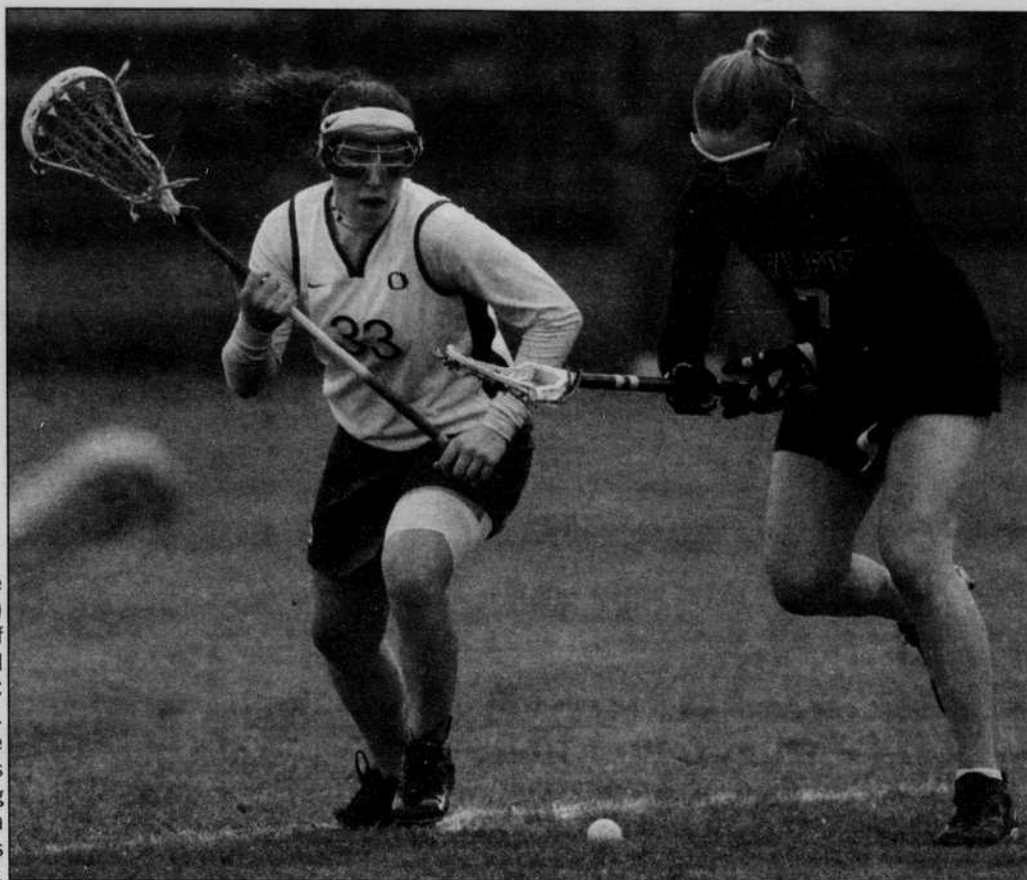


■ Women's lacrosse



Oregon's Kate Fleming (33) and the rest of the Ducks squad will host UC Davis at 1 p.m. Sunday at Papé Field. The Ducks will be looking for the first win in the program's short history.

ERIK R. BISHOFF | PHOTOGRAPHER

Ducks look to bounce back from 0-3 start versus Denver

BY BEAU EASTES
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

Heading into Sunday's home game, the Oregon women's lacrosse team faces UC Davis, a team in similar circumstances.

The Aggies have only four upperclassmen on their roster, and the Ducks have two. The UC Davis lacrosse team is playing in its second season in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation, Oregon is playing in its first. Finally, both squads are led by a former Virginia All-American, UC Davis by head coach Elaine Jones and Oregon by head coach Jen Larsen.

"We do have similar styles," Jones said about her fellow alumna's program. "We're both young teams transitioning."

The Ducks (0-3 overall, 0-2 MPSF) play the visiting Aggies (1-1, 1-1) following Oregon's first-ever road trip. The Ducks blew a halftime lead in a 17-12 loss to host Denver and were overwhelmed by No. 3 Northwestern, 21-2.

Larsen, who has loaded her schedule with lacrosse power

houses, said that playing the highly ranked Wildcats was beneficial, because it showed her athletes what an elite-level program looked like.

"We saw excellence from their program," Larsen said.

The Aggies, while not quite on the same level as Northwestern, present a formidable foe. Jones' squad, which went 12-5 and finished third in the MPSF last year, rebounded from an 11-4 season-opening home loss to Stanford to defeat Saint Mary's, 10-5, on the road Tuesday. Despite losing three All-Americans who accounted for 92 goals, UC Davis returns plenty of offensive fire power. Sophomore Katie McMahon led the MPSF and was seventh in the nation last year with a school-record 66 scores.

"Katie is ... a pivotal player on our offense," Jones said. "She'll get her goals this year because she's a one-on-one player."

On defense the Aggies return senior Kristen Braasch at goalkeeper. The Oakland, Calif., native broke the school saves record last year with 170 stops in the Aggies' cage.

For the Ducks, freshman Jana Bradley is expected to lead the offense. The attacker from Encinitas, Calif., leads Oregon with seven goals, including a brilliant five-goal performance against Denver.

"(Bradley) is really coming into her own," Larsen said. "She's bringing more attitude."

Oregon midfielders Jen May and Theresa Waldron each have three goals on the season and should contribute as well.

At goalkeeper, senior Louisa Dorsch and freshman Allison O'Brien may split time. Larsen, who said the goalie situation is assessed on a "week to week" basis, played O'Brien the entire second half of the Northwestern loss.

According to the Ducks' first-year coach, Oregon's success doesn't hinge so much on reacting to whom they're playing, but the skills and lacrosse instincts that she and her staff are instilling in her squad.

"We really need to focus on us," Larsen said. "It's what we present."

Oregon and UC Davis will face off at 1 p.m. Sunday at Papé Field.

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