

arizona state

Sun Devils hoping for lucky Mac Court string

By MIKE GRADY
Of the Emerald

The cozy confines of McArthur Court won't be anything new for the Arizona State Sun Devils when competition for the 1978 NCAA Gymnastics title starts on Thursday.

It was less than three months ago that ASU brought their wild and exciting show to Eugene and broke a string of 25 straight home victories for Bill Ballester and his Oregon Ducks. Since that 219.10-218.05 win on Jan. 20, the Sun Devils have yet to be beaten, having won all 11 of their dual meets and capturing a record fifth straight Western Athletic Conference (WAC) team title.

ASU head Coach Don Robinson remembered the early season road trip to Oregon during a recent telephone conversation and expressed hope that his team could duplicate the results on their second visit to Eugene.

"When we went up there earlier

we scored real well and even led the nation for a while after that," said Robinson. "Right now I think the statistics would show us as being the second or third ranked team in the country."

Robinson, now in his 10th year at ASU, said that he sees Oklahoma, Southern Connecticut State College and his own squad as the teams most likely to be at the top, but at the same time made an effort not to shortchange any of the other entrants.

"Actually," said Robinson, "any one of the top eight teams are good enough to take it because of the fact that they've come this far. Everybody has faced different situations and different judges and so it's not really that easy to say that there are any clear-cut favorites."

But if there are any clear-cut favorites to be found, then the ASU all-around team of Scott Barclay and Lindsay Nylund will be one of them. Barclay and Nylund finished second and third

behind Brigham Young's Isamu Maesato in the WAC meet, totaling 107.75 and 106.20 points respectively in combined compulsory and optional scores.

"In Scott Barclay and Lindsay Nylund, we have what may be the two strongest All-arounders on any one team in America," Robinson said. "They're both 54 point All-arounders and we're hoping that they'll perform up to All-American status."

Nylund, a sophomore, will also be the Sun Devils' top individual on the pommel horse. In scoring 18.475 in the WAC championships, Nylund finished second in the conference.

"He's solid, but not a power like (Tom) Truedson for Oregon," Robinson said about the native from Perth, West Australia. "Lindsay is consistently at a 9.3 or 9.4."

Perhaps the biggest disappointment for Robinson in the conference meet was his still rings team. "We have an excellent still ring team," said Robinson, "but we didn't qualify anybody for the individuals except for Barclay."

And keeping in tradition of eye-catching wild routines which ASU has built a reputation on, Robinson promises a crowd pleasing dismount from Barclay on the rings.

"He ends his routine with a full-in, back-out," stated the Sun Devil coach. "That's a very difficult move to say the least."

Floor exercise has been ASU's bread-and-butter event all season long and promises to possibly be their strongest in the NCAA meet. Two-time All-American Steve Economides returns after a fifth place finish in the NCAA's last season and Robinson touts him as one of the finest floor-exercise men in the country.

Teamed with Economides to give the Sun Devils an impressive one-two punch is junior Gary Rust. Rust beat his more well-known teammate in the floor exercise during the Oregon meet earlier this year and even managed to end up leading the nation in that event with the highest recorded score of 9.55.

"In vaulting we have the WAC vaulting champion in Jim Nelson," reported Robinson. Nelson,

