

Sports

OREGON WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Ionescu leads Ducks to victory

By Anne M. Peterson
AP Sports Writer

EUGENE — Long after Sabrina Ionescu collected her 18th career triple double — in an NCAA Tournament game, no less — she stayed on the court at Matthew Knight Arena to sign autographs and pose for photos.

At one point a Ducks fan shouted her way: “Come back next year!”

The junior guard had 29 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds and second-seeded Oregon defeated No. 10 Indiana 91-68 on Sunday to advance to the Sweet 16 at the NCAA Tournament.

Already the NCAA's career triple-double leader among both men and women, she's had eight this season alone.

She reached her latest on Sunday with just over 2 minutes left when she corralled a rebound on her own missed shot.

“Yeah, it was cool,” she said later. “But I'm just honestly just really happy that we played really well. It's so fun when you're moving the ball. ... And everyone scored tonight, so just being able to get that last game that we all have together here with this particular team on this home court was awesome,” she said.

With speculation that she may turn pro at the end of this season, it may have been Ionescu's final career game at Matthew Knight Arena. But it certainly won't be her last game in Oregon: With the win the Ducks (31-4) advanced to face the winner of Monday's game between South Dakota State and Syracuse next weekend at Portland's Moda Center.

Satou Sabally added 19 points and eight rebounds for the Ducks, who are headed to the round of 16 for the third straight season. Oregon led by as many as 23 points.

Sabally said Ionescu's low-key approach was typical.

“That's the special thing about Sabrina, she really does not care about the stats. She doesn't brag about it, she's not the kind of person who is hunting stats. This is what makes her unique” Sabally said.

Ali Patberg had 16 points and Jaelynn Penn added 15 for the Hoosiers, who were hurt in the third quarter when Bendu Yeanyey was injured and left the game.

Indiana was making its first appearance in the NCAA Tournament since the 2015-16 season, and sixth trip in school history. The Hoosiers improved their overall record to 3-5 with a win over Texas in the opening round.

“As good as Oregon is, could we have had a chance? Maybe, if we'd shot it a little bit better, but tonight Oregon was the better team, and they beat us,” Indiana coach Teri Morin said.

The winner of last year's WNIT Tournament, Indiana was helped in its bid for an NCAA berth this season by a victory over No. 10 Iowa last month.

Penn had 24 points, including four 3-pointers, in Indiana's 69-65 victory over seventh-seeded Longhorns on Friday.

Oregon easily dispatched No. 15 seed Portland State 78-40 in Friday's other first-round game, shaking off a disappointing 64-57 loss to Stanford in the Pac-12 tournament championship game.

The Ducks have been to the NCAA Tournament for the past three seasons, including Elite Eight appearances in the last two.

Oregon used a 10-0 run to take an early 16-8 lead, and was ahead 24-19 at the end of the first quarter. But Penn knocked down a 3-pointer that gave the Hoosiers a 28-24 lead in the second.

Ionescu answered with her own 3 and was fouled for the four-point play to tie it at 28. She added another and pumped her fists as she ran back down the court.

She capped the half with a 3-pointer that made it 43-31 at the break, and finished with five 3-pointers overall.

The Pac-12 Player of the Year went into Friday's game averaging 19.4 points, 8.1 assists and 7.5 rebounds a game. It is her second triple-double in the NCAA Tournament, she also had one in the first round last year. She joins Stanford's Nicole Powell as the only players with multiple tournament triple-doubles.

Oregon Governor Kate Brown was at the game. ... Oregon shot 59 percent from the field in the first half, and 51 percent for the game. Erin Boley finished with 14 points, including four 3-pointers.



Submitted photo

Baker's seventh-grade boys state champion basketball team.

Baker wins seventh-grade boys state basketball title

Baker's seventh-grade boys middle school basketball team, recently competing in the gold division, won the state title.

“All of the young men played extremely hard for each other the entire tourney,” said Baker coach Jebron Jones.

