

Women's College Basketball

OSU's seniors helped guide program's rise

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

CORVALLIS — Sydney Wiese joked that when she was first recruited by Oregon State, she didn't even know where Corvallis was.

Four years later, Wiese and her fellow seniors are wrapping up a historic run that has seen the Beavers' status rise not only in the Pac-12 but also in the nation.

"I think we just saw a vision, bottom line. We saw what this place could be," Gabby Hanson said.

On Saturday, No. 2 Oregon State (31-4) returns to the Sweet 16 for the second straight season to face third-seeded Florida State in the Stockton Regional. Last year, the Beavers advanced to the Final Four but fell to eventual champion UConn.

Top seed South Carolina plays No. 12 seed Quinnipiac in the other regional game Saturday at Stockton Arena.

The Seminoles (27-6) defeated sixth-seeded Missouri 77-55 on Sunday in Tallahassee, Florida, for their third straight trip to the Sweet 16. The Beavers moved on with a 64-52 victory over No. 7 seed Creighton at Gill Coliseum.

It was the last game at home for Wiese, Hanson and Kolbie Orum. Redshirt junior Breanna Brown has eligibility left but will graduate this spring and is undecided about her future.

The Beavers have been to the NCAA Tournament in each of the last four seasons. The streak comes after an 18-year tournament drought.

Wiese and Hanson credit coach Scott Rueck with lifting the program. When he took over in 2010, he inherited a team in so much disarray that he had to hold



AP Photo/Timothy J. Gonzalez

Oregon State's Sydney Wiese touches center court after Oregon State defeated Creighton 64-52 in a second-round game in the NCAA women's college basketball tournament Sunday, March 19, 2017, in Corvallis, Ore., in Wiese's final game at Gill Coliseum.

open tryouts to fill his first roster.

It was his vision, along with the lure of a college town eager to embrace the sport, that struck both Wiese and Hanson.

"Whether its women's basketball games or any sporting event, there's always great support from the community," Wiese said. "That was definitely appealing coming on a visit. There were people who reached out and said:

"This is an amazing place. It's a diamond in the rough."

That was back when Wiese was a wide-eyed recruit from Arizona. Since then she's written her way into Oregon State's record book.

She broke the Pac-12 career record for 3-pointers this season, surpassing Stanford's Candice Wiggins, and currently has 373. She has hit a 3 in 30 straight games. She also set Oregon State's

career assist record this season and now has 624. She has 1,815 points, ranking fifth on the Beavers' career list and 31st in the Pac-12.

Hanson has been Oregon State's defensive specialist, but she matched Wiese with 13 points against Creighton, including 11 in a first-half outburst.

"They did everything right for four years and they earned everything they got out there," he said. "All I can say is well done and I'm so proud of them," Rueck said. "They've created a legacy that will live on forever in this program and they will remain. This team will carry them on in the way they conduct themselves in the future."

With the victory over Creighton, the Beavers' seniors finished 60-6 at Gill. Attendance was announced at 5,660, and all were on their feet at the end when Wiese blew kisses from center court.

"What a great finish to their home career. To be 60-6 is astounding," Rueck said. "It's simply incredible. A place that had never won a Pac-12 title, before their arrival, and now they've won three straight. Now they're going to be able to participate in their second straight Sweet 16 with a chance to move on."

The Beavers lost two key players from last season's Final Four team, Ruth Hamblin and Jamie Weisner, and expectations weren't as high for this season. But Oregon State has proved any doubters wrong — again.

"We saw what this place could be," Hanson said. "I think we both can attest to when we came on our visits and everyone was so kind and so nice and they wanted this program to do well. They just didn't really have the 'right stuff' yet."

Men's College Basketball

College basketball evolving into distinctively NBA game

By MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Rick Pitino watched in amazement as the Michigan Wolverines made 11 second-half 3-pointers, many from well beyond the arc.

The first comparison that came to mind was the Golden State Warriors.

"The amazing thing to me is you look at the size of the players that Michigan has, and they shoot it like backcourt players. That's what's really coming on," Pitino said last weekend in Indianapolis, where the Cardinals were eliminated by Michigan. "I made a concentrated effort this past year in our recruiting to recruit bigs who could shoot because we don't have bigs who can shoot now."

Pitino can find the NBA's influence on just about any college game.

The shot clock has been shortened, the 3-pointer has been embraced and everyone from 5-foot-6 Keon Johnson of Winthrop to 6-foot-10 Moe Wagner of Michigan seems comfortable shooting from long range. Scoring is up, defenses are being stretched thin and coaches are trying to adapt to change by recruiting bigger, better shooters and fewer true centers.

College basketball has its own version of small ball going these days.

The Wolverines are not small by any means, but all five starters and each of their top six scorers are capable 3-point shooters.

