

No. 21 Oregon pulls away from California for a 82-69 victory

Eugene Omoruyi scored 26 points and No. 21 Oregon extended its winning streak at home to 27 games with win over Cal Bears

Associated Press

EUGENE — An extended break allowed Oregon's Eugene Omoruyi to recharge.

Omoruyi scored 26 points and the No. 21 Ducks extended their winning streak at home to 27 games with a 82-69 victory over California on Thursday night, Dec. 31, 2020.

"Just being able to go home and see family helped me lock back in," Omoruyi said. The Ducks had an 11-day break between games over the holidays.

It was the seventh straight overall victory for the Ducks (7-1, 2-0 Pac-12), who led by as many as 12 points down the stretch. Oregon has won eight straight against the Golden Bears.

Matt Bradley scored 21 points, including four 3-pointers, for Cal (5-5, 0-3).

"We made some errors and had some plays we'd like to have back. I thought the first half we played really confidently and we competed well throughout the night," Cal coach Mark Fox said. "In the second half, we just had a drought. We put so much pressure on



Andy Nelson/Associated Press

Oregon Ducks forward Eugene Omoruyi (2) steals the ball from California Golden Bears guard Eugene Omoruyi (00) during the first half of their Pac 12 Conference game at Matthew Knight Arena in Eugene on Thursday, Dec. 31, 2020.

our defense."

The Ducks opened the season with an 83-75 loss to Missouri, but they won their next capped by an 80-41 victory over Portland

on Dec. 19. Oregon's game against UCLA that was set for Dec. 23 was postponed because of an official tested positive for coronavirus.

California had won three

straight, including a 70-65 victory over Seattle on Dec. 22.

Bradley went into the game leading the league with an average of 19.14 points, while Oregon's Omoruyi ranked third with an average of 18.14 points.

Bradley missed the last two games with an injured ankle, but started against the Ducks. His 3-pointer with just over five minutes left in the first half gave Cal a 27-26 lead after trailing by as many as seven points. Makale Foreman added a 3 to extend the lead.

Aaron Estrada hit a 3-pointer to give the Ducks 36-35 lead at the break.

Chandler Lawson's layup put Oregon up 55-49. The Ducks pushed the lead to 71-62 on a pair of 3-pointers from Chris Duarte, who

finished with 19 points and five 3s.

"Eugene did a tremendous job finishing inside," Oregon coach Dana Altman said. "He was 10 for 11 around the basket, so just a phenomenal job there of finishing inside."

Two other Pac-12 games scheduled for New Year's Eve were postponed. Coronavirus testing results and contact tracing at Oregon State forced the Beavers to call off their game at home against Stanford, while Washington State's game at home against Arizona State was also put off because of COVID-19 protocols.

Oregon's winning streak at Matthew Knight Arena is the fourth-longest active home streak in Division I. It is the second-longest in school history.

Races: Miami to play at Buffalo for the first time in 30 years

Continued from Page B1

rushing last year in Houston, so reaching the elusive 2,000-yard level is possible.

Jacksonville (1-14) at Indianapolis (10-5)

Indy lost a direct path to the postseason by falling at Pittsburgh last week. So the Colts need to handle the league's worst team, then get help.

Indianapolis needs a win and a loss by Baltimore, Cleveland, Miami or Tennessee to make it. But Colts veterans claim they won't be watching the scoreboards.

"Me personally, it will be real easy," linebacker Justin Houston says. "I have a job to do and that's playing against the Jags. I can't focus on anything else. If you do focus on anything else, it will become a distraction from what you really have to do. I can't let that be a distraction."

Jacksonville owns the top overall selection in April's draft, and could carry a 15-game slide into an off-season when Clemson quarterback Trevor Lawrence figures to be that pick.

NFC EAST

It's quite simple, really — at least in this woeful division. A Washington victory gives it the division crown. Otherwise, the winner of the game at the Meadowlands gets in; we're not getting into any scenarios with ties.

Washington (6-9) at Philadelphia (4-10-1)

Washington blew its first shot to clinch a playoff spot by losing at home to Carolina. It tries again, hoping veteran quarterback Alex Smith has recovered enough from a calf injury to go. Otherwise, it's journeyman Taylor Heinicke.

"We understand the situation," running back J.D. McKissic said. "You can just tell guys are laser-focused out there (at practice). There's not much talking and when there is, it's about football. Guys are just ready to play."

Dallas (6-9) at New York Giants (5-10)

An atrocious defense has made a bit of a turnaround in Big D: The Cowboys have 10 takeaways in their three-game winning streak. They had 11 in the first 12 games.



