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emerald sports

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Japanese meet Friday

Christensen named to U.S. gym team

Gene Christensen, the Oregon gymnastics team's number two all-around man, has been named to the United States national team that will face the Japanese this Friday.

Christensen, a sophomore from Elk Grove, Ill., was named to the team as an alternate by coach Bill Ballester.

"With the weather back east and so much flu going around I don't know what will happen," said Ballester, the Oregon coach named to lead the U.S. team. "Jim Kelch, (Oregon's other gymnast on the team) has had the flu problems, and Gene will be used in the event someone else can't go."

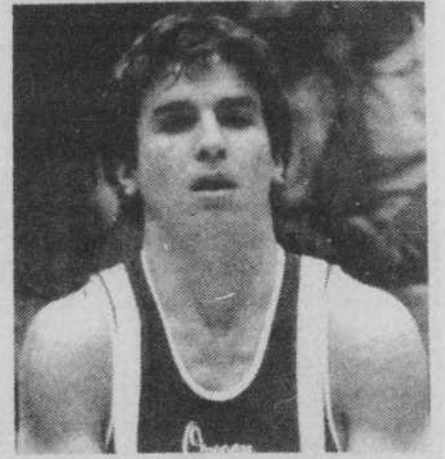
Christensen's highest score of 1977 came, ironically enough,

against the Japanese Nippon University team that came to Mac Court last year.

Christensen broke that total 11 days ago with a 53.70 total score in the all-around for the Arizona State meet. "Gene is capable of competing in all five events with anybody," Ballester said. "His only weakness is on the (pommel) horse."

Christensen's top score from last season was a 9.4 in the vault, his strongest event. This year he was awarded a 9.5 on the vault in the UCLA invitational, tying defending Pac-8 champion Steve Wejmar in the process.

"I'm just a little nervous," Christensen said Tuesday in practice, "it's gonna be hard."



Gene Christensen

"Seeing some of these guys last year in the NCAAs (like Curt Thomas, the captain of the U.S. team) was really different, and it'll be a strange feeling competing with them."

The teams are due to arrive in Eugene on Thursday, with the meet getting underway Friday night at 7:30 in Mac Court.

Ski team faces action

The Club Sports skiing team will head to the mountains again this upcoming weekend for tournament action, following losses this past weekend.

The women's and men's alpine and nordic squads will race at Hoodoo Ski Bowl in a race featuring the University of Alaska, Puget Sound and six other Southern division schools. Ski coach Randy Rogers mentioned the University of British Columbia might also enter a team.

Both the men's and women's teams were defeated by Central Oregon Community College (COCC) last weekend, the men losing for the first time this season.

COCC defeated the Oregon men 69-80, in the low score competition.

Oregon led by nine points going into the final event, the cross-country race, but COCC's strong contingent thwarted Oregon's hopes of victory. The men got strong performances from Rick Murray who finished ninth, Kirk Neilson who finished tenth, and Randy Rogers, eleventh, to record their best team finish of the year.

Depth was important for the giant slalom victory by the men. Oregon placed four people in the top ten to win the event. Scott Kime led the Ducks with a sixth

place finish, followed by Charlie Skinner, seventh, Dan Kidd, ninth and Randy Rogers in tenth.

In the men's slalom, Charlie Gould came back from a disastrous performance in the giant slalom to finish third.

Oregon's women finished in third place in the competition, with COCC getting 50 points, Eastern Oregon 72 and Oregon 73.

Val Sloan was the top racer for the women, finishing second in the giant slalom, less than a second slower than the winner. Sloan also finished third in the slalom, rounding out an impressive weekend for her.

Gina Green was especially impressive in the cross-country competition, according to Rogers. Green, the number three competitor for the team, garnered a fifth place finish. Her performance was especially helpful because the two top racers stayed in Eugene to concentrate on their studies.

Other top finishers for the women in the cross-country race were Elaine Powers and Cheryl Hukari. Hukari also finished ninth in the giant slalom event to key the women.

Other top performances by the women included Christi Mathis' ninth place finish in the slalom, and Christa Danielson's eleventh place finish in the same event.

Award given to Fought

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The Bill Hayward Amateur Athlete of the Year Award has been given to John Fought of Portland, a Tualatin Country Club golfer who won three national tournaments in 1977.

The honor was conferred Monday at the 30th annual Bill Hayward Banquet of Champions sponsored by the Oregon Sports Writers and Sportscasters Association.

The Pro Athlete of the Year award went to Bill Walton, center for the Portland Trail Blazers of the National Basketball Association. The Slats Gill Coach of the Year award went to Jack Ramsay, coach of the NBA champions. The Trail Blazers also won a special team award.

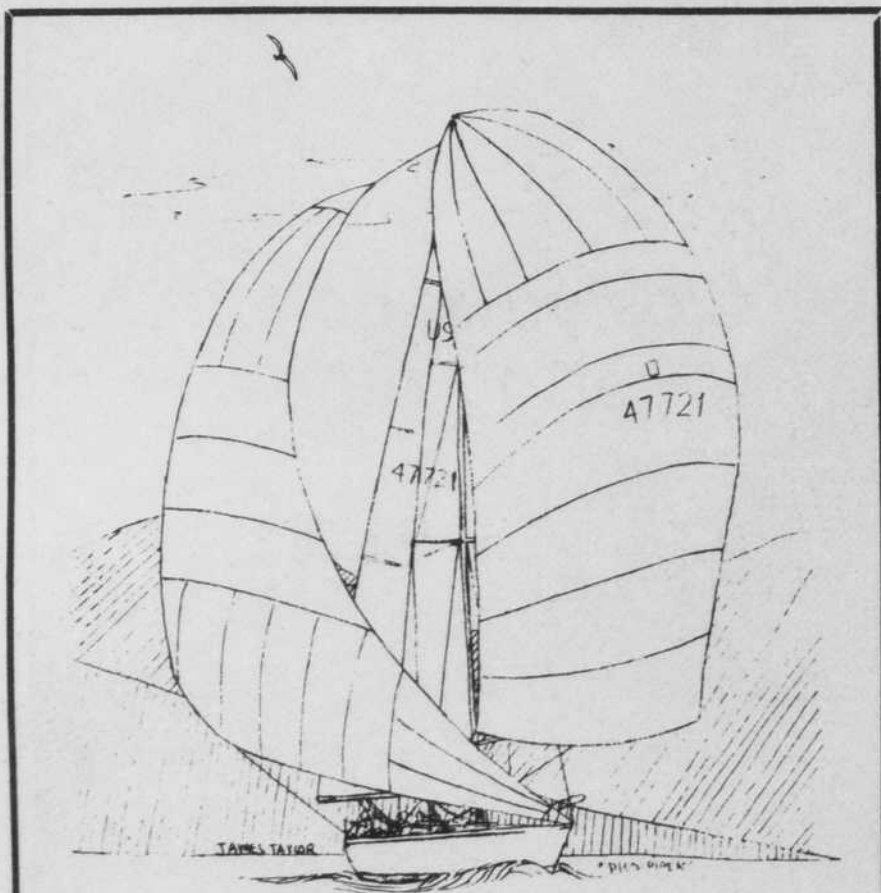
Chosen as Johnny Carpenter high school athlete of the year was Dan Ainge, who helped North Eugene High School to state Class AAA basketball championships last year and in 1976. He now attends Brigham Young University at Provo, Utah.

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