Disbelievers can rewind Friday's 92-91, first-round victory over Oklahoma State, the game that caught Pitino's attention. The Cardinals did a solid job in Sunday's second-round game giving up only six 3s, though Wagner's deep shot helped send



In this Jan. 7, 2017, file photo, Michigan guard Zak Irvin (21) shoots a three point basket in the first half of an NCAA college basketball game against Maryland, in Ann Arbor, Mich.

AP Photo/Tony Ding, File

Michigan to the Sweet 16 for Thursday's Midwest Regional showdown against Oregon.

Style is only part of the ongoing change.

Two years ago, the NCAA approved a 30-second shot clock and followed the NBA's lead by using timeouts called within close proximity of a media timeout as the scheduled stop. It also stripped a second-half timeout from teams.

The numbers reveal just how much and how fast things have changed.

Through the first two rounds of this year's tournament, teams are averaging 74.22 points per game. If that average is maintained through the next four rounds, it would be the highest tournament scoring average since 1993 (74.31) and a 6.45-point

per team increase over the 2015 average (67.77 ppg).

Last year, the first with the new shot clock, teams averaged 71.85 points in tourney play.

"I like it," said Michigan coach John Beilein, whose head coaching career began before the shot clock or the 3-point line existed in college. "I think it would be very hard to play if you didn't have shooters, though, because everybody would plug in there, and you wouldn't have anybody open."

High-scoring offenses are only part of the equation.

Pitino believes defenses are starting to add NBA staples, too. Instead of using traps and pressure to force turnovers, he said, many teams are simply trying to take precious seconds off the

shot clock with "soft pressure," a notion he advocated during two stints as an NBA coach.

Analytics, which Brad Stevens used heavily during his coaching tenure at Butler, has become a bigger part of the college game, too, and other changes could be on the horizon. Women's teams already play four quarters rather than two halves, and the NIT is experimenting this year with resetting team fouls after each 10-minute segment of the game.

One thing Beilein and Pitino don't want is the 24-second shot clock. But it's become clear to many at all levels that today's players are putting a pro-style stamp on the college game.

"There's a trickle down," said Utah Jazz coach Quin Snyder, a former college coach and player. "I think some of it has to do with the fact the NBA is so widely covered now. There's so much NBA basketball on television — younger players see it. They idolize guys, they try to emulate them. That process takes place and I think it's the same thing with coaches."

Perhaps that's why Beilein and Pitino have been so successful adapting. With a track record of developing NBA-ready players, the two longtime coaches have become the faces of embracing change.

"It's probably more like the games in the '60s right now with Rudy T. (Tomjanovich) and Calvin Murphy and Bob Lanier and Pete Maravich than it is to what we saw in some periods of the 44-42 game earlier on," Beilein said. "It's becoming more like football every day with the way people can move people around and give different looks and do the same thing. Your kids have to recognize it without huddling up every 30 seconds. It's opened up this game."

Weston-McEwen Tennis

Note: The Weston-McEwen TigerScots tennis team preview regrettably did not make it in the Spring Sports Preview special section in today's newspaper, and is running here instead.

HEAD COACHES: Troy and Rachael Olson, 5th year

RETURNING STARTERS: (Girls) Johanna Albert, jr., singles; Emmaline Irvine, sr., singles; Krysta Calvert, jr., singles; Christina Swafford and Mary Bagdon doubles; Hannah McIntyre and Samantha Ford, doubles. (Boys) Ryan Schmidgall, sr., singles; Kellen Fairchild, sr., singles; Michael Shafer and David Froese, doubles; Rob Davison, doubles.

OTHER SENIORS: Curtis Papineau Impact newcomers: Emma Olson and Cloe Davis, fr., doubles; Cade Bryan and Marcelino Barrera, fr., doubles; Curtis Papineau, singles.

PRIMARY GOALS: Weston-McEwen hopes to compete at a high level and continually improve through each match and each practice of the season.

OLSON'S KEY TO THE SEASON: "The continued daily dedication to practice, willingness to learn, and a coachable attitude. As coaches we will continue to learn and grow along with positively interacting with athletes and celebrating their achievements."

BIGGEST STRENGTHS: Weston-McEwen returns numerous starters from a year ago, including five of the top six singles players for both boys and girls as well as the top two doubles pairings for each side.

2017 Schedule

Mar. 21	at Stanfield	4 p.m.
Mar. 23	at Mac-Hi	3:30 p.m.
Apr. 4	vs. Ione	4 p.m.
Apr. 6	vs. Stanfield	3:30 p.m.
Apr. 11	vs. Helix	3:30 p.m.
Apr. 13	vs. Umatilla	3:15 p.m.
Apr. 13	vs. Helix	3:15 p.m.
Apr. 14	at Riverside	4 p.m.
Apr. 18	at Mac-Hi	3:30 p.m.
Apr. 20	at Ione	4 p.m.
Apr. 25	vs. Helix	3:30 p.m.
Apr. 27	vs. Riverside	4 p.m.
Apr. 29	at Helix Tournament	TBD
May 5	at Sub-Districts (Tri-Cities)	TBD
May 12	Districts	TBD
May 19	State Tournament	TBD

PREPS:

Continued from 1B

as it struck for three runs in the inning behind an RBI single from Tanner Mills and two errors by Pilot Rock. The Knights added four more runs in the sixth with help from an RBI single from Zack Henrichs (2-for-3, run, RBI) and a RBI double by Nate Gumbert (1-for-4).

