

Oregon tabbed team to beat at Pacific-8 championships

It's merely a natural progression for Ron Finley and the Oregon wrestling program over the last five years.

The first two seasons, the Ducks were fourth at the Pacific-8 tournament under Finley, in 1973 third, in 1974 second, and this year? The Ducks, simple and smooth, are in line for the title.

While Oregon State and Washington might put up a fight, the Ducks are the definitely the team to beat at the 1975 Pacific-8 championships today and tomorrow at Corvallis' Gill Coliseum. Even Dr. Dale would be forced to admit it.

Oregon returns eight of 10 placemen to the tourney, and Finley's goal is to place all 10 at each weight. Barring an injury or an overweight wrestler, that could very well happen.

Washington, the defending champion, lost the depth of last year, and at best is the spoiler. Oregon State, primed for an upset with a healthy lineup, lacks the depth in every weight. Unless the Ducks completely fall apart, they'll win their first wrestling champion-

ship ever in 22 years of competition, and better yet, it'll happen in the Beaver backyard.

Oregon will send its strongest lineup it could possibly assemble with Susumu Hagihara at 118, Joe Sade at 126, Shuichi Shoji at 134, Dean Dixon at 142, John Scott at 150, Kevin Kramer at 158, Duane Stutzman at 167, Buck Davis at 177, Wes Hines at 190 and Greg Gibson at heavyweight.

By CARL STEWARD
Of the Emerald

Of those, Dixon, Stutzman and Hines, all seniors have the best opportunities to garner championships. Stutzman, who won the 167-pound title two years ago, is nearly a sure bet.

The meet will begin Friday at 1 p.m. with the first round, then again at 7 p.m. with semifinals. On Saturday, the semifinals will be held at 1:30 with the finals scheduled for 7:30.

"It should be an exciting meet,"

said Finley, who predicts that if his club wrestles well it should win. "Washington could have five champions and we expect good matches."

Should they materialize, the top Oregon matches would pit Hines against Washington's Rich Calderon, Shoji against Washington's Brad Jacot, Dixon against Cal's Brent Jacinto, Kramer against Washington's Mike Miller and, as always, Gibson against Oregon State's outstanding Larry Bielenberg, probably the only undefeated wrestler in the tournament save Miller, who has seen limited action this season.

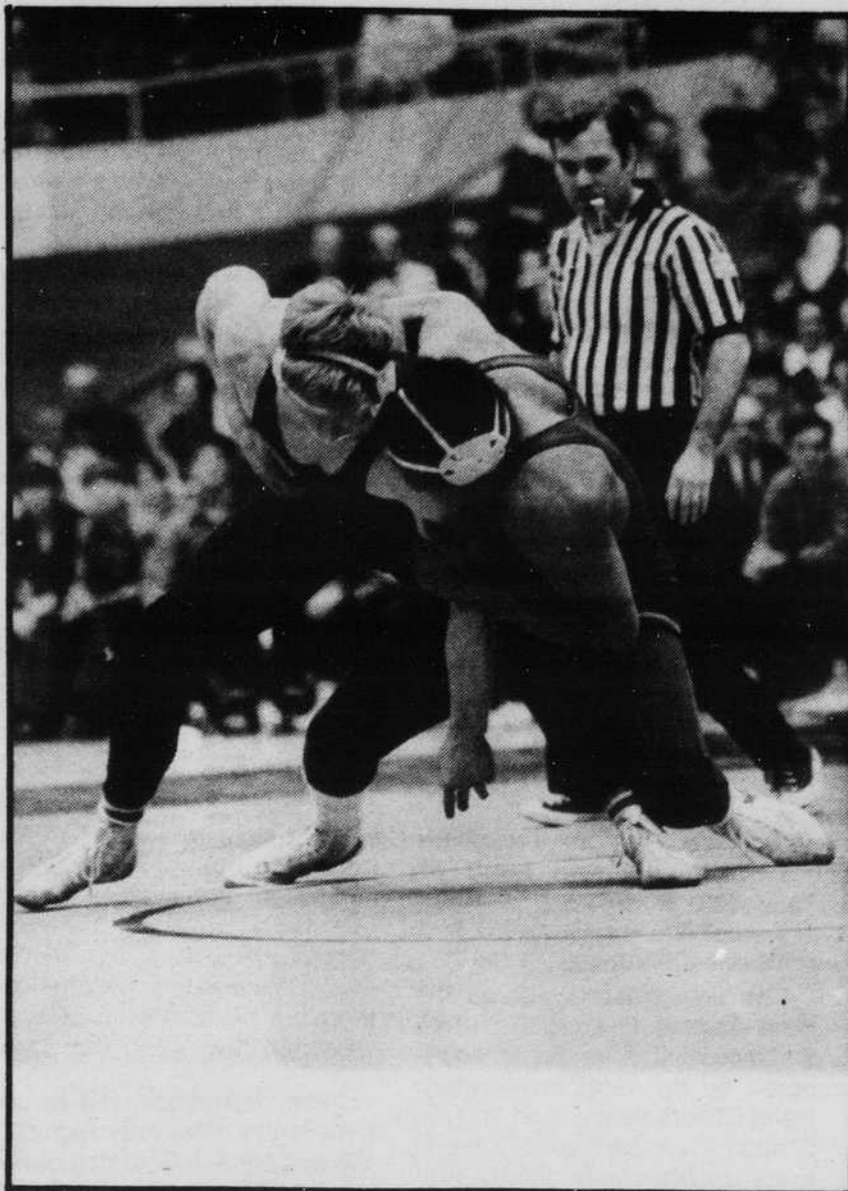
UCLA and California will play an integral part in determining just how easily the Ducks could win. It is more likely that the Bruins and Bears will decide second place between OSU and the Huskies.

