

golf

Murray important to Oregon's Pac-8, national hopes



Brent Murray

Photo by Mike Baer

By MIKE BAER
Of the Emerald

It's not surprising Brent Murray and his teammates live in obscurity in Eugene despite representing the University on a nationally-ranked team.

Murray is a member of the Oregon golf team, which is currently ranked sixth in the nation. The team once again has left their rain gear behind to tee the ball up in the Sun Devil-Phoenix Thunderbird Classic that begins tomorrow in Arizona.

The team is coming off a poor performance just two weeks ago in Houston at the All-American Tournament. The Ducks skyrocketed to a miserable 17-over-par score dropping them from fifth to eighth place in the final team standings.

In the past, Oregon has been a slow starting team, primarily be-

cause the weather puts them behind the southern schools that can play year-round. During spring break, however, the Ducks performed well, capturing the Fresno State Classic and finishing a strong fourth behind powerful Brigham Young in the Western Intercollegiate before heading for Texas.

Part of coach Jim Ferguson's philosophy is to face the strongest competition possible, and this week the Ducks will be head-to-head with six of the top 14 teams in the nation.

The main problem for the Ducks this year seems to be a lack of consistency throughout the lineup, with two of the Duck's top men, Jeff Sanders and Jon Hesselewood, having trouble putting their games together. Murray has been consistently around par, and between himself and Scott Tuttle, who is also playing well, Oregon

has been a contender everywhere they have played.

Murray, who considers himself a "real consistent" player, has sparked this spring, including a round of 66 that gave him the first round lead in the April Sound Tournament which the Ducks eventually finished second in, narrowly defeated by defending NCAA champion and host Houston.

Originally competing on the collegiate level for Stanford, Murray transferred to Oregon and returned to the state where he had been high school champion, the state amateur titlist and also the Portland city champion.

Murray never really enjoyed his days at Stanford, and has found college golf and school are sometimes incompatible. He estimated golfers who play in all tournaments miss about four weeks of spring term.

"Right now," he said, "golf is more important."

Murray's plans for the future are to continue playing as an amateur this summer and finish school next fall. He will then spend six months preparing for qualifying school to become eligible for the professional tour.

Murray has probably his toughest golf facing him, beginning next week at the Pac-8 championship where the Ducks hope to defeat top conference foe USC for the third time this season. This time Oregon will have to do it on the Trojan's home course.

After that, Oregon hosts the NCAA national tournament at Eugene Country Club, a tough course that might prove to be the undoing of some of the nation's top teams.

"It's a definite advantage (to us). We know that course; We'll have confidence," Murray continued, "You don't get away with anything out there."

If the Ducks can fulfill their role as Pac-8 favorite, they will return to Eugene and wait for the national powers to try to negotiate the course they have practiced on all year.

For Brent Murray, the pressure has just begun.



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