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(signed) Prof. Richard Lindholm
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sports

Ranked 11th in nation

Netters have point to prove

By Robert Collias

Of the Emerald

The Duck volleyball team is ready to turn some heads this season as the netters have climbed to 11th in the NCAA polls with a 12-6 record.

Oregon coach Chris Voelz has a team which should be a solid bet to contend for the NorPac conference title and an NCAA playoff berth. The netters barely missed the playoffs last year despite posting a 24-18 record. This year the Ducks are poised and ready to advance to the NCAAs.

Oregon coach Chris Voelz will lead her team into NorPac conference play this weekend against the University of Washington and Washington

State University on the road.

The spikers have attained their lofty position with perseverance and hard work, but Voelz isn't taking anything for granted.

"Last year we thought we deserved to go (to the NCAAs), but the selection committee rejected us because we lost to teams like Weber State," says Voelz who entered her seventh year as head coach.

"This year we are beating the teams we are supposed to and doing it decisively," says Voelz.

Last season, the Ducks showed sparks of brilliance by beating the likes of third-ranked University of Southern California, seventh-ranked University

of Texas and 13th ranked San Jose State University.

When post-season announcements came, the Ducks were left out. They are doing their best this season to see that won't happen again. In three pre-season tournaments, the Ducks have steadily improved. To cap off the pre-season, Oregon won the prestigious Brigham Young Preview Invitational last weekend.

"We changed defenses and it made a big difference," Voelz said on the BYU triumph which saw the netters win 17 of 18 games played.

Oregon's top player is All-America candidate Sue Harbour. Harbour has been dazzling at the middle hitter position. Harbour's All-America candidacy is justified by her nation-leading 300 kills.

"Everything is really going well," says Harbour who enters her third season with the Ducks. "We are doing what we are expected to do."

Harbour isn't a one-woman show. She is backed by talented setter Lisa Gemoya and host of new recruits.

"The freshmen have helped immensely," says Harbour. "We are stronger in a lot of areas and everyone is pulling their weight."

Voelz's tem has been boosted by the return of Shaunna Koenig, Connie Riel and Cynthia Shepherd.

"I think it is more of a motivation factor," says Koenig. "It is nice to be ranked, but rankings don't mean anything."

A tribute to Oregon's play is that all six losses have been to nationally-ranked teams.

"I think that shows we've come a long way," says Voelz.

Shepherd feels the Ducks are different than last year's version.

"We started at a much higher level," says Shepherd. "It is a totally different team."

With the pre-season behind them, the Ducks begin conference play against an improved WSU team this Friday in Pullman, Wash., at 7:30 p.m. Then the Ducks travel to Seattle for a match against the Washington Huskies at 8 p.m.

"We have to be prepared for both," warned a wary Voelz who thinks the matches will be hard fought.

Shepherd thinks the Washington trip will add more confidence to the Ducks' hopes.

"We should come out on top this weekend," says Shepherd. "It shouldn't be a surprise."

Tournament set

The Oregon tennis team will sponsor invitational tournaments on Oct. 5-7 for adults and Oct. 12-14 for juniors.

Adults can enter in the open and age group competitions for a fee of \$10.50 for singles and \$6.50 for each doubles team. Junior fees are \$6.00 for singles and \$4.00 for doubles.

For information, call Oregon tennis coach Buzz Summers at 686-5476. Checks should be made payable to the University of Oregon Athletic Department.



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