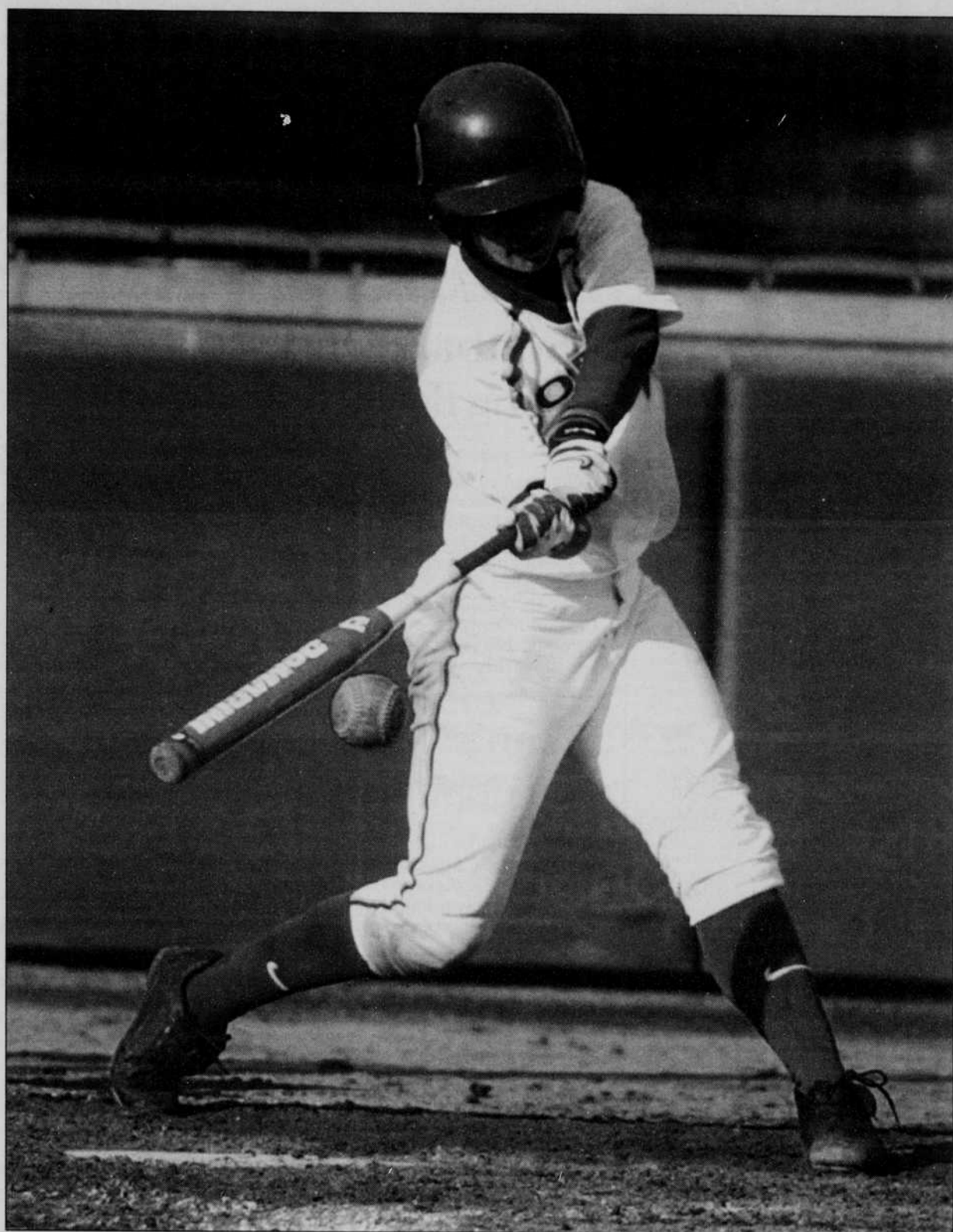


"Anytime I've taken the mound, it's always been the old Samson-and-Goliath story written about me."

RANDY JOHNSON | Yankees pitcher



ERIK R. BISHOFF | PHOTOGRAPHER

Oregon junior Dani Baird, seen here earlier this season, hit a game-winning single with bases loaded against Drake on Saturday at the UNLV Rebel Classic in Las Vegas.

■ Duck softball

Baird drives in winning run for No. 21 Oregon

The Ducks edged by Drake with a 4-3 victory to improve their season record to 10-8 overall

BY CLAYTON JONES
SPORTS EDITOR

Late-inning heroics from the 21st-ranked Oregon softball team allowed it to salvage another 2-2 weekend as the Ducks beat Drake 4-3 Saturday at the UNLV Rebel Classic.

Junior Dani Baird's bases-loaded single in the bottom of the seventh inning snapped Oregon's two-game losing skid and improved the team's record to 10-8 on the season.

Oregon started off the inning with a single to right by sophomore Suzie Barnes that was followed by Ashley Richards reaching first on an error by Drake third baseman Katie Wappler. Barnes moved to third on the play.

Beth Boskovich — who was 2 for 2 with a home run, a double and two RBIs — was then intentionally walked for the second time in the game to load the bases.

Baird stepped up next and drilled a single up the middle to score the winning run.

Freshman pitcher Alicia Cook picked up the victory for Oregon. She went the full seven innings, giving up seven hits, a lone earned run and four strikeouts for her fifth victory on the season.

Oregon fell behind in the top of the fourth when the Ducks committed two errors, leading to a two-run inning for Drake.

The Ducks struck back in the bottom half of the inning when Drake second baseman Shanna Cook committed an error on a ball hit by Richards. Boskovich followed with a home run to tie the game at 2-2.

