

Ducks have high hopes for national meet



All-arounder Jim Hamilton and the rest of the Flying Ducks hope to maintain the team's number one ranking in the nation at this week's NCAA championships in Baton Rouge, La. The Ducks have finished fourth in the national tourney the past two years.

By TAMARA SWENSON
Of the Emerald

Oregon's flying Ducks will be competing in the NCAA gymnastics championships this weekend as the number one ranked team in the nation.

The Ducks received the number one ranking at the regional championships when they scored 442.6 points for a new collegiate team record. "It will be a chance for us to prove that we deserved the number one ranking the record gave us," says coach Bill Ballester.

The NCAA meet begins today in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. "This is what we've been working for," Ballester says. "We placed fourth two years in a row, and we are looking to win the championship this year."

"If everything goes right," he continues, "I think we can keep that number one ranking if we hit it right."

Ballester says he is sure of one thing — the Ducks will score high in the meet. "We should be in the top three or four schools in the all-around. A lot of it just depends on the judging — if they are conservative or liberal, and who the judges favor."

The Ducks are healthy and prepared for the meet, says Ballester. "Our primary goal is to win the team championship and the only way we can do that is to have the bulk of the guys do well."

Ballester isn't the only one

looking for success. John Caine, athletic director, says "the Ducks will definitely be in the top three or four teams there. I think that the team has a good chance to go all the way. Boy, would I ever be pleased if they do. I hope to God they do."

Duck hopes have been high since the Western Regional Championship. "The polls didn't rank us in the number one spot, even though we deserved it," says Ballester. "We were consistently at 218.4 or better throughout the season. Several times we had the highest score for a week, but the polls didn't reflect the scoring."

Thirteen Ducks will be working to keep the title. The four all-around men and the individualists will have to have "one of their best performances ever," Ballester says.

"Randy Beard and Gordy Hocking have good chances of placing," says Ballester. "They are primed for the meet and in top condition. But the entire team is in top condition. David Villansenor is a potential all-American and Miki Moyal is one of the best all-arounders you can find."

Eight squads will be competing for the championship, "some of them are tougher than others," says Ballester. Other squads competing are Nebraska (440.2), Indiana State (439.7), Oklahoma (438.3), Arizona State (438.2), Penn State (438.1), Southern Con-

necticut (434.05) and Minnesota (430.3).

"We think we can beat all of them," says Ballester. "Some of the schools have superstars and future Olympians that we don't, but we have the best all-around strong team in the states."

"Even without the Kurt Thomases (Indiana State) and Bart Connors (Oklahoma) we can win," says Ballester. "And we will win as a team, not individuals."

The members of that Duck team and their events are: all-arounders-Moyal, Gene Christensen, Jim Hamilton and Kelly Crumley; floor exercises-Mark Knupp and Marty Vasey; pommel horse-hocking and Larry Zankowski; rings-Randu Jepson and Sam McBride; vault-Knupp and Vasey; parallel bars-Knupp and Villansenor and the horizontal bar-Knupp and Beard.

Ballester says he has the confidence that the Ducks will need to make it through the competition. Entering as the number one team may give the Duck gymnasts an edge on the rest of the field. "The number one ranking lets people know we exist," Ballester says. "It's very special, but going in there it has no significance except we know we are number one. But where it will count is in the final standings. We just have to prove we are number one."

Duck golfers defend title this weekend

It will take a perfect performance from seniors Jon Heselwood and Jeff Sanders if the University golf team is to successfully defend its title this week at the 54-hole Fresno State Classic, says coach Him Ferguson.

"They have the potential to win this tournament or any other one we play in," says Ferguson, referring to Heselwood and Sanders. "Obviously we could have an individual champion."

"It's hard to say because there isn't a weak team in the field," he says. "We could win it, but I don't think that we have the depth."

Duck golfers Doug Hixson, Dave DeLong, Lawrence Zech and Glen Luikart will also compete.

Play begins today at the Belmont Country Club in Fresno and will continue through Saturday.

Baseball team wins 14-2; plays in Seattle Friday

The Duck baseball team surged to a 14-2 lead after seven innings, then held on for a 14-6 victory over Southern Oregon State College Wednesday at Howe Field.

The win was the third straight for the Ducks, who had 14 hits in the game, giving them 25 runs and 27 hits over the two-game home stand.

Bill Gwinn, Glen Baggerly and Tom Dodd each had two hits for the Ducks. Baggerly drove in three runs with a single and a double, and Gwinn doubled and tripled. Jerry Rinella highlighted a five-run sixth inning for the Webfoots with a leadoff home run, his first of the season.

Coach Mel Krause used six pitchers in the game, with Mike Talia picking up the win to even his record at 1-1.

The Ducks, now 8-13, moved to a 6-2 lead, then exploded for five runs in the sixth inning and three more in the seventh to ice the win. SOSC collected 11 hits — four in their three-run eighth inning — but it was not enough to save the Red Raiders' record from dropping to 7-10.

Krause's club leaves today for their league-opening series with the University of Washington in Seattle. The Ducks face the Huskies once on Friday and in a doubleheader Saturday before returning home to face Lewis and Clark on Monday.

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Tennis team faces BYU in California tourney

The women's tennis team will face its toughest competition this year at the Berkeley Invitational this weekend, says coach Marty Schey. "All of the schools there will be top-flight competition."

Brigham Young University will meet the Ducks at 2 p.m. today in the first round of competition. "BYU is favored to win this year," says Schey. "They are outstanding and although it will be a tough match, we are looking forward to it."

Other teams in the tournament are Arizona, Arizona State, Cal-Fullerton, Cal Poly-Pomona, U.C. Berkeley and

Fresno State. "We are looking forward to the tournament," says Schey. "We are anxious to play some good tennis against some good schools."

"I'd say it'll be tough, but we'll be helped by having strong competition at the beginning of the season," Schey says. "We've been practicing since January with only one match, a tournament will definitely help us improve."

"Everyone on the team is hyped and ready for the tournament," she says. "They are looking forward to traveling south and playing some tough tennis. That is one thing we can count on, tough competition."

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