

## ASU takes early gym lead

By BARRY BREEDE  
Of the Emerald

As opening round compulsory action in the NCAA gymnastics championship came to a close Thursday night at Mac Court, Oregon coach Bill Ballester was informed that a computer had broken down and most of the individual scoring would not be known for quite a while. After viewing his squad's opening performance in the high and parallel bars, Ballester may have wished the scores would never be known.

After suffering through two early dismal performances in the high

and parallel bars, Ballester saw his club's chance of winning the championship "realistically gone."

While the Ducks saw their championship hopes tarnished, the Arizona State Sun Devils used a ninth inning comeback performance to grab the early lead as they overtook last year's co-champion Oklahoma, 216.05-215.95.

Commenting on his team's performance, Sun Devil coach Don Robinson said "our team's goal was to hit at 100 percent in the compulsories. Tonight I think we hit about 98 percent."

The Sun Devils used some fine team depth in the parallel bars to clinch the first round lead, and according to Robinson "if we can keep this up tomorrow night and Oklahoma breaks just a little bit, we should have a good chance of winning the whole thing."

In the all-around competition, the compulsories went pretty much as expected as Oklahoma's outstanding Olympian Bart Conner took the early lead with a steady performance.

Ballester hasn't given up on his team's chances, and neither have his gymnasts, according to seven year Oregon coach. "It's not over yet, but realistically we are shooting for third place," said Ballester. And the battle for third looks to be real tough because there are four or five teams that all have a good shot.

"Our high bar and parallel bar performance really hurt us but I thought we performed well otherwise," said Ballester.

While many of the Duck veterans did not perform up to par, there were some fine performances by some of the lesser publicized Ducks, especially Harry Ricks, who pulled off a career best of 9.55 in the floor exercise.

"My family came to see me perform for the first time in college and that really got me pumped up," said Ricks. Besides, we weren't doing so well in the other events and we needed something to try and pick up our morale."

Action will continue tonight when the optional competition gets underway at 7 p.m.

**Pommel horse** — Mike Burke, Northern Illinois, 9.7; Blaine Dehl, Louisiana State, 9.70; John Maseng, Washington, 9.65. Others — 5. Tom Truedson, Oregon, 9.55.

**Floor Exercise** — Tom Gray, Penn State, 9.6; Mike Wilson, Oklahoma, 9.5; Yoichi Tomita, Long Beach State, 9.5; Mark Mueller, Illinois State, 9.5; Mike Silverstein, Temple, 9.5. Others — 17. Mark Knupp, Oregon, 9.2.

**Parallel bars** — Yoichi Tomita, Long Beach State, 9.7; John Conners, Michigan, 9.65; Bart Conner, Oklahoma, 9.6. Others — 21. Jim Kelch, Oregon, 8.85.

**Rings** — Scott McEldowney, Oregon, 9.35; Elliott Schmae, Cal-Fullerton, 9.35; John Bernal, New Mexico, 9.35. Others — Jerry Bush, Oregon, 9.10.

**Vault** — Mark Trippal, Iowa State, 9.55; Mike Wilson, Oklahoma, 9.45; Five others tied at 9.4.

**High bar** — Mel Cooley, Washington, 9.6; Bart Conner, Oklahoma, 9.5; Tim LeFleur, Minnesota, 9.4.

**All-around** — Bart Conner, Oklahoma, 56.25; Yoichi Tomita, Long Beach State, 55.65; Mike Wilson, Oklahoma, 54.85; Mario McCutcheon, Southern Connecticut, 54.45; Warren Long, California, and Mike Dubois, California, 54.00.

**Team score** — Arizona State, 216.05; Oklahoma, 215.95; Penn State, 212.65; Oregon, 211.50; Minnesota, 211.45; Southern Connecticut, 211.30; Indiana State, 210.90; Cal-Fullerton, 202.80.



Photo by Mike Beer

Bart Conner of Oklahoma smiles as he completes his pommel horse routine in last night's NCAA compulsories at McArthur

Court. Conner leads the all-around competition after the first night, but Oklahoma trails Arizona State in the team race.

## Women netters in tourney

The Oregon women's tennis team opens against Cal-State Sacramento today at 1 p.m. in the Berkeley Invitational in California.

"Usually we don't have the opportunity to play California schools," Coach Marti Schey said. "The definite plus is that the women will be playing good individuals and teams."

