

On Winning: John Wooden Style

UCLA Bruins men's basketball team dominated the '71-'72 and '72-'73 season; winning back-to-back NCAA championships with perfect 30-0 records. The start of the 1974 basketball season looked promising. The team already had an 88-game win streak, a UCLA record that still remains undefeated.

However, on Saturday, January 19, 1974, in an away match against Notre Dame, UCLA lost 71-70. The Bruins lost an 11-point lead in the last three minutes and thirty seconds of the game, and Notre Dame scored the winning point in the last 29 seconds.

After the game, chaos broke. No doubt, the loss came as a shock to many people. John Wooden, the coach of the Bruins, had to get police protection for his wife, Nell, who was severely harassed after the end of the streak

"There were a handful of semi-insane fans with their fingers in Nell Wooden's face, shouting "We're number one," wrote Ed Burgart, sports writer for the Daily Bruin.

Wooden's Reactions

Wooden left the court neither "mad nor glad" about the end of the streak. "I think it will add advantage on us," he said. "I think we will get a better measure of the game this week. If we do not struggle at home, then I would say that UCLA is the better team on a neutral court," he said.

The following week, UCLA faced Notre Dame again, but this time at home. UCLA came back and won 101-69.

"They out-played us, out-hustled us and out-shot us," said Notre Dame coach Phelps. "UCLA deserved to win."

The Bruins continued their season and lost two more games before going to the NCAA championship against North Carolina. Unfortunately, UCLA lost a 7-point lead in the last two minutes of the final game, losing their 10th NCAA championship by three points.