

It's now that time of the year when wrestling coaches start worrying about NCAA qualifying tournaments and recruiting.

And surprisingly enough Oregon may fare very well in both important facets to a wrestling program.

Surprising, because the Ducks currently hold a 7-6 won-lost dual match record this season. Normally such a mediocre record might be a harbinger of a poor showing at the Pacific-8 tournament. But it isn't.

The Ducks appear to have a solid shot at third place in the tournament and have as good a chance as anyone of upsetting the co-favorites Washington and Oregon State.

Going into the Pac-8 tourney Oregon has three good chances at individual championships in Dave Luke at 126 pounds, Brent Merrill, 134 and Pete Purkey, 167.

Luke, a junior, is leading the team with a 19-2-1 record and seven pins. But Luke won't have it easy going in the Pac-8. John Meikle, UCLA, will return to defend his 126 title. Also, Pat Kaveny, Washington sophomore, placed third in the tournament last year and will be a tough competitor.

By MERLIN MANN
Of the Emerald

Luke has met Kaveny twice this season in December tournaments and lost both times by narrow decisions—Luke's only two losses of the season.

Luke says he wants to win this one badly. He can clearly remember last year's tournament, watching it

With a 7-6 record?

Ducks should fare well in tourneys

from the sidelines. Luke had been seeded first at 118 pounds.

But he couldn't lose enough weight to reach 118 pounds and failed to qualify. Even more bitter to swallow was the team's poor fourth place finish without him. Sam Oquendo of UCLA took the 118 pound title, with Luke absent, to help the Bruins upset the Ducks for third place. Oregon was considered the solid third place choice before Luke's disqualification.

Merrill, a senior, took a third place in the Pac-8 last year at 134. In 1968 he captured second place before leaving school for two years.

Merrill's chief opponents will be California's Ceasar Vasquez and Washington's Mike Kondo. Merrill edged the Californian, 5-3, in their dual match bout last

weekend. With Kondo, Merrill has split two matches this season.

Merrill is currently on a streak of 13 matches with only one loss, 8-7, to Craig Skeesick, Central Washington State's college division national champion.

Should Merrill continue his winning ways, he'll finish in the top ten of Oregon career winning percentages and could climb to the second spot, behind national champion John Miller, in most career victories.

Purkey's career has just started. He's a freshman, a prep state champion from Milwaukie.

Already he has established impressive credentials which includes a draw with national runner-up Mike Jones, Oregon State, and a win over Cal Poly's college division national runner-up Pat Ferner. Purkey's only loss in his last 12 matches was a close 4-1 battle with Carl Adams, Iowa State's national champ.

Purkey's major competition in the Pac-8 will come from Washington's Bill Murdock and Washington State's Sam Hieronymus, both cutting down to 167 pounds from their normal 177.

Finley is going strong in his recruiting program, which has included many visits to the campus by prep prospects. Finley is also looking into the junior college ranks for possible prospects.

Finley's so interested in recruiting he will miss Oregon's final dual match, at Seattle Pacific next weekend, to attend the high school state championships in Corvallis. Last year the second-year coach walked away with eight state champions.

Maybe he's just getting warmed up.

*Play for pride,
Play for a win,
Play 'cause
it's scheduled*

By NEAL ROSEN
Of the Emerald

They might be playing for their pride, or they might be playing for the sheer thrill of victory. One thing the Oregon Frosh won't be playing for Friday and Saturday is an undefeated season, something they had been after until last Saturday.

That hope was dashed Saturday night when they dropped an 85-83 decision to the University of Portland Frosh. It left the Ducklings with a 14-1 record.

Most probably the Frosh will enter their two contests this weekend with a strong determination to prove to themselves they can come back. But the Ducklings will need more than strong determination if they are to get back on the winning track.

They take on what Freshmen Coach Dick Stewart called "two very good teams." They meet the Portland State JV's Friday night and Claudias AAU Saturday night. Tip-off time for both games is 5:45 p.m. at Mac Court.

The Vikings from Portland State are no strangers to the Frosh. The two teams have met once before, the Ducklings coming out with 91-80 victory. "They're a very good team, much quicker than us," Stewart said of the Vikings.

Saturday's opponent, Claudias, is made up of ex-college stand-outs. "I have a lot of respect for them," Stewart said. "They have the ability to shoot well and score a lot. Against the Oregon State Rooks, they scored 78 points in the second half."

The thing weighing most heavily in Stewart's mind is the condition, both mental and physical, of his charges for their upcoming encounters.

