

■ Women's basketball

Ducks capture dominant 62-47 victory against WSU

Senior Brandi Davis led all scorers with 19 points, and Cathrine Kraayeveld grabbed 11 boards in win

BY BRIAN SMITH
SPORTS REPORTER

The Oregon women's basketball team weathered through a game in which senior Cathrine Kraayeveld played under the weather and came away with a crucial 62-47 victory over Washington State at Friel Court on Thursday night.

"We've got a couple of people under the weather, but at this point in the season, it's crunch time," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "You've got to weather through things."

Weather they did, and as a result, the Ducks (16-6 overall, 9-4 Pacific-10 Conference) moved into tie in the loss column with Southern California for second place in the Pac-10 after the Women of Troy fell to Arizona State 49-45 earlier in the night.

The Ducks led by as much as 15 in a game that saw Washington State — the lowest scoring team in the conference (57.8 points per game) — shoot 28 percent (16 of 58) for the game and 0 of 14 from the three-point line. It was the first time in at least two years that the Ducks have held an opponent to zero three-pointers in a game.

The Cougars kept the game close for much of the first half until a three-pointer by Oregon senior Brandi Davis pushed the Duck lead to 23-14. The Cougars were never able to get within four points after

that. The closest they came was in the second half when junior Arianna Scales completed a three-point play to close the gap to 46-39.

Washington State (5-18, 1-12) lost its ninth straight game against the Ducks and fell to 1-9 on the year at home in conference play. The Cougars' last victory came in 2001 with a 77-76 win in Eugene. Oregon holds a 48-9 series advantage all-time against Washington State.

While the Cougars continued their struggles at home, Davis had no trouble playing in the Palouse, again. Davis — inserted into the starting lineup last week against Oregon State — led all scorers, dropping 19 points on 8 of 13 shooting from the field, including 3 of 5 from beyond the arc.

Davis has been making three-pointers at a nearly 50 percent pace starting with her career-high 28 points against UCLA, which included six three-pointers.

"I prepare no different (for Washington State)," Davis said. "It makes no difference for me."

In her three games in Pullman, Davis has scored 63 points.

Her scoring picked up the slack left for the Ducks' offensively as Kraayeveld, the team's leading scorer, battled a lingering cold that forced her to miss practice for most of the week.

However, Kraayeveld still

embodied a presence, even in a limited capacity. The native of Kirkland, Wash., added nine points on 3 of 5 shooting from behind the three-point line to go along with her 11 rebounds. Kraayeveld was a single point away from another double-double in the season.

Despite drawing two defenders for most of the game, Oregon senior Andrea Bills added 10 points, eight rebounds and a career-high six blocks. Her previous single-game mark was four against Michigan State in 2002.

The Ducks did not allow any Cougar player to score in double-digits for the first time in at least two years. Junior Keisha Moore led the Cougars with nine points.

"It really wasn't a pretty game, but we don't look at those things," Smith said. "We just need to get back-to-back games together. We need to get some food, get hydrated and get some cold medicine so that we can get those players some energy."

Up next for the Ducks is a Saturday afternoon matchup with Washington. Last year in Seattle, the Huskies drilled the Ducks 95-50. Washington led by as many as 30 in the first half with Washington sophomore Breanne Watson leading the Huskies with 22 points. Tipoff is set for 1 p.m.

"I'm really excited to go," Davis said. "We are just trying to go in there for a win. We need these road wins."

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■ In my opinion

Though losing streak endures, Ducks show promise on the court

There are two ways to examine a loss such as Oregon's 95-88 overtime loss to No. 11 Washington on Thursday night.

One way is obvious. Criticize them for not hitting free throws or making clutch baskets at crucial moments in the game. But for once, I'll take the other road with this loss.

At the risk of sounding like a homer and every coach in America, this loss could be beneficial to the heartbroken Ducks.

These guys didn't only play with, but were in control of the 11th-ranked team in the country — the same Huskies team that blasted Oregon 77-56 in Seattle earlier this season.

And while Oregon's Jordan Kent had his head lowered as he walked to the bench with his fifth foul during overtime, still visibly upset at a couple of free throws he missed near the end of regulation, he has nothing to be ashamed of.

Pulling down 16 boards and scoring 19 points is nothing to shake your head at. At 6-foot-5, grabbing that many boards is a pretty remarkable feat. He was the energy guy for this team Thursday night and has entrenched himself as a big-time player on this Oregon squad.

Another positive for the Ducks was the play of Maarty Leunen. The freshman looked as though he may have broken through the "freshman wall"



CLAYTON JONES
SEVENTH INNING STRETCH

that everyone talks about. He scored 12 points and had eight rebounds while playing an important role in the Ducks' first-half lead.

Fellow freshman Chamberlain

Oguchi also shined in a mere 14 minutes of play. He scored 13 points and threw down two crowd-pumping dunks and two key three-pointers to keep the game close.

Even Bryce Taylor showed signs of getting back into the swing of things with 10 points in a foul-plagued effort.

To make things even tougher, the Ducks lost a teammate this week. Though Ian Crosswhite hasn't been as productive as he has in the past, a team can't help but feel the loss of one of its most experienced players.

But it didn't show Thursday night. While I've been the first to blast this team for its losses, I'll also be the first to say that was a great effort against Washington.

But on Saturday against Washington State, we will see which way this Oregon team takes the loss. If it can take the good things out of this defeat, maybe the Ducks will break their current six-game losing streak.

If not, it might be loss No. 7 for the young Ducks, and any chances of making the Pacific-10 tournament might be far, far away.

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