

Ducks fly into tourney



Oregon's Will Richardson, left, and Ehab Amin guard Washington's Noah Dickerson during the first half the Pac-12 men's basketball tournament Saturday in Las Vegas.

Pritchard scores 20 points, Ducks beat Washington to win four games in four days

By JOHN MARSHALL
AP Basketball Writer

LAS VEGAS — Oregon was the Pac-12's preseason favorite, yet did not play like it through most of the season. The Ducks were inconsistent, lost their star freshman, had some ugly losses.

After four days of dominating defense, the Ducks are going dancing again.

Sparked by do-everything point guard Payton Pritchard, Oregon shut down Washington 68-48 Saturday night to become the second team to win four games in four days at the Pac-12 tournament.

"In my 39 years in coaching, I've never seen a team grow up that much that fast," Oregon coach Dana Altman said.

The Ducks (23-12) had some dark days during the regular season, notably a home

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Board work, 3-point shot could fuel upsets of top NCAA seeds

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — This year's NCAA Tournament features a top tier of teams that are heavy Final Four favorites, starting with No. 1 overall seed Duke and star freshman Zion Williamson.

Figuring out how to stop them won't be easy.

Gonzaga joined the Atlantic Coast Conference trio of Duke, Virginia and North Carolina atop the four regional brackets, followed by Michigan State, Tennessee, Kentucky and Michigan as No. 2 seeds.

These eight teams have won 85 percent of their games this season. And nearly half of their games lost (18 of 40) have come against another team within this group of 1- and 2-seeds.

That makes for a tricky puzzle, though some clues may be in weaknesses that

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Baylor tops women's NCAA field

Oregon gets a No. 2 seed, Oregon State a No. 4

By DOUG FEINBERG
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK — Baylor, Notre Dame, Mississippi State and Louisville are the No. 1 seeds in the women's NCAA Tournament, leading a March Madness field that was revealed early thanks to a production error.

The bracket was mistakenly put out by ESPN hours before the network had scheduled its selection show. ESPN apologized and scrambled to air an early selection show to release the brackets while screenshots of the field were shared across social networks.

"In working with the NCAA to prepare for tonight's Women's Selection Special we received the bracket, similar to years past. In the midst of our preparation, the bracket was mistakenly posted on ESPN," the network said in a statement. "We deeply regret the error and extend our apology to the NCAA and the women's basketball community. We will conduct a thorough review of our process to ensure it doesn't happen in the future."

In 2016, the men's bracket was leaked during the selection show, reverberating on Twitter and elsewhere as fans wondered if the picks were accurate.

The No. 1 Lady Bears are the top team in the Greensboro Regional while defending champion Notre Dame is the first choice in Chicago. Baylor was the overall top seed in the field and will be trying to reach the Final Four for the first time since 2012. The team has won 23 consecutive games.

The Irish are looking to repeat as champions and are potentially better than the



Baylor celebrates after defeating Iowa State during the Big 12 women's conference tournament championship in Oklahoma City on Monday, March 11.

COMING UP

The women's NCAA Tournament bracket will be published in the Wednesday edition of the East Oregonian.

team that won the school's first championship since 2001 last season. Notre Dame returns most of its team from last year, including Final Four MVP Arike Ogunbowale, who hit game-winning shots in the semifinals and championship game. The team also added talented forward Bri-

anna Turner, who missed last season with a knee injury.

"I definitely think with Brianna Turner we're a more talented team and we have a couple more people on the bench too," Notre Dame coach Muffet McGraw said.

Mississippi State is the No. 1 seed in the Portland Regional, where Oregon is the second seed. Louisville is the top choice in the Albany Regional, where No. 2 UConn potentially awaits.

"We're thrilled to have the season we've had. We played an outstanding

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NBA

Blazers sink Pacers minus McCollum

PORTLAND (AP) — Damian Lillard had 30 points and 15 assists as the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Indiana Pacers 106-98 on Monday night without starting guard CJ McCollum.

Jusuf Nurkic added 18 points and 11 rebounds for the Blazers, who led by as many as 21. Portland has won four of five and is holding onto fourth place in the Western Conference.

Myles Turner had 28 points and 10 rebounds for the Pacers, who missed out on clinching a playoff spot in the East. Indiana (44-27) has lost six straight on the road.

Bojan Bogdanovic's layup pulled the Pacers to 100-91 with just under three minutes left, and Turner made free throws to get Indiana closer. The teams traded free throws down the stretch, but Portland (43-27) was stung when Nurkic fouled out.

Wesley Matthews' layup closed the gap to 102-97, but Al-Farouq Aminu made free throws on the other end and Portland held on.

Portland was playing its first game minus McCollum, who injured his left knee in Saturday's loss at San Antonio.

McCollum has a popliteus strain and will be re-examined in a week, the team said. It isn't known whether he'll be back before the end of the regular season.

"I don't like to miss games, but I've got to do what's best for myself from a health standpoint, and doctors will sign off when they think I'm ready," he said before the game.

Turner scored 11 points in the opening six minutes and the Pacers led 19-12. They stretched the margin to 11, but Portland got to 31-28 by the end of the first quarter.

Lillard closed out the first half with a 3-pointer from nearly the pinwheel logo at center court, and the Blazers went to the locker room with a 55-48 lead. Lillard had 18 points and eight assists in the half. Turner also scored 18 to go with six rebounds.

After hitting just three 3-pointers in the first half, the Blazers made eight in the third quarter. Aminu had four of those.

PREP BASEBALL

Bucks split with Spartans in doubleheader

By BRETT KANE
East Oregonian

Although the Bucks dropped their season's first game 6-5 at Hillsboro on Friday, they quickly recouped to end the baseball doubleheader with a 7-3 win.

"It was just good to get out there," said coach T.J. Haguewood. "I think there were plays that we should have made, and there were plays that you could just chock it up to us not having enough practices to play consistently yet. I think the effort was there."

The Bucks took the lead twice before the game slipped away from them. They were ahead 4-0 at the top of the third before the Spartans chipped away at the deficit with three runs to come within just one.

Hillsboro tied things up in the fifth inning and the Bucks pulled ahead once again at the top of the seventh. But two Spartan runs would end the game in their favor.

"It was not very clean baseball in the end," Haguewood said of the first game.

Gabe Umbarger scored two runs, and Justin Duso, Quinn Doherty and Ty Beers each crossed the plate once.

In game two, the Bucks made sure to keep things in their control from the start.

Umbarger singled in the first inning and proceeded to steal second. Duso singled to first, and Doherty rang off a double that would send both Duso and Umbarger home. Doherty would score before the end of the inning that gave the Bucks a three-run advantage.

It was a lead they would never relinquish.

"That's the growth I was talking about," Haguewood said. "In that second game, we had a good lead and answered back whenever they (Hillsboro) scored. It was good growth from game one to game two."

Duso was 3-for-4 at the plate and had two runs and two RBIs. Doherty also drove in two runs. Ryan Stahl went 3-for-4 at the plate and also scored a run of his own.

The Bucks (1-1) will play their season's first game at home on Thursday. They'll host La Grande at 4:30 p.m.