

Women runners face key squads

The women's cross country team will face many of the best squads in the west Saturday in the California Invitational meet at Berkeley.

"The Berkeley meet is important because it's a chance to run against the top teams in the West before nationals," coach Tom Heinonen said. "At this stage in

the Oregon program that's essential."

The Ducks, after placing eight women among the top 10 runners during last Saturday's Garrie Franklin Classic, will be facing third-ranked Colorado, last year's fifth place team at nationals; UCLA, and a young, but very fit team from California-Berkeley.

"I don't know what to expect due to last week, but that makes it intriguing," Heinonen said.

"I was most pleased with the small split between the first and eighty runners — 31 seconds is a coach's dream because depth of performance is the critical factor in cross country."

Heinonen said that while it was difficult to evaluate his team's performance at the Franklin Classic, he was pleased with the individual performances of Robin Baker, Jody Parker and Lori Alzner.

"Robin won unexpectedly," Heinonen said. "She took command of the race, and what's most important is that she was willing to force the pace."

"Jody showed that she has the talent to be in the top seven (she was the eighth Duck to cross the finish line), and Lori has been hobbled by an injury and has had only half the training for two weeks, but lost to only three runners from other terms."

It appears that Colorado's Mary Decker, who finished seventh in the national meet last year, is favored to win the individual title, with Oregon challenging Cal and Colorado for the team title.

Heinonen expects Cal to be near peak-season form, based on what several coaches have told him, Cal coach Vern Gambetta hopes this is not the case.

"I hope we're a long way from

peak-season form," Gambetta said in a telephone interview. "The meet for us is a good test to see where we stand against a team like Oregon, which should be favored to win nationals."

The course for the meet will be 5,000 meters and "will challenge all runners" with its dirt roads, hills and running creek, according to Gambetta. He rates the course fairly difficult.

Conference play begins for club soccer squads

By NICK DAWSON
Of the Emerald

Oregon's men's and women's club soccer squads open Northwest Collegiate Soccer Conference (NCSC) action today and Saturday, hosting Washington schools in two matches each.

The men open their league with Seattle Pacific at Autzen Stadium, today, at 2:30 p.m. The women will take on Washington State immediately preceding the men's match. That contest is scheduled to begin at noon.

Saturday, the men will meet Washington at 7 p.m. on the Autzen Stadium pitch, with the women playing the first game of the evening against the Huskies at 5 p.m.

Mike Davis' men's squad will be looking to improve on last year's 4-4 league record, however, the booters couldn't be starting out against much tougher competition.

Washington placed second in NCSC play last year with a 7-1 record, while Seattle Pacific was one place lower with a 6-2 record.

"We really have to upset at least one of these clubs this weekend to finish in the top three (in league play)," remarked Davis. "The league is improving all the time and I think we'll be doing very well to finish in the top four."

Oregon's defense will be put to a stern test by both schools. The Falcons outscored their league opponents by a 28-12 margin last year, while Washington had an even more impressive 27-6 margin over its opponents.

But Davis isn't throwing all his hopes onto his defense. "I don't think you can play an out-and-out defense against either of these teams," he said. "There's no good in sticking all your ace cards in the back and kicking the ball up front and having it come back again."

Instead, Oregon will be hoping to control the ball in both matches to keep the pressure off the defense. At the same time, the Ducks will be counting on the Autzen Stadium "jinx" to play a crucial role. That "jinx" allowed only one league opponent (champion Simon Fraser) to score a goal on Oregon's home field last year.

The women, tutored by Jim Sernoffsky, in his first year as Oregon coach, have recorded two wins already this season and will have momentum going into the crucial league openers. The women have defeated Lewis and Clark 5-0 and Oregon State 1-0.



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