

Women

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gling program and guided the Ducks to an 11-6 record, their first winning season in six years. Since that initial season, Heiny's record has improved to 118-33, and the women's basketball program boasts the best mark of all major sports at Oregon.

Heiny had the unenviable task of turning a program that was still a part of the physical education department into a national power. Obviously, it wasn't easy.

"All of women's sports was just beginning to have the opportunities the men's programs have had for years," Heiny says. "I was fortunate to have girls that came from good high school programs."

"Title IX goes right back to opportunity," Heiny says. "We were able to reap the benefits of it early by getting players from the junior colleges and high schools. We've made steps to push our program forward faster than other schools."

Those steps included recruiting primarily from the Northwest. Heiny says the only real limitation to recruiting is the lack of funds, but "there are very good players in the Northwest."

"We've also had the help of a few from the far north — Canada."

The most golden of the nuggets from the north has been Bev Smith, the team's all-time leading scorer and rebounder from British Columbia who helped the team to four consecutive seasons of 20 or more victories, and three consecutive appearances in post-season play. Heiny says Smith's contribution to the success of the program went much deeper than her leadership.

"Scholarships have had an impact, but so have role models,

of which the latest was Bev Smith," Heiny says. "Her impact was noticeable not only on the team, but throughout the community."

Another step forward was improving the schedule, Heiny says. This year, Heiny believes the pre-season schedule is the toughest he has assembled. It includes Drake, Illinois State, and a tournament date with Memphis State. All three were nationally-ranked last year.

Traditionally, the Northwest has not been a hotbed for women's basketball, so "it's been very tough to get top opponents up here," Heiny says. But the home schedule this year features, for the first time, nationally-ranked opponents. Long Beach State comes in on Dec. 19, followed later by games with UCLA and USC. Heiny says many people are picking the Trojans to be the top team in the country this year.

"You are only as good as the teams you play," Heiny says.

Scheduling has also played an important role in determining the success of the women's volleyball program, Voelz says. Last year, the team's record dropped to 13-32-2 after a 1980 season of 41-16-1. The volleyball team qualified for the AIAW tournament for four straight years from 1973 to 1976, and in 1973 won the regional title.

"I don't mean to take anything away from it (the past program)," Voelz says. "They were successful and had a solid foundation. They went for a time where they were fourth in the nation."

"But in this day and age, everyone's giving scholarships and women's volleyball is on the level with men's basketball."

Volleyball on the west coast is

the best in the nation, according to Voelz. She points to the fact that 14 of the top 20 teams in the nation compete in either the NorPac conference or the West Coast Athletic Conference. Last weekend, the Ducks hosted 18th-ranked California and 12th-ranked San Jose State on consecutive nights. Opponents like that not only make for fierce competition near the net, but also on the recruiting front.

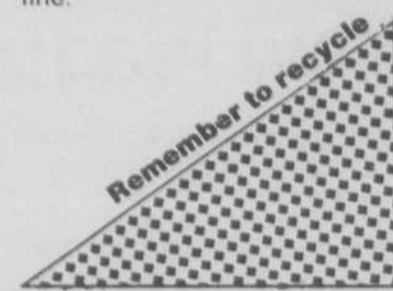
Voelz maintains that the population base in the Northwest is too small for Oregon to attract the best players from the area. A top female athlete has a number of schools from which to choose, including the talent and tradition-rich schools in southern California.

"It's just a small population base that's being pulled apart by a lot of schools," Voelz says.

The economic times have not been easy on either the women's or men's programs, but Voelz says the Oregon has a "good problem," in that the athletic administration has recognized the importance of both programs.

"We've got a good problem. We don't have the money but we have a good philosophy," Voelz says. She says she would rather be here than at a school where money is available — but there is dissension about how the money will be spent.

"But," she says, "when we all have the money we'll all be fine."



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