Chris Weinke was Pilot Rock's top hitter going 2-for-4 at the plate.

UP NEXT

Irrigon next heads to Heppner on Saturday for a doubleheader starting at 11 a.m., while Pilot Rock heads to Stanfield on Thursday for a game at 4:30 p.m.

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(PR) C. Weinke, B. Postma (6), (IHS) A. Rice, J. Phillips (4), A. Roa (7), W. J. Phillips, L. C. Weinke.
2B — C. Weinke (PR); Z. Henrichs, N. Gumbert, A. Rice (IHS).

GOLF

GRANDVIEW, Washington — The Hermiston boys golf team headed north for its second outing of the season and came back winners, taking first place at the Black Rock Creek Golf Invitational on Monday.

Hermiston shot 334 as a team in the invitational, three strokes ahead of East Valley (WA) with a 337. Hermiston was led individually by Anders Lind's 80, which earned him third-place medalist after winning a playoff for the spot.

Also scoring for Hermiston was Jared Thacker (82), Kayden Mecham (90) and Tyler Cameron (82), while Blue Blackhurst followed up with a 96.

SOFTBALL

DAYTON 12, RIVERSIDE 7 — At Boardman, coming off a 24-2 win at Waitsburg (WA) on Monday, the Pirates dropped their home opener for their first loss of the season on Tuesday.

Dayton (WA) scored six runs in the top of the first and added four more in the second to out-pace the also hot Pirates 10-7 through two.

Riverside (3-1) scored one of its runs on a squeeze bunt by Xenia Velasco that brought in Sadie Hasbell. Velasco had two RBIs, Abby Hernandez was 2 for 3 and Masie Hancock was 2 for 4.

On Monday, Skylar Wightman had eight strikeouts and allowed just three hits in the circle, and went 3 for 4 with a triple and four RBIs at the plate to lead the win against Waitsburg. Bianca Avalos was 2 for 3 with three RBIs and Velasco was 2 for 4 with one RBI.

UP NEXT

Riverside hosts Columbia (WA) of White Salmon for a doubleheader on Friday starting at 2 p.m.

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W — Savannah McFarbur, L — Skylar Wightman.

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W — Skylar Wightman, L — Kelsey Allemen.
3B — S. Wightman (RHS).

NHL

Penguins clinch playoff spot for 11th straight season

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Nick Bonino scored the go-ahead goal with 5:29 left and the Pittsburgh Penguins clinched their 11th straight playoff berth with a 3-1 win over the Buffalo Sabres on Tuesday night.

Sidney Crosby and Conor Sheary also scored, and Matt Murray made 29 saves. The Penguins (46-17-9) improved to 8-1-1 in their past 10 and are in the hunt to finish with the NHL's best record.

Sam Reinhart scored for a Sabres team that's sputtering on offense. Coming off a 2-1 win at Detroit on

Monday, Buffalo has just five goals in regulation in its past five games, including a 2-0 shutout loss at Los Angeles on Thursday.

The score would've been more lopsided if not for Buffalo goalie Robin Lehner, who made 31 saves. Lehner foiled Tom Kuhnackl and Chris Kunitz on a pair of breakaways in the opening three minutes of the second period.

Crosby scored his sixth goal in three games, and he entered the day with an NHL-leading 40.

Pittsburgh improved to 11-0-1 over Buffalo in a string dating to April 23, 2013.

BLAZERS:

Continued from 1B

The Bucks outscored the Blazers 30-14 in the second quarter for a 48-35 lead at the break.

Portland closed to 65-58 on Lillard's layup with just under three minutes to go in the third. The Blazers finished the quarter on a 14-4 run to trim the Bucks' lead to 67-63 heading into the fourth.

TIP-INS

Bucks: Milwaukee's roster includes Portland native Terrence Jones, signed on March 4 for the rest of the season. Jones played 51 games for New Orleans this season before he was waived. He's only played sparingly for the

Bucks. "He's a talented young man and he'll get his chances but right now we're top-heavy with bigs," coach Jason Kidd said.

Trail Blazers: Lillard became the first Trail Blazer to make 1,000 career 3-pointers during the victory against the Heat, and the Blazers' arena announcer recognized the milestone during player introductions on Tuesday night.

UP NEXT

Bucks: Play the second of a back-to-back at Sacramento on Wednesday night, the final game of a five-game road trip.

Trail Blazers: Host the Knicks on Thursday night.