

Softball squad faces Vikings

The University of Oregon women's softball team wraps up its regular season schedule today with a doubleheader at Portland State. Oregon has a record of 17-12 and is headed toward the AIAW national championship tournament, May 22-25 in Norman, Okla.

The Ducks have won four straight against the Vikings this year, and Oregon coach Nancy Plantz says she would like to continue that trend while giving her players the game-condition work necessary to prepare them for nationals.

Plantz is still without her ace pitcher Lori Sweet, who has been sidelined with a shoulder injury since the Berkeley Invitational in late April. Freshman Lynn Eaton has been filling in for Sweet and has done a good job, according to Plantz.

Tennis teams improve over last season

Oregon's men's and women's tennis squads competed in regional tournaments last weekend, and both teams showed improvement over last year with their finishes.

The Duck men, paced by top seed Eric Lehto, settled for a second place finish in the Pac-10 Conference Northern Division championships when the University of Washington stopped them on Saturday, 7-2. Friday, Oregon was assured of at least a second place finish by toppling Washington State, 8-1.

Improving slightly on last year's fourth place finish, the Oregon women piled up 43 points to place third in the Northwest Women's College Sports Association Region 9 tournament last weekend.

First place in the women's meet went to the University of Montana with 66 points. Montana State was second with 62 points, Oregon State fourth with 35 and Washington State fifth with 19.

The Oregon's women produced three regional champions: Paula Jones in number five singles, Tina Mickelson in number six singles, and the number three doubles combination of Cathy Rudolph-Susie Hunt. However, since only the winners of first and second singles and first doubles advance to the nationals, none of Oregon's winners advance.

Some hard luck prevented Oregon from getting more points. Lynne Haeckler had advanced to the finals in fourth singles and first doubles (along with Nancy Curfman), but the Ducks were

forced to default when Haeckler sprained a muscle.

Coach Pat Moran felt that the tournament was not necessarily the best indicator of team strength. "We beat Montana State 6-3 a week before the tournament, and they finished ahead of us," she said. Moran was disappointed with the tournament scoring format, which emphasizes individual seedings rather than team strength. "I proposed a new format for next year at the Region Committee meeting," she commented.

Nevertheless, it was a good year for Moran and the Ducks as they compiled a 10-2 Region 9 record. With a few new players to compliment a solid returning nucleus (only Tina Mickelson graduates), Moran looks for additional improvement next year.

The men, by the same token, completed the season with a mark of 18-8, one win better than the school record set in 1972.

Lehto led the men's effort this weekend by winning both his single matches — a 4-6, 6-1, 7-5 squeaker over WSU's Jim Lees Friday, and an easy 6-1, 6-3 victory over Washington's Scott Pearson in the championship.

Lehto was one of many Ducks who won Friday, boosting their team into the finals. Tom Greider, Thor Carlson, Mark Evans and Stewart Bartlett all posted single match victories, while the Cougars forfeited all three doubles matches to the Ducks.

But it was a different story against powerful Washington. Aside from Lehto's victory, the Ducks could manage only one other win.

Ducks drop to league cellar

Oregon's hopes for a second place finish in the Northern Division suddenly ended Monday as the Oregon State Beavers rallied in the bottom of the ninth to squeeze a 3-2 baseball win out in the season-ender for both ballclubs.

