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**Soccer: Higa may miss fourth straight game**

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Oregon's student assistant, scored the game-winning goal midway through the third minute of overtime.

The winning team in the Civil War has scored at least three goals in six of the past eight meetings placing the Ducks at a disadvantage — they are yet to score three goals in a game this season.

Oregon may have to play without both Valadez and fellow senior starter Cristian Higa for the fourth straight game. They suffered injuries two weeks ago against Arizona and have not seen playing time since.

Valadez is nursing an ankle injury and Higa has an ailing knee. As with last weekend, Erickson is tabbing whether or not they will play against the Beavers as a game-time decision.

The two injuries may have left Oregon short-handed, but they have received help from Sabrina DeMonte and Taylor Callan, who will likely start at midfield. The Ducks have a much-needed day off Sunday, which should help Erickson's squad get healthy.

"Having Sunday off will be nice, it means we can put everything we have into the game and it gives us a

chance to help our injured players get back," Erickson said.

In its quest to earn the program's first invitation to the NCAAs, this game is indeed crucial for Oregon, which is in need of conference wins or ties to secure a post-season berth.

"It can mean a ton if we can win this game," Erickson said. "It's a winnable game and so are our next few games and those are games we definitely have to win."

Kickoff today is at 3 p.m. at Lorenz Field.

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**Volleyball: Swoboda invests in team's future**

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Shortly thereafter, Moore learned of Oregon's opening, and he was hired by the University in January. One of his first priorities was securing Swoboda's commitment. She committed in mid-February and signed in April.

"It's an unbelievable amount of luck that she was still available and we could still get her," Moore said. "I think she's as good as any libero in the (Pac-10) conference."

Early in the recruiting process, Oregon's former coach Carl Ferreira hinted through the club system that he was interested in offering Swoboda a scholarship, and other schools' interest waned as Oregon appeared to be her top choice. When Ferreira later decided to go in another direction, he offered Swoboda the chance to come but without a scholarship, said Swoboda's mom, Debbie Swoboda.

When Moore took charge in January, the decision to offer Katie Swoboda a scholarship was an easy one, he said.

Katie Swoboda said turning Oregon into a power was a major factor. "I wanted to be a part of this program that's going to be good in the future," Katie Swoboda added.

Her potential, Moore said, is unlimited. It has him believing Katie Swoboda is the best in a conference featuring USC's Debora Seilhamer, a member of Puerto Rico's National Team, California's Jillian Davis and Stanford's Courtney Schultz.

"Kate's skills aren't necessarily better, just her drive and determination and her discipline is better than almost everybody's," Moore said.

Oregon's next challenge comes today with No. 2 Washington visiting McArthur Court at 7 p.m. The top-ranked Huskies enter undefeated at 16-0 overall and 7-0 in the Pac-10.

They have won 14 of the 16 games in three-game sweeps.

Oregon gets a slight reprieve Saturday with Washington State (8-12, 1-6) set for a 7 p.m. match.

The two home matches for Oregon (10-8, 0-7) gives the Ducks another opportunity to earn an elusive conference win. Much of Oregon's difficulties have been inexperience, whereas Katie Swoboda came in knowing volleyball intimately, her entire life spent within a gym as the daughter of a high school volleyball coach.

Similar to all freshmen, Swoboda has had her highs and lows, though predominantly highs — she had a match-high 24 digs against No. 17 USC and had a career and Oregon season high 31 digs against Fresno State.

Defense is her forte, an area that allows her to remain away from the spotlight normally reserved for big hitters, such as Oregon's Kelly Russell and Mira Djuric. The competitive Katie Swoboda, even when she has strong performances, is her biggest critic, Moore said.

"She's very focused and always been that way," Debbie Swoboda said.

Katie Swoboda has had her share of the spotlight as a standout player at Reynolds High School in Troutdale. Now in her 28th year of coaching, Debbie Swoboda took over as coach of Reynolds in 1990.

Katie Swoboda was a regular at practices and matches. Her potential made it a difficult decision where to place her as a high school freshman — junior varsity or varsity. With mom the varsity coach, some people said unkind things, but Swoboda's talents were undeniable.

"It was hard at first, but after the initial year there's never been a problem," Debbie Swoboda said.

Some parents were anxious with daughters who played the same position and who didn't make varsity.

But support flowed in as well, with opponents from other schools like Barlow, Gresham and even current teammate Heather Madison backing Katie Swoboda.

Debbie Swoboda left the decision up to her then-assistant coach, Tai Quirke, now the head coach at Barlow High. Quirke quickly voiced support to move Katie Swoboda to varsity.

As a coach and parent, Debbie Swoboda felt she came down hard on her daughter at times, but the experience will be a lasting memory, she said.

"We shared the same love of volleyball, and having her there for me was amazing," Katie Swoboda said.

There was no animosity or jealousy between teammates, Swoboda said. One of her teammates, Ali Walker, has been a best friend since fifth grade when she played club volleyball with Katie Swoboda.

The team harmony resulted in Swoboda winning Mt. Hood Conference player of the year honors her senior season. She also played with many of her in-conference rivals as part of Nike Northwest Juniors Volleyball Club.

Club volleyball helped, giving Swoboda more opportunities to face elite competition.

This season, Swoboda's first in four years with a new coach, both mother and daughter relish their new roles. Mom can be mom again and Katie Swoboda is adjusting to Division I volleyball, pleased to have her family nearby.

"My mom, my dad, my brother and my grandpa have been to every single game since I started playing," Swoboda said. "I wanted not only to... play here for me, but to play for them too."

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