

Sports



(Photo courtesy of Kelli Augustadt for The Illinois Valley News)

No. 24 junior Trent Jensen stops a shot during the Jan. 16, 35-62 home loss to Rogue River. Jan. 20 the boys fell to Cascade Christian 33-87. Jan. 27 the Cougs played St. Mary's at home after deadline.

Oregon St takes over first in Pac-12 with 68-57 win over ASU

Al Bravo
Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — What a difference a year makes. Almost a year ago, Jan. 31, 2014, Oregon State was a 12-8 team when they came into Tempe to face Arizona State and led by 13 before falling to a furious rally by the Sun Devils and lost 64-62.

The No. 9 Beavers haven't lost a regular season conference game since then and didn't let a slow start get the best of them in a 68-57 win Sunday over 13th-ranked Arizona State that left Oregon State in sole possession of first place in the Pac-12.

Jamie Weisner scored 21 points to help as Oregon State in a battle of the last two teams unbeaten in conference play.

"We have a combination of the ability and now the experience," said Beavers coach Scott Rueck. "So last year, there were so many firsts — learning how to win, losing some really hard, tough games, like the one we lost here a year ago and now they've got a fight. They've learned how to win and they're will to do what it takes and it leads to opportunities like this one."

What it took on Sunday was for Oregon State (18-1, 8-0 Pac-12) was a 14-0 run early in the second half to pull away from Arizona State (18-2, 7-1). It was the Beavers' eighth win

in a row and it ended the Sun Devils' 14-game winning streak, one short of the school record.

"I think we are a lot tougher than we played today," Arizona State coach Charli Turner Thorne said. "We let the magnitude of the game just get inside us a little bit. We talk a lot about collective toughness. We didn't play as a team. We got frustrated, we got away from things and we started to play as individuals."

Center Ruth Hamblin added 12 points and seven rebounds for the Beavers, which scored 28 points in the lane, taking advantage of their height advantage. Weisner also hit 3-of-4 from beyond the arc for Oregon State.

"Definitely a big game for us, but we just tried to stick to our game plan and this is what we work for every single day, we didn't have any fear coming in here," Weisner said. "We have confidence in everyone, if somebody is not hitting one night, then somebody else will pick them up. We have experience."

Katie Hempen led Arizona State with a career-high 22 points, hitting 6-of-8 from outside the 3-point line, but was the only Sun Devil in double figures. Oregon State led by as much as 20 in the second half, never allowing the Sun Devils closer than 11 after that.

"We settled down, we were dialed in coming out of the locker room," Rueck said. "There was a high level of focus,

I thought we executed phenomenally. We got great looks and took care of the ball during that stretch. And our defense was pretty outstanding all day."

TIP-INS

Oregon State: Had lost 17 straight to Arizona State in Tempe. Before Sunday, its win was 74-54 on Jan. 26, 1996. The Beavers have won 17 straight games, dating back to last season. The last Pac-12 team to beat Oregon State in the regular season was Arizona State on Jan. 31, 2014 -- 64-62. Oregon State had not swept the Arizona schools on the road since 1995.

Arizona State: The Sun Devils came one game short of the school record for consecutive wins, set in 2008-09. The Sun Devils came into the game third in the nation in defending against the 3-point shot, allowing 21.9 percent. Oregon State was fourth in the nation in 3-point percentage (39.5) and made 7-of-20 (35 percent). During its winning streak, Arizona State had won its games by an average 20 points. The loss was the first for Arizona State since a 63-57 defeat to Green Bay at the Gulf Coast Showcase tournament in Florida on Nov. 29.

PIVOTAL MOMENT

With Oregon State up by six, Ali Gibson scored a layup, was fouled, but missed the free throw. However, Sydney Weise - who went to high school in Phoenix - grabbed the rebound and Gibson fed Weisner for one of her 3-pointers, kick-starting the 14-0 run.

Oregon ski area trying to stay viable despite lack of snow

Vickie Aldous,
Mail Tribune

MEDFORD, Ore (AP) — Mt. Ashland Ski Area officials are looking beyond downhill skiing and snowboarding to keep the resort financially viable in the long term.

All options are on the table, including snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in the winter and mountain bike rentals in the summer, according to a Monday night discussion among board members for the Mt. Ashland Association, which oversees the nonprofit ski area in Southern Oregon.

"We run four to five months out of the year when we could run nine or 10 months," said Hiram Towle, ski area general manager.

The resort could potentially rent out snowshoes and cross-country skis. Snowshoeing and cross country skiing are popular on roads on the back side of Mount Ashland, although people have to bring their own equipment.

The ski area could also rent mountain bikes and sell supplies such as bike tire inner tubes to people attracted to the network of hiking and biking trails outside the ski area on Mount Ashland. Some Rogue Valley businesses already rent mountain bikes to tourists and run shuttle services to the top of the mountain for locals and visitors who are fans of downhill biking.

The U.S. Forest Service is considering expanding the trail network. Use has boomed from 16,000 people annually 15 years ago to 50,000 per year currently, according to agency estimates.

Audience members at the board meeting suggested other ways for the ski area to save money or generate revenue, including installing solar panels to cut electricity costs and selling food to spectators and participants in popular running races like the grueling Mt. Ashland Hillclimb.

"This is the second year in a row that we've had a difficult stretch," Towle said. "We know weather is cyclical and we'll have good snow years as well, but we know we need to build our summer business."

The ski area was unable to open last winter due to a lack of snow. It was open for only 13 days this season before dwindling snow pack caused it to close down again in early January. Ski area officials are holding out hope late winter storms could allow the resort to reopen.

"We are operating in hibernation mode," Towle said. "But there are two-and-a-half months left in the season."

The ski area had 139 permanent and seasonal workers ready to go for this season, but is now down to a skeleton crew of five people after deep layoffs forced by the closure, according to managers.

Board members said they have looked into snow-making systems for the ski area, but the equipment is costly and the ski area lacks an

adequate water source to create artificial snow.

During the 13 days this winter the ski area was open, it attracted 6,669 skiers and snowboarders and took in \$269,109 in revenue, Towle said.

Those visitors made up 10 percent of the visitation the ski area would experience in a regular winter, he said.

Lift ticket sales accounted for \$80,316 of this winter's revenue and 3,503 tickets were sold. Other skiers and snowboarders who came used their season passes, he said.

Board members excluded the press and audience members from a more detailed discussion of the ski area's finances, which took place behind closed doors.

In spring 2014, the ski area took out a Small Business Administration disaster loan of \$750,000 to stay afloat. Payments are now coming due, with a \$3,100 payment due in February. Managers have said they have budgeted money to make the payments.

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