

sports

Flying Ducks to defend title

By BARRY BREEDE
Of the Emerald

The long journey towards a possible NCAA championship gymnastics berth is rapidly ending for Oregon's Flying Ducks, and this weekend the last obstacle holding them from that berth makes its appearance as the Ducks travel to Seattle for the Pacific-8 Gymnastics Championship.

Coach Bill Ballester's Ducks head north with knowledge that a championship trophy will assure the team a spot in the national finals at MacCourt later in April.

The Ducks are out to repeat last year's league-winning performance and hopefully come away with their second straight Pac-8 crown.

Trying to repeat as champions could provide some extra pressure for many clubs but Ballester

feels if there is pressure this weekend it will be nothing unusual for the Ducks. "The pressure is always there every time we go out so we are used to it," said Ballester. "I don't think this weekend will be any different. All we have to do is keep our concentration."

Ballester is confident about the team's ability going into this weekend's championship, and feels the club is, too. "We are not over-confident about our performance this weekend," said Ballester, "but we are optimistic that we can repeat as champions."

The Ducks have had trouble during the dual meet season with performances on the compulsory high bar, but Ballester believes it is no longer a problem. "We have had three good meets in a row and have had good jobs on the high so I think we can look past the bar as being a big problem for us."

As in years past, Cal-Berkeley looks to provide the toughest competition for the Ducks, but Washington, with an upset dual meet win over Cal earlier in the year, also looks to be strong, according to Ballester.

"Cal and Washington are our only serious competition," said Ballester. "Cal has always been tough and they don't look to be any easier this year. Now that Washington beat Cal during the

season they are all going to have to be considered as a contender."

Cal is led by ring man Al Garcia, a red-shirt last year who has come on to become one of the top specialists on the west coast. Garcia defeated the nation's number one ring man, the Duck's Scott McEldowney earlier this year in dual meet action. Oregon defeated the Golden Bears in the February meet, but Ballester was not pleased with the Ducks' performance, calling it lackluster.

Up in the Puget Sound area the Huskies have rapidly become one of the top squads on the coast, and their win over Cal only strengthens their position according to Ballester. However Washington head coach Dick Foxe said he doesn't place much significance on his team's victory over Cal.

"We beat Cal but I'm not sure we could do it again," admitted Foxe. "We caught them on an off performance and we were able to put it all together on our routines and pull the thing out."

Like the other coaches around the league, Foxe sees the Ducks as the team to beat, but he doesn't rule out the possibility of either Cal or his own club taking top honors.

"Obviously Oregon is the favorite," said Foxe, "but I do think the Bears and us both could have a good shot at the title."

Six swimmers lead Ducks to AIAW championships

For six Oregon women swimmers, three days in the middle of March are being set aside for a special occasion — the AIAW National Championships.

With a team roster of six that coach Virginia Van Rossen cites as "one of the best I have ever taken back to the AIAW," Oregon

will head east for Duke University at Durham, N.C. for the women's nationals on March 16-18.

"I am optimistic about it," said Van Rossen, who also found time to compare this year's qualifiers with the 1974 Oregon team that placed tenth at the Nationals.

"This team has better swimmers and they also have more confidence in their ability," said Van Rossen of the 1978 squad that has qualified in 18 of 24 events.

This year's Oregon representatives consist of three freshmen, Tama Cuddeback, Kathy Hemmer and Kelly Peyton. In addition, sophomore Judy Bowen, junior Robin Wheeler, and senior Michelle Menkens will make the trip.

For Wheeler and Menkens the trip is a familiar one. Wheeler visits the meet for the third time and qualified for the 50 and 100 butterfly. She finished 17th in the 50 fly in the 1977 meet. Menkens is returning for the fourth time, where in 1975 she was the AIAW national 50 freestyle champion. On the agenda this time is the 100 fly, 50 and 100 free, and the 100 individual medley. In addition, both will have relay team roles.

Batsmen open with a split

PORTLAND — Oregon lost 11-5 to Portland State University Sunday afternoon and cancelled a fourth game scheduled for the weekend.

Oregon opened the baseball season with a split Friday, beating Portland 6-1 in the first game behind the four-hit pitching of Glenn Fisher, but losing in the second 5-4.

Against Portland State, freshman designated hitter Ron Sloy slugged a double and three hits in the first game, while Steve Elam had two hits. Mike Carr had a triple for Oregon in the second game.

Fisher went the distance for the Ducks in the first game of the year, striking out six and walking just two in seven innings

Women qualify in relay, discus in Oregon State Preview meet

CORVALLIS — Oregon's women's track team had a relay team and two discus throwers qualify for the national championships in the Oregon State Beaver Preview meet Saturday.

Oregon's two-mile team of Sandy Trowbridge, Katy Mountain, Ellen Schmidt and Jody Parker won their race with a 9:14.9 time, good for the national berth. In addition, Oregon had Mary Stevenson and Kathy

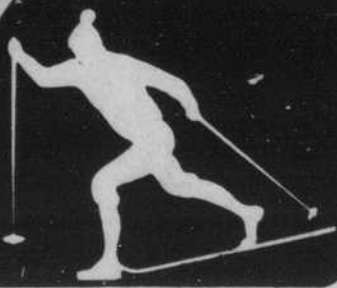
Picknell finish one-two in the discus with throws of 148-8 and 148-2 respectively, also good for the nationals.

Oregon won the 400 meter relay, the 1,600 meter relay, and the distance medley relay.

For the Oregon men, Jeff Stover won the shot put with a 59-5 toss, and redshirt Ray Burton won the hammer throw with a 188-8½ mark.

Monday, March 13, 1978

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Halberg wins but Ducks fourth

CHENEY, Wash — Oregon's Wendy Halberg captured the uneven bars for the Ducks' lone win as they finished fourth in the NCWSA gymnastics tournament here over the weekend.

Halberg's score of 8.95 in the finals beat the OSU duo of Cynthia Peticolas and Linda Parker, who tied with scores of 8.75. Parker won the all-around title, while Halberg finished sixth.

Only two other competitors were given scores of higher than Halberg's in the low-scoring meet. Protests to the judges finally raised the scoring to allow OSU and Washington to advance to the national championships. Before the protests, no team in the meet had met the qualifying standard of 134 points. Oregon State and Washington finished with 134.15 each. Oregon totaled 121.85.



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