

Netters travel to tourney

By TERRY RHOADS
Of the Emerald

With three positive goals in mind, the University volleyball team faces California in a first-round match at the eight-team California Invitational today at Berkeley.

If the Ducks can beat the highly regarded Bears in the 1 p.m. match, they will face the winner of the University of Hawaii-Fresno State University clash in an 8 p.m. quarterfinal contest.

"We have three goals going into this tournament," volleyball coach Chris Voelz said Thursday. "One, to come out among the top four teams; two, to increase our serving percentage; and three, to develop more consistency in our style of play...no yo-yo style."

Standing in the Ducks' pathway to achieving those goals are seven tall and talented teams, Voelz said. In the Ducks' bracket looms 14th-ranked California, defending Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women Division II national champion Hawaii, and Fresno State, who slapped the Ducks with a 15-4, 17-15 defeat earlier this season.

Fourth-ranked, pre-tournament favorite San Diego State University rounds out the top of the bracket along with Stanford University, Portland State University (the defending Region 9 champs), and San Jose State University, a 15-12, 15-7 loser to the Ducks two weeks ago.

Two years ago, during Voelz' first year of coaching at the University, the Ducks were embarrassed by a last-place finish in the Cal-Invitational. "I suffered more defeats in that one weekend than I had in the previous two years of coaching," Voelz recalls. Last year her squad improved to fifth.

While the Ducks sport a 15-5-1 record this season, their serving percentage leaves something to be desired, Voelz said. Currently 11 percent of the Ducks serves go out of bounds or hit the net — resulting in only an 89-percent serving efficiency. Voelz frets at that figure. "We've going to have to



Photo by Martha Stanton

Cathy Hill (left) and Carrie DeHart go for a block during last weekend's Oregon Jamboree. The Ducks travel to Berkeley this weekend for the Cal-Invitational.

improve on that right now... we should be at 94 percent in our matches. Instead of our serving being a weapon, it's hampering us."

"We're having our problems because sometimes the server tries to do too much with the ball," said senior Kim Jessup. "We've been working hard this week during practice on it and we'll be ready for this weekend."

The Ducks are down to nine team members due to injuries to three players. This week they added defensive specialist Kirsten Frazer, a 5-6 freshman

from Los Angeles.

"Our team is still short on the bench," said Voelz. "We don't have any hitters left on the bench and while we still have the same goals as we set at the beginning of the season (to qualify for nationals), it's going to be twice as hard to realize those goals. We have our work cut out for us."

That job starts today.

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