Oregon added another run in the inning when hot-hitting freshman T.J. Eadus smacked an RBI single through the left side of the infield, scoring an already-on-base Baird and giving the Ducks a 3-2 lead. The Tucson, Ariz., native leads the team in hitting this season with a .464 average.

But Drake struck back when Lindsay Larry led off the top of the fifth inning with a single. She stole second base and scored on a Cook single down the left-field line to tie the score 3-3.

The score remained even until Baird's game-winning single, dropping Drake's record to 8-2.

Oregon's fortunes were much different on Friday as the Ducks were shut out by No. 25 Long Beach State, 4-0.

The Ducks struggled from the plate, as they were limited to four hits by Long Beach State's Kourtnee Gervasi. She struck out eight in seven innings of work to pick up her sixth win of the season.

Long Beach State scored an unearned run in the top of the third to take a 1-0 lead. The 49ers' Lauren Johnson laid down a bunt on a squeeze play and Gervasi, who had singled to begin the inning and advanced on an error and a stolen base, scampered home for the score.

The Ducks' trouble on defense continued as another unearned run from an error scored in the top of the seventh on a Marcel Torres two-RBI double.

"Defensively, I know we are a better team," Oregon head coach

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■ Duck tennis

Duck women breeze by Boise State with 5-2 win

BY ALEX TAM
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

Boise State head coach Mark Tichenor paced around the Student Tennis Center on Saturday, glancing up at the scores and shaking his head as his team dug itself into a deep hole in its dual match against the Oregon women's tennis team.

The Ducks (10-2, 1-1 Pacific-10 Conference) scored the first five points in the match en route to defeating Boise State (3-4) in a relatively stress-free 5-2 victory. It was Oregon's 12th-consecutive victory in regular season non-conference games, dating back to last season.

"I was pleased with the way we played," Oregon head coach Nils Schyllander said. "I think we took care of business. We got to four (points) pretty quick, and it wasn't very stressful."

The Ducks jumped out to a 1-0 lead after sweeping all three doubles matches. The 15th-ranked duo of Daria Panova and Dominika Dieskova improved to a 9-3 doubles record with their triumph over Boise State's Megan Biorkman and Alissa Ayling, 8-2.

Dieskova then helped the Ducks take a 2-0 advantage when she defeated Ayling in straight sets, 6-3, 6-1. The 20-year-old Dieskova won the last five games of the match and improved her singles record to 9-3.

Oregon took control with a sizable 3-0 lead when Panova stopped Biorkman's late rally attempt in another straight-set win, 6-1, 6-3.

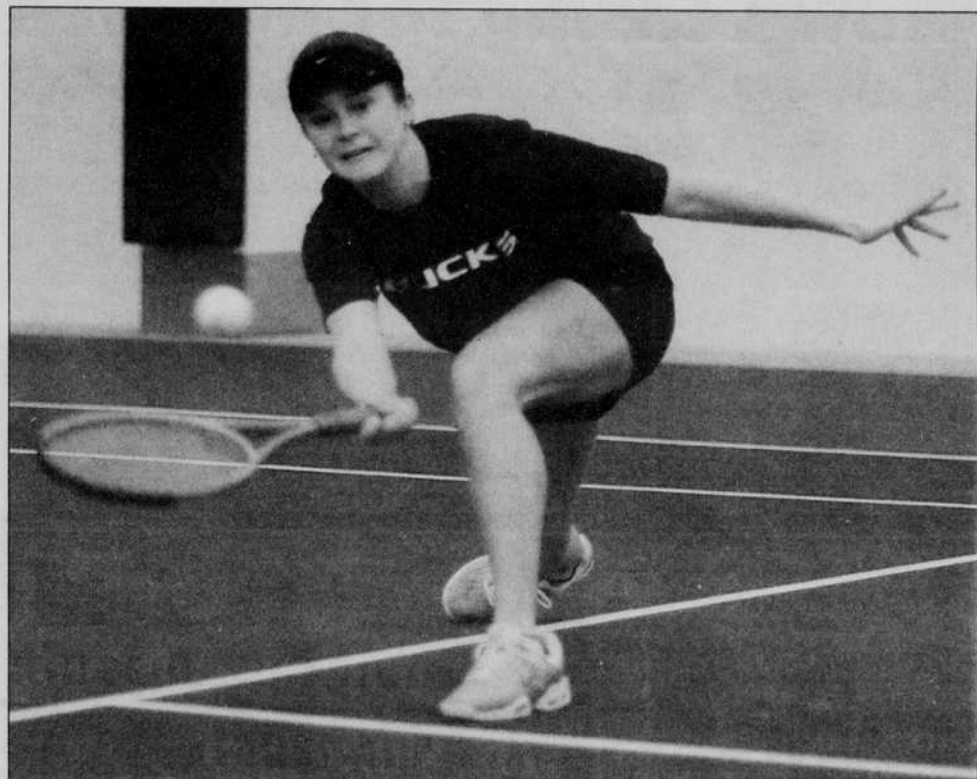
"I think I played real good in the first set," Panova said. "Second set, she wouldn't give up."

Panova led the second set 5-1 before her opponent took a break point and then held serve. Oregon's No. 1 player said she was tired at the end of her match because of a trip to Arizona a week ago, and she "just wanted to win" as fast as possible.

"I was thinking, 'The match is almost over, I need to win one more game,' and (I finally got it)," Panova said.

Senior Ester Bak then sealed the fourth point — and victory — for the Ducks with her win against Broncos' senior Anna Curtolo, 6-3, 6-2.

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DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

Juniors Anna Leksinska, above, and Jamie Marshall improved their doubles records to 6-5 while helping Oregon defeat Boise State 5-2 Saturday at the Student Tennis Center.