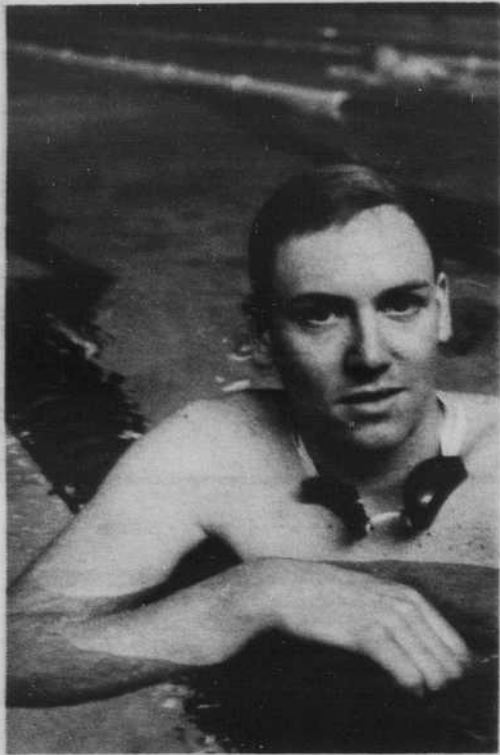


Tough competition may sink Ducks

By Mark Johnson
Of the Emerald



Emerald photo

Jamie Dull

Nothing short of the Southwest's secession from the Union will give the Oregon men's swimming team a shot at the Pacific 10 Conference title this week in Los Angeles.

In fact, the Ducks will probably bring up the rear.

UCLA, California, USC, Stanford and Arizona all finished within the top 11 spots at the NCAA championships last year while Arizona State finished 16th. It's not hard to see why the Pac-10 is regarded as the toughest conference in the nation for swimming competition.

California will be defending its 1981 Pac-10 title while Oregon, which took eighth last year out of eight teams, will try to rack up more points than last year's 39. California rolled to 351 points last year.

Budget problems almost eliminated Oregon swimming last spring and the lack of money will keep most of the team, including potential scorers, in Eugene.

Duck swimming coach Dan Cole said Erik Hughes and Mark Bennett will com-

pete in the butterfly and individual medley events. Jeff Zeller and Jamie Dull will concentrate on various freestyle events, and Jeff Morgan will pull freestyle and butterfly duty.

Significant times include Bennett's 51.20 in the 100-yards butterfly and Morgan's 1:43.92 in the 200-yards freestyle and 1:53.66 in the 200-yards butterfly.

Momentum should also help to carry the Ducks as they are coming off a 13-1 dual meet season record, the only loss was a 82-29 drubbing by Washington, and a tally of 48 personal bests out of 51 individual swims to take third at the recent North Pacific Conference swimming championships in Seattle.

However, Oregon hasn't fielded a national swimming power since the early 1970's when they were ranked in the top-10, and a limited budget has given the program only enough money to deal with the bare essentials.

The Ducks won't be competing on an even keel with the Californias or UCLAs for a long while — if ever. But Cole said he can competently rebuild through recruiting in the next few years to

challenge perennial Northwest power Washington.