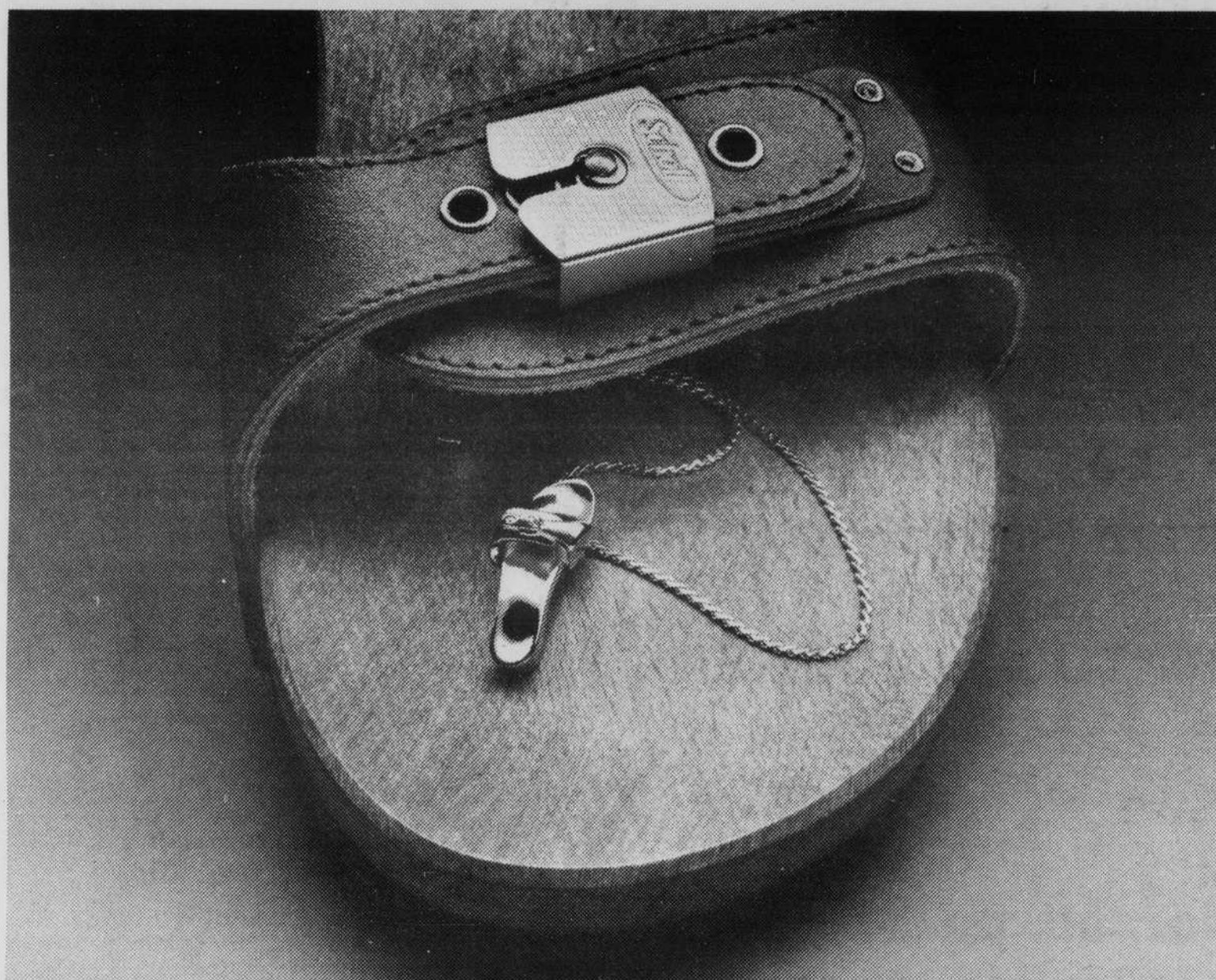
The loss dropped the Ducks (7-10) into the league cellar for the second straight year, behind OSU (8-9) and Washington (7-9).

Oregon, assuming an early lead, came within one half inning of bagging the win.

Thanks to Randy Porter's RBI sacrifice fly, Rick Thomas' basehit that scored Mike Ritchey, and a brilliant two-hit pitching performance by Dean Kegler, the Ducks went into the ninth inning holding a 2-0 lead.

But OSU came back. With no outs, Bob McNair and Dave Backen swatted back-to-back singles. Oregon countered by inserting ace reliever Jim Givens to cool the rally, but to no avail. The next batter, Bill Gassaway, doubled, scoring two runs.

After loading the bases with intentional walks, Mickey Riley's tapper back to Givens was bobbled, then dropped by catcher Thomas as Gassaway scored.



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