time ago, and it's the woods," she said. Baldwin has been going to Breitenbush for many years and enjoys the relaxing effect of soaking in the center's rock-lined pools.

Breitenbush is famous for its pools. It has three rock-lined meadow pools that overlook the Breitenbush River and have a view of the nearby mountains. Another set of pools, called the Medicine Wheel Tubs, consists of five tubs

with different temperatures. These are located next to a mineral steam sauna and adjacent to a cold tub, offering the benefits of hot-cold therapy.

All of the tubs have 24-hour access.

In addition to the tubs, a retreat to Breitenbush offers alternative activities.

Both day and overnight guests can take daily well-being programs, such as yoga or meditation, go for a hike in the old-growth forest, take a walk in the labyrinth, get a 90-minute massage or explore the library and gift shop.

Day use of the facilities is available on a sliding scale of \$10 to \$20 per day, with an option to include a meal for \$8.

The meals are described by the staff as bountiful and organic. Guests enjoy the variety of



Breitenbush
Hot Springs
Detroit, Oregon

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