Ben Margot/Associated Press, File

Tennessee Titans running back Derrick Henry, left, runs past Detroit Lions outside linebacker Jamie Collins during the second half of an NFL football game in Nashville, Tenn., on Dec. 20, 2020.

Andy Dalton has settled in nicely at quarterback, too. Ezekiel Elliott, despite a mediocre performance in 2020, needs 63 yards rushing for 1,000 this season, his fourth such output in five seasons.

New York has a somewhat-hobbled Daniel Jones at quarterback and has dropped three straight. LB Blake Martinez has 140 tackles, his fourth straight season with at least that many.

AFC NORTH

The Steelers broke a very ugly three-game skid with a massive second half to beat Indianapolis and earn the division title. Cleveland gets a wild card with a win, would need help should it fail.

Baltimore also heads to the postseason by beating the Bengals.

Pittsburgh (12-3) at Cleveland (10-5)

Despite the juicy prospect of possibly extending their despised rivals' postseason exclusion, now at 17 seasons, the Steelers will rest a bunch of regulars, including Ben Roethlisberger. Pittsburgh's 52 sacks lead the NFL, putting the Steelers in a position to top the league a fourth straight season.

Several COVID-19 issues

remain for Cleveland, but it should have its dynamic backfield combo of Nick Chubb, who's 41 yards short of 1,000 rushing, and Kareem Hunt. Chubb's got 11 touchdowns despite missing four games, including the earlier loss against Pittsburgh, with a sprained knee.

Baltimore (10-5) at Cincinnati (4-10-1)

During their four-game winning streak, the Ravens have averaged 37 points and 233.3 yards rushing per game. QB Lamar Jackson has thrown eight TD passes and run for four scores during that stretch.

NFC WEST

The Seahawks own the division crown and could get the top overall seed. In LA, the winner of Cardinals-Rams advances.

Arizona (8-7) at Los Angeles Rams (9-6)

The Cardinals need a win to get a wild-card spot, while the Rams require a win or a loss by the Bears. Normally, with Rams coach Sean McVay 7-0 against Arizona — six wins by double digits and a 233-84 aggregate score — that would not seem too challenging. But quarterback Jared Goff, as inconsistent as he has been, could be

severely missed after thumb surgery. His replacement, John Wolford, would make his first NFL start.

Arizona's defense has come around. Over the past three games, it has 17 sacks, 14 tackles for loss, eight forced fumbles and 24 quarterback hits. LB Haason Reddick has 7½ sacks and six forced fumbles over the past three games, and a career-high 12½ sacks this season.

Seattle (11-4) at San Francisco (6-9)

The high-scoring Seahawks have won 12 of the past 14 in the series. They will be no worse than the No. 3 seed in the NFC playoffs, can move up to No. 2 with a win and loss by Green Bay, and could be the No. 1 seed with a win and losses by both the Packers and Saints. With 20 points on Sunday, Jan. 3, the Seahawks would set a franchise record for a season with 453.

The Niners are playing their third "home" game in Arizona after being relocated because of coronavirus protocols. They lost the first two, but won at this stadium as the road team last week vs. the Cardinals.

AFC EAST

No, not the Patriots on top.

For the first time since 1995, Buffalo won this division, snapping New England's 11-year run. Of course, the Patriots had Tom Brady for those seasons.

Miami (10-5) at Buffalo (12-3)

The Bills have won the past four meetings to match their longest win streak over the Dolphins since a team-best six-game run spanning the 1987-89 seasons. But with a victory, Miami would clinch only its third postseason berth since 2001. It can even get in with a loss and help elsewhere.

Miami will play at Buffalo in January for the first time since 1991. In December, it has lost three in a row there by a combined score of 85-33. But the Dolphins have allowed the NFL's fewest points at 18.8 per game, and could lead that category for a full season for the first time since 1998.

New York Jets (2-13) at New England (6-9)

Can the Jets, already guaranteed the No. 2 overall pick in the draft, finish by winning three straight games in what likely is Adam Gase's last outing as coach?

The Patriots have won the past nine meetings. The Jets haven't won in Foxborough in the regular season since 2008.

NFC NORTH

Should the Packers beat their biggest rivals, they secure the NFC's only bye, ensuring the path to the Super Bowl goes through Lambeau Field. Shiver!!!!

A Chicago win puts the Bears into the postseason and eliminates the loser of Cardinals-Rams.

Green Bay (12-3) at Chicago (8-7)

Although the Packers clinched the division a while ago, they need to go full-out because a loss could sink them to the third seed.