"They can help us, but I don't think they could hurt us," said Finley, who sits in the favorable position of having every other team playing a diminishing game of roulette while the Ducks themselves steadily roll up points.

Under the current point system, Oregon's depth really should show its colors. Contrary to the old system, which awarded on a scale of 10-8-6-4-2, the new system adopted a year ago gives 16 for a first, 12 for second, 8 for third and so on. As long as you keep from being eliminated altogether, each placing adds up, whereas before, a faulty weight wouldn't hurt that much. The new point rules enabled Oregon to finish second last season where they would have finished third under the old. It will affect the tournament in the same light this season. The change was made to give more emphasis to overall strength, where before a team could win with a few champions and a couple of placers.

One of Oregon's many keys to taking the title will be how well 118-pounder Hagihara and 134-pound Shoji have absorbed their recent layoffs due to injury. Shoji, in particular, has been out of action nearly three weeks with pulled cartilage in his ribs, but is healthy now.

It has been Finley's plan all along to keep Shoji out until the big tourneys, namely the Pacific-8s and NCAA's. Friday will be the first test, as the Japanese wrestler is entered in perhaps the toughest weight class in the tournament.



Photos by Geoff Parks

All-American heavies tangle again

The Weights

118 — There is no clear-cut champion at this weight. UCLA's Matt Mendoza could be the favorite, but he will get competition from Oregon's Hagihara and Washington's Dave McClain, as well as OSU's Pat Plourd, who is probably the darkhorse.

126 — Toshi Onishi of Washington rates the favorite role, after moving down from 134. Oregon State's Joe Kittel and Oregon's Sade also stand as challengers, however, to the title which again could be a wide-open affair.

134 — The No. 1 seed will definitely be the Huskies' Brad Jacot, who has just one loss this season. Then comes Shoji, if he's able enough after the three-week layoff. Ron Boucher of Oregon State and Juan Pichardo of Cal are also strong contenders, in a division where anything may go and some very fine wrestlers being eliminated.

142 — Brent Jacinto of California is the defending champion, but Oregon's Dean Dixon is a comparable challenger. He's been wrestling at his best of late. Ken Krebs of Stanford and Andy Kacmarcik of Washington also could be factors.

150 — Doug Ziebart, having a great year in the shadow of standout Bielenberg, is the best at this weight. Stanford's Chris Horpel and Cal's Steve Whedbee, will challenge. Oregon's John Scott, who had a fine match against Ziebart despite losing last week, could be a surprise.

158 — Undefeated Mike Miller will be looking to avenge for last time. Last year Miller was eliminated when he did not make weight at 150, but this year he is

back and has the favorite role. Oregon's Kramer rates a close second, while OSU's Mark Everhus, Cal's Brad Druktenis and UCLA's Craig Keane all could provide upsets in this very interesting weight class.