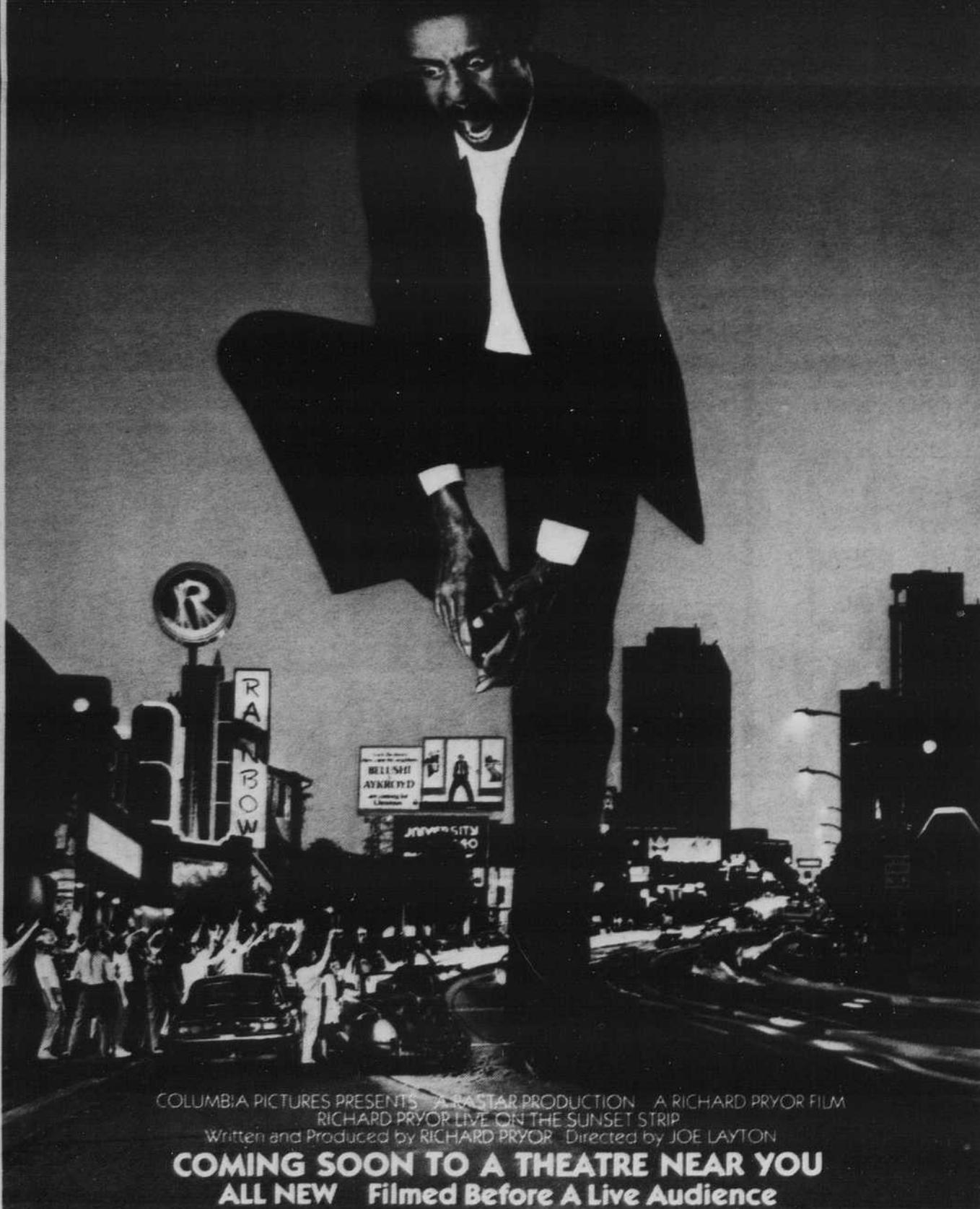
Swimming at Oregon has faced many changes over the past year, such as a limited budget, a new coach and the combination of the men and women into a coed program, but most of the athletes agree that the greatest change has been the atmosphere created by Cole's charismatic approach to coaching.

Jamie Dull, a junior in telecommunications and film, was named an all-American for his efforts on Crescenta Valley (Calif.) High School's water polo team — "my main sport," says Dull.

"I was encouraged by the new program change, and I thought Dan was doing the really instrumental things in promoting a good club — he has charisma," Dull said.

Cole's charisma may not keep him from turning out the lights and being the last to leave the East Los Angeles Community College pool this weekend, but it may provide the base to attract the talent, and eventually the money, that will keep him from being the last to leave in the future.

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Women meet MSU; ready for regionals

The Oregon women's gymnastics team will see its first action in the last two weeks when the lady flyers face Montana State in Bozeman tonight.

The meet should be a warmup for the women before regionals next week, according to coach Gary Vanderhoef. Montana State, an AIAW team, has been scoring about 133 points a meet, while the Ducks have been in the 136-138 range.

"They're not a real strong team as I understand," Vanderhoef said. "We'll try some new things, but we're looking right through this meet."

Oregon will have Sara Gustafson competing in the all-around. Gustafson is healthy now after suffering from a finger injury earlier.

Montana State will be the last regular-season meet for the Ducks before the NCAA regionals March 12-13 in Corvallis. Oregon will be one of four teams in the region, along with the University of Washington, Oregon State University and the University of Utah.

Oregon's goal will be to take third in the region and score 140 points, which would be an all-time scoring record for women's gymnastics at Oregon. However, the Ducks will be hard-pressed to take third in the region. Top-ranked Utah and 2nd-ranked Oregon State should battle it out for the regional title, and Washington has already defeated Oregon earlier this year. The Huskies have consistently been scoring in the 140-point range.

Women's nationals will be held March 26-27 in Salt Lake City, Utah.



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