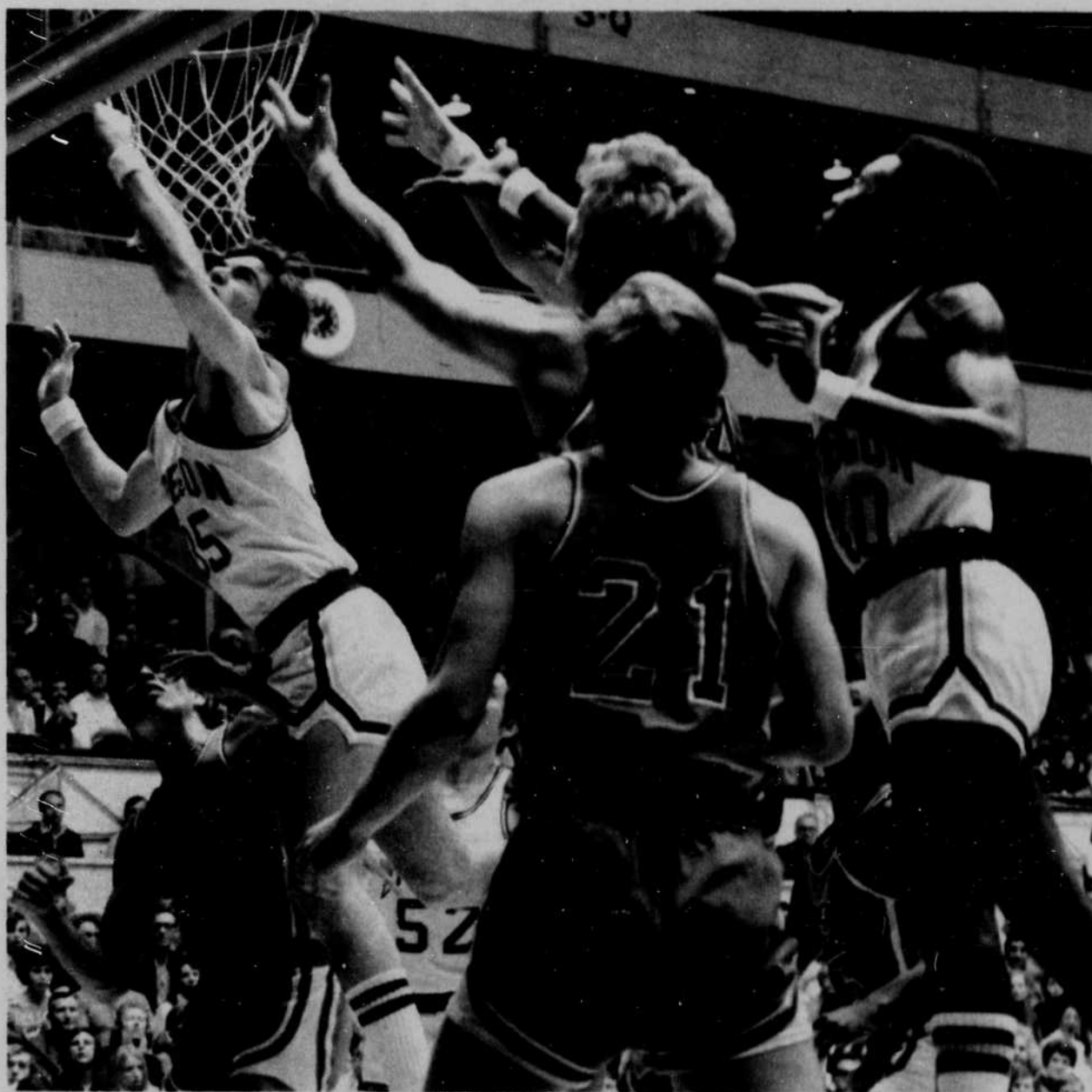
"I think they are still pretty down about their loss to Portland. They've been working hard and they've got their minds on Portland State and Claudias," Stewart said.

"I'm not really sure what their attitude will be, but I'm anxious to see how they'll react. I'll just have to wait."

Physically, the Ducklings sound like they're ready for Marcus Welby. Guard Dean Roberts and forwards Paul Benson and George Martin are hampered with sprained ankles. Ken Stringer is slowed by a pulled ligament and Bobby Herndon by a sore knee. The "cast" is rounded out with guard Burt Fredrickson who has been bothered by a bad head cold.

"We're not in the best of shape," Stewart said. "Right now I'd have to say it's likely both Benson or Stringer will see little action."

Statistically speaking, the Ducklings seem to be a healthy ballclub. They are averaging 90 points a game, 32 more than their opponents. They are shooting .470 from the floor and averaging some 60 rebounds a game.



Paul Sunderland (35) drives past two Oregon State defenders on the way to two of his six points. The 6-5 forward is expected to see action in this weekend's games with California and Stanford. Photo by Jim Link

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