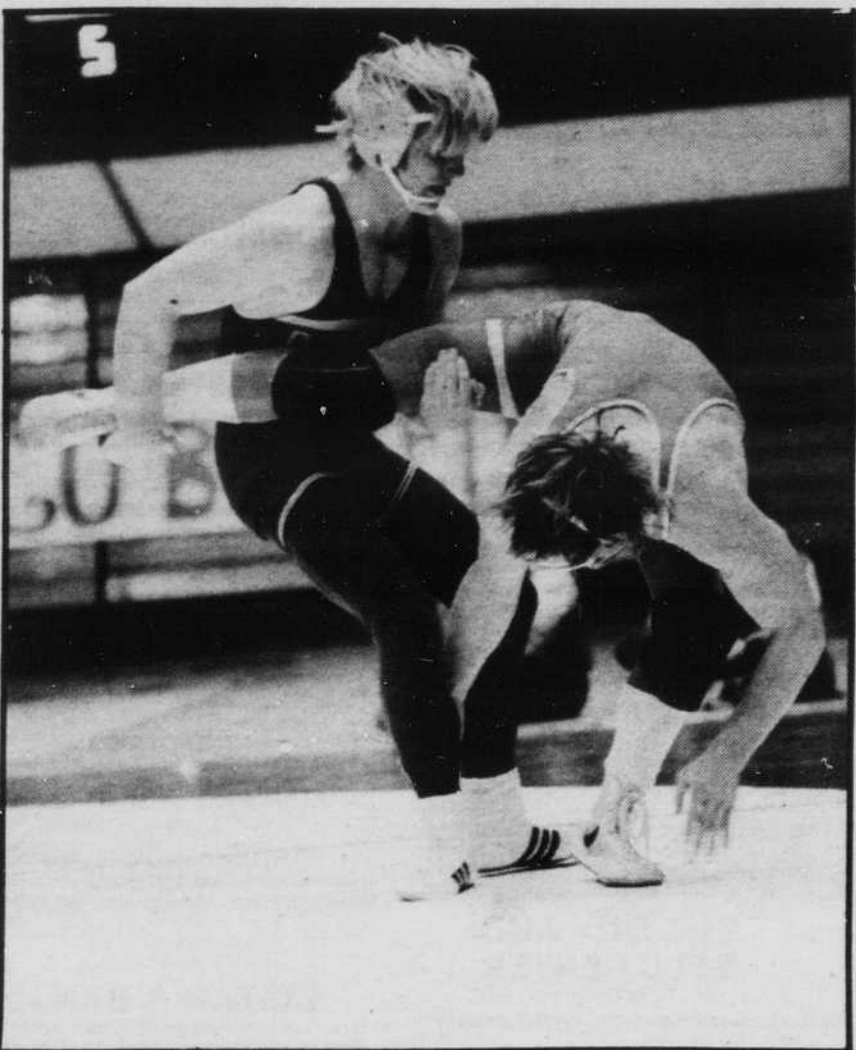
167 — Duane Stutzman, if he wrestles like he can, should regain his title. Not much competition, save Fred Nix of Washington State and Joel Cotten of OSU, although Stutzman has defeated both twice.

177 — Brady Hall of UCLA has just one loss this season and is the likely choice for No. 1. Mike Dillenburgh of OSU and Buck Davis of Oregon rate as close contenders, while Ricky Hale of Cal adds to the balance of power at this weight.

190 — Hines and Calderon will more than likely battle for the top spot at this weight. Hines defeated Calderon last year for second last season, and the Oregon standout was also second the year before. Calderon, however, a sophomore, has defeated Hines once this season and the two tied last time out. OSU's Ron Haberlach could possibly be in line for a top placing, but the former are the class of the weight.

HEAVYWEIGHT — Need it be said? Larry Bielenberg, 20-0, 11 pins, vs. Greg Gibson, who has lost only to Bielenberg, and defeated everyone else in the league. Two outstanding All-Americans going at it in the finals with the nod going to the OSU wrestler.

TEAM FINISH — Oregon, Washington, Oregon State, California, UCLA, Stanford, Washington State.



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