“They made the extra

pass and were unselfish in all six games. Going into the tournament we knew we had to earn other teams' respect because we were a smaller school playing 5a/6a schools. I believe the young men rose to the challenge and definitely earned many people's respect.”

Game scores were Baker 57, Springfield 41; Baker 55, Crater 23; Baker 79, Reynolds 56; Baker 56, Clackamas 49; Baker 63, Oregon City 50; Championship Baker 69, Tualatin 56.

Top scorers for the championship game Paul Hobson 19, Hudson Spike 17, Jaron Long 11, Isaiah Jones 7.

Gonzaga heads to Sweet 16

By Eddie Pells
AP National Writer

SALT LAKE CITY — Next stop on the Brandon Clarke Dunk 'n Swat Festival: The Sweet 16.

The Gonzaga forward had five monster dunks, five blocks, matched a career-high with 36 points and enjoyed the overall kind of night that earns potential NBA'ers millions, while leading the top-seeded Bulldogs to an 83-71 rejection of Baylor on Saturday.

“Is ‘Wow’ the word you say?” teammate Josh Perkins said. “Dunking the ball, blocking shots. He just plays the right way.”

Because of it, Gonzaga (32-3) is into the second weekend of the NCAA Tournament for the fifth straight time, the longest current streak in the country.

This second-round matchup in the West Region wasn't exactly a blowout, but wasn't quite a nail-biter, either: That doesn't mean it lacked entertainment.

Most of it centered on Clarke, the junior transfer from San Jose State, who started the fireworks with a windmill jam on a breakaway

that gave Gonzaga an early 16-7 lead.

A few possessions later, Clarke took a bounce pass on the break from Perkins for a two-handed flush that had the Gonzaga kids in the Ken- nel going ga-ga.

Clark's final dunk of the first half came at the end of a 5-second clinic on how to deal with Baylor's floor-clogging 1-3-1 zone. Starting at the perimeter, all five Bulldogs touched the ball in the span of those 5 seconds; it ended with Killian Tillie's hook-flip to Clarke for a jam. It was as gorgeous a display of basketball as you'll see all year, and it put the Bulldogs ahead 35-16.

“That's players having great feel for the game and just playing,” coach Mark Few said.

Ninth-seeded Baylor (20-14) scored the first 10 points of the second half to draw within six, and keep the game in range.

But Gonzaga held on, and when Clarke took a bounce pass from Perkins, who finished with six assists, it led to an easy bucket that put the Bulldogs up 13 with less than 4 minutes left.

Clarke also had eight rebounds and two steals. He lifted his season blocks total to 110 — now good for best in the nation. Baylor coach Scott Drew was even more impressed with another number that showed up on the stat sheet.

“He drew nine fouls,” Drew said. “There's a reason he's on the draft board.”

It was the defensive prowess that put him on many of those boards, though there's been a pretty large spread in opinion about exactly where he might land if he leaves after this season.

What he did on the offensive end in this game certainly won't hurt.

He went 15 for 18 from the floor, and most of the shots were of the high-percentage variety. Clarke is the team's two-time reigning dunk champion.

“If he'd made his free throws, he'd have had a 40-burger,” Perkins said.

Or had a couple more dunks.

One missed chance came midway through the first half, when Geno Crandall saw Clarke get a sliver of daylight as he broke toward the rim.

OREGON MEN'S BASKETBALL

Oregon beats UC Irvine 73-54 to advance to the Sweet 16

By Josh Dubow
AP Sports Writer

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Ehab Amin started the second half by cheering on his Oregon teammates from the bench during a scoring drought that seemed like it would never end.

When the fifth-year senior got into the game, he provided a jolt of energy that carried Oregon to the Sweet 16.

Amin's 3-pointer ended a run of 14 straight points for UC Irvine and provided the pivotal spark that helped the Ducks become the lone double-digit seed to advance to next weekend by beating UC Irvine 73-54 on Sunday night.