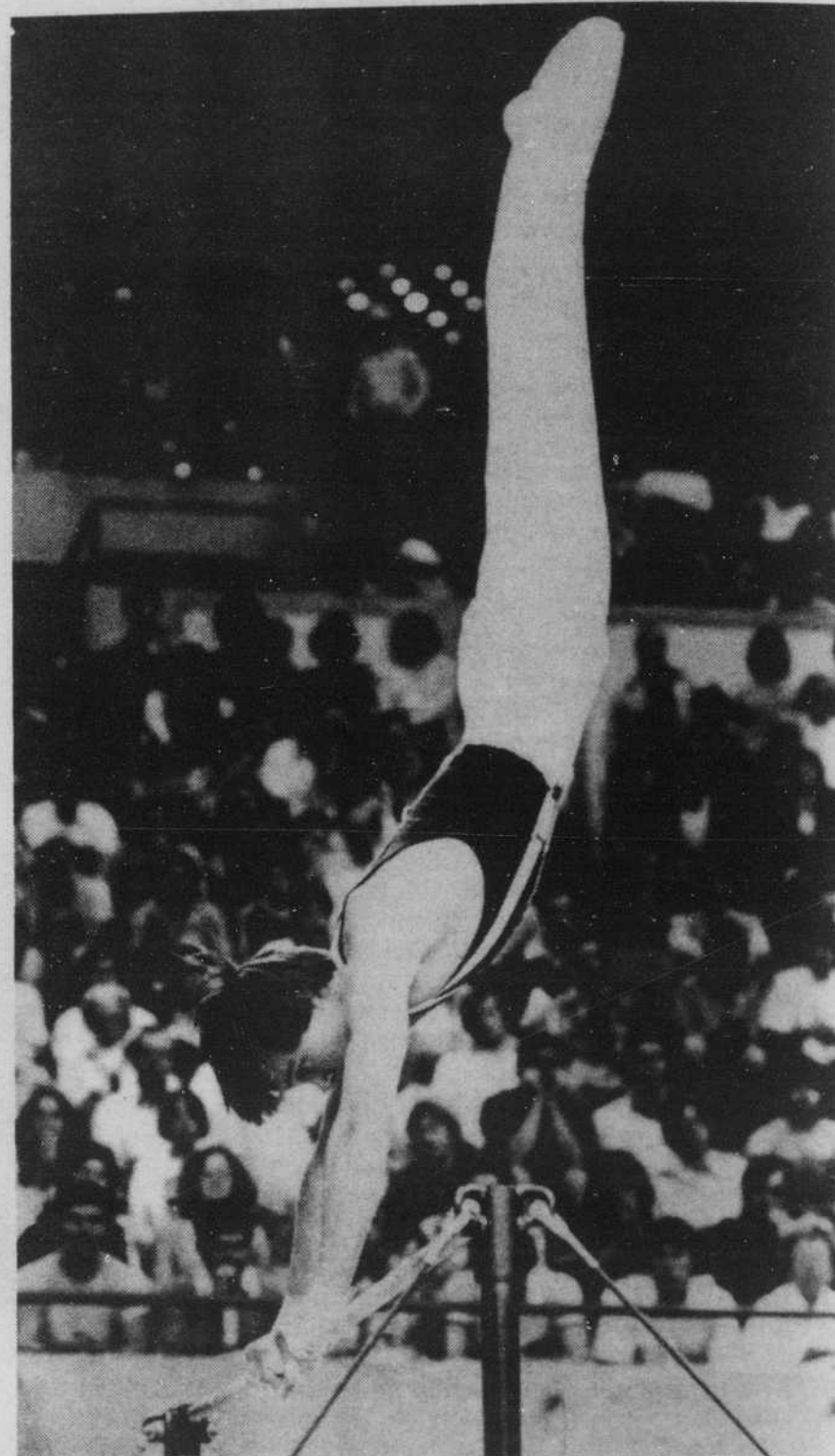


Photo courtesy ASU

Dave Martin of Arizona State won the Western Athletic conference meet with his performance on the high bar, and should be considered one of the favorites this weekend.

at a stocky 5-11 and 200 pounds, has tremendous spring and body control according to the ASU coach.

"Jim's an excellent vaulter who can score around the 9.6 or 9.7 mark," said Robinson. "I think the fight for the top spot in vaulting should be between Nelson, (Mark) Trippel from Iowa State and Willie Gallimore from LSU."

Top performers for ASU on the parallel bars will be all-arounder Barclay and sophomore Mike Naddour. Barclay was the WAC champion in the event while Naddour, who averaged a 9.4 throughout the season, finished tied for second in the conference.

The Sun Devils boast another conference champion in horizon-

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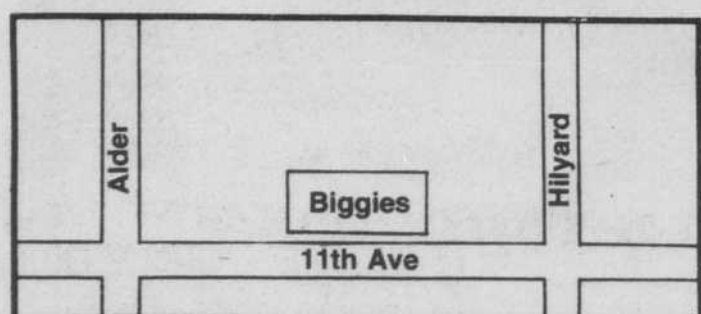
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