"We both have something to play for," says Aaron Rodgers, who's led Green Bay to five consecutive victories. "We're playing for the (No.) 1 seed, they're playing for their playoff lives, so there's a lot at stake for both squads. We got after them a few weeks ago; they've been playing a lot better since then. We know

what kind of game it's going to be."

Minnesota (6-9) at Detroit (5-10)

And we know what kind of game this will be: worth ignoring.

NFC SOUTH

The Saints clinched even if they finish with the same record as the Bucs because they swept Tampa Bay.

New Orleans (11-4) at Carolina (5-10)

The Saints get the No. 1 seed with a win, a Packers loss and a Seahawks win. New Orleans is seeking to become the first team to finish 6-0 in the NFC South since the division was formed in 2002. And Alvin Kamara comes off a game for the ages: an NFL record-tying six TDs (all rushing) against the Vikings. He leads the NFL with a franchise-record 21 touchdowns.

Carolina has a pair of 1,000-yard receivers in D.J. Moore and Robby Anderson.

Atlanta (4-11) at Tampa Bay (10-5)

Brady helped the Bucs smash their playoff drought dating to the 2008 season, and has been in postseason form the past few weeks. The old man (43) might get some time off in this one before a likely wild-card game at the NFC East "winner."

AFC WEST

Not much suspense here.

Los Angeles Chargers (6-9) at Kansas City (14-1)

The reigning Super Bowl champion Chiefs can match the 2011 Packers for the best record by a Super Bowl champion with a win. They already have set a club record for victories in a season and have won 10 straight games. One more would break the franchise record, but coach Andy Reid will be resting a bunch of regulars.

LA has won three in a row and seemingly found a franchise quarterback in rookie Justin Herbert.

Las Vegas (7-8) at Denver (5-10)

If finishing .500 in their first season in Sin City means anything to the Raiders, then there's some significance here. Otherwise, well, there's plenty of other NFL action to pay attention to.

Flood:

Continued from Page B1

their blessings that the electrical system that runs the scoreboard and concession/announcer building did not need to be replaced.

If you build it, they will play

The Little League field was built by the community, with community funding, in the mid-1980s. It's built on land owned by the school district, with a small parcel of the land donated by a local farmer.

The field was strictly used by the Little League program until the high school got a softball team about 10 years later.

The field has a rich history with Little League teams that have produced district and state titles.

The Pilot Rock softball team won 2A/1A state titles in 2015 and 2016, and placed second the next two seasons. The program also has turned out several all-conference and all-state players, and has had several players move on to play in college.

The past eight seasons, the Rockets were 138-51.

Thieme said the remaining work on the facility should be finished by spring, just in time for the high school softball season and the summer Little League program.

"As long as the state and Little League allow it, we will be ready to play," Thieme said.

Seahawks: 'DK's gonna still be out there'

Continued from Page B1

In his first matchup against the 49ers earlier this season, Metcalf had 12 catches for 161 yards and two TDs. The season as a whole has been the exponential jump the Seahawks were hoping to see but weren't sure if it would happen because of the offseason disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Just to break a record that's been standing for so long, it's just a blessing just to be in this position and an amazing opportunity I have in front of me," Metcalf said.

While Metcalf seemed

to be posting big games week after week earlier in the season, his numbers have taken a dip since his first matchup against the 49ers. Metcalf did have a huge game against Philadelphia in Week 12, when he had a career-best 177 yards on 10 catches, but the chunk plays that made Seattle's offense so potent have been limited. Take away his big game against the Eagles, and Metcalf has just seven catches of 16 or more yards since Week 10. He had 16 catches of 16 or more yards in the first eight games of the season.

Offensive coordinator Brian Schottenheimer said it's because coverages

have changed. Teams are playing softer with more safeties over the top, leading Seattle to run more or throw shorter passes.

"DK understands that. He's a really smart football player. He's like, 'These guys are playing really, really soft. OK, how can I impact the game?'" Schottenheimer said. "Maybe it's in run blocking or maybe it's in third down."

The competition has certainly been a factor. During that stretch, he's been shadowed by the likes of Jalen Ramsey twice, Patrick Peterson twice and James Bradberry. Still, Metcalf has at least five catches in five straight

games.

Metcalf is also hoping Tyler Lockett has a few passes go his way on Jan. 3. Lockett needs 36 yards against the 49ers to reach 1,000 for the season. That would make Lockett and Metcalf just the second combo in team history to reach 1,000 yards in the same season, joining Brian Blades and Joey Galloway, who did it in 1995.

"DK's gonna still be out there. Tyler's gonna be out there. We're going to have our (running) backs. So we don't care how we do it. We still believe we're one of the top offenses in the NFL," Schottenheimer said.