

Harriers gear up for district 8 meet

Men healthy, women hurting, as Ducks head for Fresno

By Marcus Prater
Of the Emerald

A healthy men's team and an ailing women's squad each decide their national cross country fates in the NCAA District 8 Championship Saturday in Fresno, Calif.

Both teams must finish in the top three to earn the right to advance to the NCAA Championship in Bloomington, Ind., Nov. 22., but neither coach is worrying about having to cancel flight plans.

"I think UCLA is the favorite, but us and Washington State have a chance of winning. It's not going to be a walkaway for anybody," men's coach Bill Dellinger said.

"Everybody is saying we're a shoo-in (to go to nationals)," said women's mentor Tom Heinonen. "But we obviously have to prove ourselves."

The men will be running against 22 teams, including all of the Pac-10 Conference and the Pacific Coast Athletic Association teams.

However, Dellinger said the strongest competitors include UCLA, Arizona, Washington State, Oregon State, California and the Ducks.

The Ducks are healthy, Dellinger said, and training is going well. But he still doesn't know how much progress has been made since Oregon's 10-point victory over host team Washington State in the Northern Division championship Oct. 29.

Washington State's Peter Koech has been tabbed the favorite for the individual title, but he is expected to battle with teammate Richard Tuwei, who won last year's individual title, Cal's Tom Downs and Oregon junior Jim Hill. Koech

defeated Hill by 17 seconds in the Northern Division meet in Pullman, Wash.

Hill will have support from teammates Greg Irwin, John Zishka, Mike Blackmore and surprise standout Vance Blow.

The Ducks are trying to return to nationals after being absent last year for the first time since they began participating in the annual event in 1963, and Dellinger doesn't want to be missing from this year's field.

The women have an enigma that has been all too familiar this season — health problems.

Kathy Hayes, Oregon's number one runner, is still nursing a ligament sprain in her left foot suffered during training. The sophomore from Newberg might not even make the trip. Even if she does, it's probable she won't run, Heinonen said.

Senior Eryn Forbes has been battling a bacterial infection and heavy cold and will not be at full strength for the 5,000-meter race.

Even with the health problems, Oregon and Stanford should battle, as they did last year, for the team crown.

"I figure six teams have a chance for the third spot. The last thing we want to do is be surprised and be on the outside looking in. There are no absolutes in cross country," Heinonen said.

Heinonen said the top runners for the individual crown are Washington's Regina Joyce, Stanford's Ceci Hopp, Alison Wiley, Kim Schnurpfeil and UCLA's freshman Polly Plumer. Heinonen's darkhorse candidates are Oregon's Rosa Gutierrez, Forbes and Hayes, "who would have been a solid threat," without the injury.

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Volleyballers to end season with homestand

It was a gloomy Chris Voelz who sat in the offices of the athletic department and pondered the last two games of the season for the Oregon volleyball team.

Ten minutes earlier, the injury bugaboo had hit the Ducks again in the form of a sprained ankle to senior team leader Annetta Ensworth. Ensworth joins Barb Lutz, also suffering from a sprained ankle, on the disabled list as Oregon prepares to end its season with home matches against Idaho tonight and Oregon State Saturday.

Both matches start at 7:30 p.m. in McArthur Court.

"It's just a real depressing thing," said Voelz of Ensworth's injury. "I have a whole lot of respect for Annetta, not only as a player but for the great person she is. She provided us with a lot of leadership this year."

The Ducks will face an Idaho team tonight that has won three games in the last week and sports a 17-8 season record. "They're an up and down team, and that's because they're a young team," said Voelz. "At full force I'd say we could beat them, and if we rise to the occasion, we should still beat them."

Saturday, Oregon State comes to Eugene having already sewed up a berth in the NorPac Conference playoffs. Voelz is not in awe of the Beavers. "The last time we played, there were two close games, and even though we lost in three games, it could've been anybody's match." Oregon must counter Oregon State's front line of Sandy Sexton, Julie Steding and Julie Williams. Williams had 13 kills in the last meeting.

To combat the loss of Ensworth, Voelz plans to insert Liz Eakin into the front line and use Sandi Adams in the backcourt. With the season nearly over, Voelz said she plans to play everyone.

"It has been a growing season," said Voelz. "We're young and we had some sporadic play. We're just going to play with pride and never give up until the season is over, and hopefully we can win these games."

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