“Once we got a couple of baskets, our energy level went way up,” coach Dana Altman said. “Ehab had some key steals and then we just started bouncing around again. But we were stuck in

the mud. I put them to sleep at halftime with my speech.”

Payton Pritchard led 12th-seeded Oregon (25-12) with 18 points, Louis King added 16 and Amin had 12 points and three steals. The Ducks have won 10 straight after a lackluster start to the season and will play top-seeded Virginia in the South Regional semifinal on Thursday.

“They fought back and came back and we could have been dead in the water again, but we're resilient,” Pritchard said. “Just credit to this team and what we're capable of.”

After going more than seven minutes without scoring to start the second half and squandering all of a 12-point lead, Oregon used a 15-3 run to take control and end a 17-game winning streak for the 13th-seeded Anteaters (31-6).

Amin started it with a 3-pointer and caused two turnovers. Pritchard scored

seven points in the spurt, and the game quickly turned into a laughter with Kenny Wooten getting a block on one end and an alley-oop on the other to make it 68-49 with just more than two minutes to play.

Robert Cartwright scored 14 points and Evan Leonard added 11 for UC Irvine, which came into the game with longest active winning streak in the nation.

The Anteaters looked like an entirely different team coming out of halftime starting with a 3-pointer by Cartwright on the opening possession. That started a run of 14 points in a row that put UC Irvine ahead 37-35 on a layup by Cartwright.

The Ducks missed their first 11 shots from the field and committed four turnovers before finally breaking through on Amin's 3-pointer that ended a drought of 7:32.

WEEK AHEAD IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

MONDAY, MARCH 25

■ **Baseball:** Baker vs. Copper Canyon, 3:30 p.m., Arizona

TUESDAY, MARCH 26

■ **Baseball:** Baker vs. Maine West, 3:30 p.m., Arizona

THURSDAY, MARCH 28

■ **Baseball:** Baker vs. Ketchikan, 3 p.m., Arizona

FRIDAY, MARCH 29

■ **Softball:** Baker vs. Junction City, 11 a.m., Milton-Freewater; Baker vs. Yamhill-Carlton, 1 p.m. Milton-Freewater

SATURDAY, MARCH 30

■ **Softball:** Baker vs. Stayton, 11 a.m., Milton-Freewater; Baker vs. Santiam Christian, 3 p.m., Milton-Freewater

AT A GLANCE

Youth track to start April 1

The annual Baker City youth track program for children in kindergarten through sixth grade will run from April 1 to May 1.

The program, run by BHS coaches and athletes, will take place Mondays and Wednesdays at the Baker High School track.

A parent meeting is scheduled at 5:45 p.m. April 3 at BHS. Cost for the program is \$20 per athlete with a \$60 family cap. Checks should be made out to Baker High School Youth Track.

More information is available from Suzy Cole, 541-523-2040, 541-524-2641, or suzy.cole@bakersd.org.

Blake Marlia also will offer a free Baker City Running Club for adults on the grass area at the northeast corner of the BHS track.

The first meeting is at 5:30 p.m. April 1. The group will meet Mondays and Wednesdays during the youth track season.

Bulldogs bury Nyssa 19-5

NYSSA — Baker hammered 17 hits, including three home runs March 19, to defeat Nyssa 19-5 in a non-league baseball game.

Connor Lay, Spencer Smith and Morgan Bennett all homered for the Bulldogs.

Lay drove in four runs. Six other Bulldogs drove in two runs.

Gavin Curry earned the win on the mound in relief of Bennett.

Baker softball falls at Nyssa

NYSSA — Nyssa defeated Baker 13-3 March 19 in a non-league softball game.

“Girls played better today” said Baker coach Sonny Gulick.

Game 2 of the season was Baker's second day of the year working on the dirt.

Verlander agrees to extension

HOUSTON — Justin Verlander and the Houston Astros have agreed to a contract adding an additional \$66 million in guaranteed money for 2020 and '21, a person with direct knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press.

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