Eight women made the trip, led by number one singles player Helen Vozinilek and anchored by Ann Thompson. Patti Layton, the Ducks' number two in singles, had some back trouble, but is expected to play, according to Schey.

Oregon will next travel to Portland State for a 3:30 p.m. match on Tuesday.

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### Commentary

## Everyone's gunning for those Sooners

—Mike Marino

After the first night of the NCAA gymnastics meet at Mac Court, I think three things became apparent: 1) Arizona State is for real; 2) Oregon is gutty; but 3) Oklahoma is still the team to beat.

Even though the Sooners trail ASU by a 216.05-215.95 margin after Thursday night's compulsory round, people are talking about them like folks used to talk about the quickest draw in the territory. Even Don Robinson, the Arizona State coach, is looking over his shoulder a bit. He knows that if Oklahoma slips up, their lack of depth will kill them. "In fact," Robinson said, "That's what we're counting on."

Well, don't count on it. To go with the top gun image, the Sooners have poker faces to match. They have their four aces on the draw, and they'll stick with what they have.

"I'm not surprised that we're a little behind," said Oklahoma Coach Paul Ziert. "It doesn't worry us, though. We've just come here just to show our brand of gymnastics, and we hope that the other coaches and the fans will see the difference and feel it."

The Sooner attitude is far beyond the rest of the teams in the NCAA meet, or so it seems. "Sure, other people are hoping that we mess up a bit," Ziert conceded. "But with gymnasts the caliber of Bart (Conner) and Mike (Wilson), you don't expect them to break. It may sound selfish, but we expect a good performance from them, and they expect the same of themselves."

Conner is a good example. He leads the all-around competition after the first night by .6 over Long Beach State's Yoichi Tomita, who himself is no slouch. "I feel pretty good about tonight," he said. "I was pleased with the way things went, although I think I might have done a bit better in the vault." Conner received a 9.15 there, his lowest score of the evening.

"I vaulted a little short," he added. "It was probably my only weak event." Still (and probably to most of the other coaches' dismay), the vault was Oklahoma's best event of the night, with the team score of 37.15 the highest any one team scored in any one event.

"We're not deep," Conner said, "but we have the quality people and a good team. Coach is a key factor in that matter. He's very selective in his recruiting, which shows why we only have nine guys here."

"But they're all quality guys, all on the same level," he added. "We have a quality team here, and I'm proud to say it. Some people might think I'm boasting to say that, but it's the truth. Elegance I think is what we show."

That, and the fact that these guys don't clam up for the big meet. Some people just try to get through their routines without any major mishaps. Oklahoma? "We have an award we call the 'Golden Wrench' award," Ziert said. "And we give it to the guys who just make sure that they get through their sets."

Ziert, rather, has his own very specific standards for the way he wants things done. "The most important thing to me is the ability of the gymnast to cooperate and have the willingness to present gymnastics the way I want," he said. "It transcends just the normal sets. When I see an exciting performance, I slide right down to the edge of my chair and get very excited. When I don't see that kind of performance, I feel cheated."

He isn't cheated often. With guys like Conner and Wilson (who is incidentally third in the all-around behind his teammate and Tomita), he's contented. Worry that he's behind after the first night? Nope.

"We know what we can do," Conner explained. "I'd hasten to say that we have the best atmosphere in any gym in the country. It provides for a great competitive atmosphere, which makes it better for the team when we're in a meet. There are days when I don't feel too hot, but Mike and the rest of the team will pick me up."

Conner, and the Sooners, are pretty "up" as it is, and believe it or not they haven't turned on the jets yet.

"We're more of an optionals team," Conner said. "I think optionals let you plan your routines around your strengths. And tomorrow (tonight's optionals competition at 7 p.m.) we'll show it. I mean, you won't believe some of the things we'll do."

From that team, those things have got to be great.

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Meanwhile, Oregon is scrambling quite successfully. The Ducks well, blew it on two events — parallel bars and high bar — but came back strong in their final three events (horse, rings, and floor exercise to stand fourth — and only 1.15 points out of third, the magic place needed for Saturday's team finals.

It'll be a helluva last two days.

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### BC hoop star picks Oregon

One of the top girl high school basketball players in Canada has announced her intentions to attend the University next year.

Bev Smith, sister of the Ducks' Tara Smith and a member of Canada's National Junior Team, averaged 25 points and 14 rebounds for Salmon Arm High School. The 6-1 Smith played guard position for the Canadian National Team, but will play forward for Oregon.

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