

■ Women's basketball

Ducks outlast late Razorback run

Gabrielle Richards leads the Ducks victory with 18 points and nine rebounds in Oregon's fourth win

BY JEFFREY DRANSFELDT
SPORTS REPORTER

Playing against a scrappy Arkansas basketball team (2-1), Oregon's Kedzie Gunderson and Cicely Oaks played large roles in the Ducks' (4-1) 70-59 win Friday at McArthur Court before a crowd of 3,536.

The stat sheet reflected the pair's effort, with Gunderson's career-high-tying 13 points and six rebounds and Oaks' eight points and five rebounds.

"When you're not able to help your team in other ways, just go in and mix it up," Oregon coach Bev Smith said.

Entering Friday's action, Oregon had several objectives, including rebounding. Oregon outrebounded Arkansas 50-30 and more importantly, held the Razorbacks to 12 offensive rebounds — a sore area this season.

"They can rebound, and they

will rebound, and that's the way we need to come out and focus on that part of the game," Smith said.

"You can't let those things affect you ... you just kind of go out there and play, and let the adrenaline kick in, and forget about it."

KEDZIE GUNDERSON | Oregon guard

Defense has been an Oregon strength and was again against Arkansas, holding the Razorbacks to 30.8 percent overall and 28.6 on three-pointers. For the season, Oregon is holding its opponents to 29.3 percent from the field and 19 percent from three-point range.

Freshman point guard Tamika Nurse has also emerged as a reliable option at point guard. Nurse went from not playing against

Temple to playing eight minutes against Nevada. She then played 22 effective minutes in Oregon's 63-36 win at Portland and contributed a short but helpful five minutes Friday with several strong drives.

Friday's win included a rough start with Arkansas leading 11-2 early on three three-pointers and a two free throws.

Oregon came back by utilizing the inside presence of Gabrielle Richards, who finished with 18 points. Richards scored all of Oregon's first eight points to pull Oregon within 13-8.

Gunderson received clearance to play just before the game. She sustained a concussion Tuesday and missed practice Thursday.

"You can't let those things affect you," Gunderson said. "You just kind of go out there and play, and let the adrenaline kick in, and forget about it."

Gunderson and Oaks hit matching pairs of free throws to bring Oregon within three, 22-19. Oaks later hit the go-ahead three-point-er to lead 27-25 as Oregon held a

33-30 halftime advantage.

Oregon appeared to solve Arkansas with an 18-4 run to begin the second half. Consecutive Oregon intentional fouls amounted to an Arkansas run of 20-6 to pull within 57-54.

Gunderson then went inside and found Richards for a layup. On Oregon's next possession, a double-teamed Richards found Chelsea Wagner open for a three-pointer and a 62-54 lead.

"We made some huge errors and Oregon capitalized on that," Arkansas coach Susie Gardner said.

With the win, Oregon improved to 3-1 at home, with one loss to No. 19 Temple.

"We want to defend Mac Court all the time," Gunderson said. "We got in there, dug deep and made some really key shots." Oregon has a quick turnaround with a home game tonight against Drake University at 7 p.m.

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Men's: Vandy is Ducks next destination

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"That's always our main goal, just to get out and run," Leunen said. "We got a ton of defensive stops, so that enabled us to do a lot better."

Oregon opened the second half on a 17-2 run to push its lead to 30. The Ducks' biggest lead came when Brandon Lincoln made a three-pointer with less than three minutes remaining in the game to give Oregon an 84-52 lead. The Owls scored the final eight points of the game.

Bryce Taylor scored 11 points and Ivan Johnson added 10 to round out Oregon players in double digits. Brooks led the Ducks with seven of their 18 assists on 28 made shots.

"The next step for us is to take this team on the road right now," Kent said. "Obviously the talent, the toughness of it is going to step up going to Vanderbilt."

Oregon's first road test of the season is at Vanderbilt (4-0) Wednesday at 6 p.m.

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Volleyball: Returning players bring hope for a strong 2006

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disappeared with Jones' leg injury and the team's lost confidence.

Oregon started matches slowly at times, but at other times, pushed elite competition.

"We've gotten farther along, and we did improve from what we've done; it's just obviously not where I'd like to see us," Moore said.

Next season comes with returnees and a strong incoming freshman class. Bitter, whom Moore considers Oregon's most improved player, showed she can play with

the best in the Pac-10. Swoboda emerged at the libero position and Djuric played well in a new position, Moore said.

Oregon's progress, McNally said, is seen in Oregon pushing USC (four games), UCLA (five) and Oregon State (five), and beating Washington State.

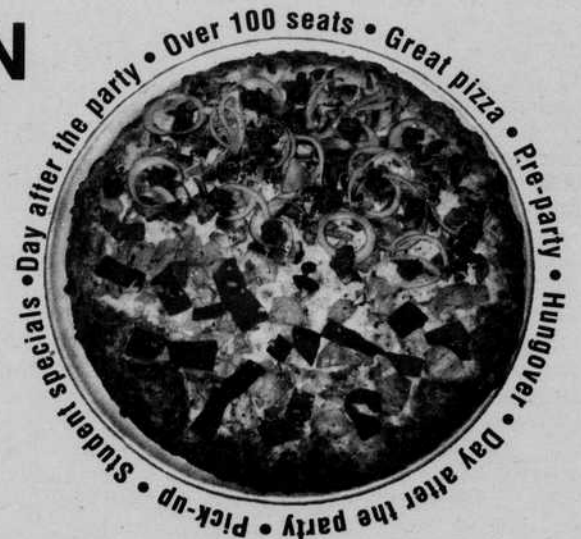
"We're not winning necessarily, but we are taking teams to five games, and we haven't even done that in a long time," she said.

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