

IN BRIEF

Djuric named to All-Freshman Team

Oregon's outside hitter Mira Djuric earned a spot on the 2005 Pacific-10 Conference All-Freshman Team, commissioner Tom Hansen announced Monday.

The 6-foot-2 Djuric led the Pac-10 in service aces this season with 59 as she tied for fourth all-time on Oregon's single-season aces list. Djuric had the most kills (448) and kills per game (4.19) this season for Oregon (12-18 overall, 1-17 Pacific-10 Conference).

"I am pleased that she got it," Oregon coach Jim Moore said. "I know she deserved it."

Djuric's play helped Oregon push elite volleyball programs USC and UCLA to four and five games, respectively. Errors could have cost Djuric a spot on the All-Pac-10 team, which Moore attributed to freshman mistakes.

"I think she showed that she can cut those errors down," Moore said. "She is going to be a dominant player in the conference."

Freshman starting libero Katie Swoboda earned honorable mention on the All-Freshman Team. She finished with 448 digs, second in Oregon single-season history. She accomplished the high dig count despite

missing three matches with a concussion sustained in a home match against Washington on Oct. 21.

— Jeffrey Dransfeldt

Ngata honored by Pac-10 for outstanding defense

Oregon junior defensive tackle Haloti Ngata has been named the Co-Defensive Player of the Year in the Pacific-10 Conference, officials announced Monday. Ngata, who is also one of five finalists for the Bronko Nagurski Trophy, awarded to the top defensive player in the country, shares this year's Pac-10 award with Arizona State's Dale Robinson. He is the first Duck ever to receive the award since its inception in 1975.

Ngata is also one of three finalists for the Outland Trophy, which is presented to the nation's top interior lineman. In addition, he was voted Oregon's Most Outstanding Player by his teammates after finishing with 59 tackles, nine for loss, three sacks and five pass breakups to help the Ducks finish the regular season 10-1. He was the first defensive lineman in 18 years to claim the team's MVP honor. Though only a junior, Ngata will most likely declare himself eligible for the NFL draft at season's end.

Ngata highlighted a host of other Ducks named to All-Pac-10 Conference teams. Wide receiver Demetrius Williams and center

Enoka Lucas were named to the second-team offense, while Ngata and cornerback Justin Phinisee garnered first-team defensive honors. Linebacker Anthony Trucks, cornerback Aaron Gipson and safety J.D. Nelson were named to the second-team defense.

Rover Patrick Chung, quarterback Kellen Clemens, tight end Tim Day, wide receiver James Finley, defensive end Devan Long, offensive tackle Max Unger and tailback Terrence Whitehead rounded out Oregon's honorable mention recipients.

USC's Reggie Bush, a Heisman Trophy candidate, garnered Offensive Player of the Year honors. He is the first non-quarterback to win the award in back-to-back years since the 1984-85 season. Bush was also the only player this year to be unanimously voted to the first team by all 10 of the conference's coaches.

Each of the 11 USC starters on offense received All-Pac-10 mention. USC had the most players on the first team with eight. Oregon State, whose offensive guard Jeremy Perry shared Freshman of the Year honors with Arizona wideout Michael Thomas, was next with five.

Pete Carroll of USC and Karl Dorrell of UCLA were tabbed Co-Coaches of the Year.

— Luke Andrews

■ NFL news

Mariucci fired by 4-7 Lions after Thanksgiving loss

BY LARRY LAGE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Detroit Lions fired coach Steve Mariucci on Monday and promoted defensive coordinator Dick Jauron to succeed him on an interim basis.

Mariucci's record with the Lions was 15-28. His 2003 hiring was hailed by fans and media alike, but he was not able to turn around a team that has won one playoff game since 1957.

"It's hard for me to stand up here in this position because Steve is a friend," said Jauron, who had a 35-46 record as head coach of the Bears from 1999-2003.

After Detroit lost 27-7 to the Atlanta Falcons on Thanksgiving to fall to 4-7, reports swirled that the team was considering firing Mariucci. When Mariucci was not let go during the weekend, some thought his job was safe for the final five games of the regular season.

"We started off this season with high expectations. I believed this was a roster that was capable of making a playoff run," team president Matt Millen said. "We have not lived up to our expectations. We have under-achieved as a football team."

The Lions have lost four of five games since a solid start put them atop the NFC North with the Chicago Bears. The team has collapsed on and off the field with players failing to produce and some bickering with one another and questioning the coaches' game plans.

Offensive tackle Jeff Backus said players had not been notified of the move.

"Something had to give, I guess,"

Backus told The Associated Press. "It's not my job to judge whether Mariucci did a good job or bad job, but we're in a bottom-line business and our bottom line hasn't been very good."

Mariucci has more than two years remaining on the \$25 million contract he signed in 2003. The Michigan native came to the Lions from San Francisco, where he was 60-43 over six seasons.

Mariucci was cut some slack in the past because the team he inherited was crafted by Millen, but expectations were high heading into his third season.

"I think we need to (make the playoffs). We want to, and we're going to make it happen," Mariucci said before the season. "If we win 10 or 11 ballgames and make the playoffs, it would make us happy and make the fans happy."

Millen hired both Mariucci and his predecessor, Marty Mornhinweg, and drafted or signed most of the players currently on the Lions — and Detroit is an NFL-worst 20-55 since 2001. Millen, a former NFL linebacker and TV analyst, was given a five-year extension before this season.

Jauron, Detroit's defensive coordinator the past two seasons, was fired in 2003 after four losing seasons in five years with the Bears. He was selected as NFL Coach of the Year during his lone winning season in Chicago.

"We need to take these next five weeks, and we need to play ... and see what we can get out of it," Jauron said. "I don't have plans other than the next game."

Recap: Bulldogs miss 17 three-pointers

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Drake's offense hectic for coach Amy Stephens.

"It's hard to prepare for a team like that because they have so many weapons offensively," Stephens said. "Personally, I think they get better as they sub. They get quicker and more athletic and the offense is more dynamic."

Stephens marveled at Oregon's offense after the game but had no sympathy for her team's output. The loss drops Drake's record to 2-2.

"I'm very disappointed in our performance, but Oregon's a good basketball team, and they made us do a lot of things tonight,"

Stephens said. "They exploited our weaknesses and did some good things and you have to give them credit."

"When I make shots I get pumped, and I like to get my teammates into it so they can start hitting shots. I just like to have fun."

CICELY OAKS | Oregon guard

Leading the Bulldogs in points were Jill Martin and Jane Horkey who both had eight. Martin also grabbed four rebounds playing in all

but 11 minutes of the game. As accurate as Drake was at free throws, making 12 of 13, the Bulldogs were just as off-target from beyond the arc. The Bulldogs made only two of their 19 three-point shots — forward Lindsay Whorton accounted for both.

The Ducks (5-1) have 12 days until they face against Prairie View A&M Dec. 10 at the Papé Jam in Portland. Oregon has five more road games before returning home to start Pacific-10 Conference play. The Ducks host California and Stanford Jan. 5 and 7.

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The Other Coast

by Adrian Raeside



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