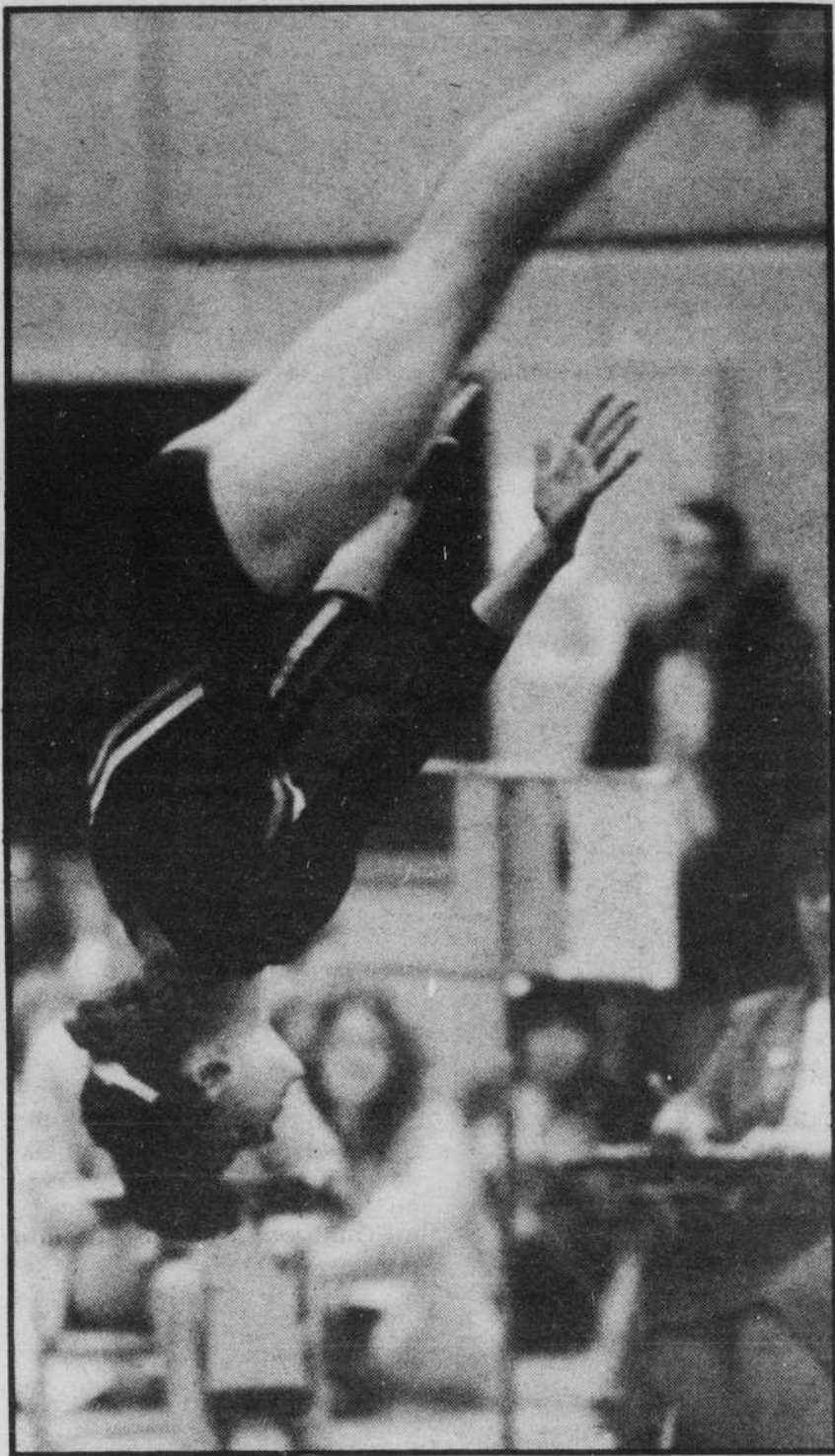


New Duck enters spotlight

Nolan emerges as top contender



For the past two years, juniors Dawn Haberland and Sara Gustafson have shared the number one spot on Oregon's gymnastics team.

Now it appears the talented duo might soon have to make room at the top for a teammate. Freshman Maureen Nolan has hit the collegiate gymnastics scene.

After taking fourth place in the all-around competition (29.7) during the Ducks' first dual meet of the season against British Columbia, Nolan was surprised when coach Henriette Heiny picked her to travel to the Brigham Young Cougar Cup Invitational as the team's third all-arounder.

Heiny was then the surprised one as Nolan was one of the few bright spots during a rather dismal trip to Utah where the women lost to both Arizona State University and BYU in a non-counting exhibition.

"Maureen has really pulled through for us," says assistant coach Jeff Davis.

"Right now she's a close second with Sara and Chris (Krueger) as the team's best all-arounder," adds Davis, not counting Haberland, who is out for at least a month with a shoulder injury.

Last Saturday in a dual meet against Portland State University, Nolan continued to improve, as she put together two third places in the uneven bars (7.95) and balance beam (7.75) along with a third and fifth place in the floor exercise (7.80) and vault (8.50).

The final result was a second-place finish in the all-around for Nolan (32.2) as Gustafson took first (33.70).

Nolan is now an Oregon student and athlete, but she almost didn't become a Duck.

How she did is a little different story from the traditional script of an athlete being hounded by schools with scholarships.

"I wanted to go to a California college," says Nolan, who grew up in Yorba Linda, Calif.

Maureen Nolan's entry into Oregon's gymnastic program has reaped its reward. The all-around performer has caught part of the spotlight and is looking forward to more.



"But somehow I ended up here at Oregon."

"Maureen is both a talented and competitive athlete," says Heiny, who found out about Maureen when her mother contacted Heiny last year.

"My mother didn't tell me anything about her contacting Henriette during the season," says Nolan. "I guess she had told her (Heiny) that she had a daughter in gymnastics and that maybe they could use me."

"I didn't want to go to Oregon. I wanted to stay in California. One day my mom got me a plane ticket to come and visit the campus. Next thing I know I'm at the (Eugene) airport where a friend, going to Oregon, picked me up."

In choosing the Ducks, Nolan turned down scholarships at Cal Poly-Pomona, Cal State-Northridge and San Diego State. Heiny didn't have any scholarships to give Nolan, but when a earlier recruit changed her mind about the Ducks, Nolan got her scholarship.

And the Ducks got a talented freshman gymnast who continues to surprise anyone.

Story by Terry Rhoads
Photos by Steve Dykes

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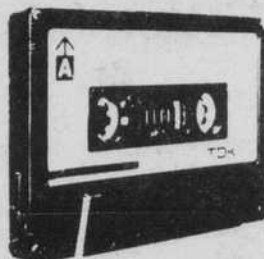
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