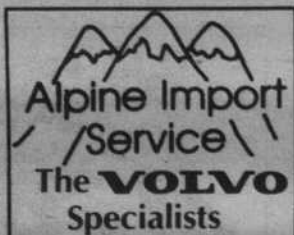


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sports

Kind, Maxwell propel Oregon Freshmen gymnasts boost program to new heights

By Adam Worcester
Of the Emerald

When considering the Oregon women's gymnastics team, "North to the Future" is more than just an Alaskan motto; the phrase also describes the Ducks' last recruiting season.

Duck coach Ed Boyd, hampered by a limited budget, cast his hopes northward and landed a pair of prizes: 5-foot-2 Cyndee Maxwell from Renton, Wash., and 5-foot-6 Gretchen Kind from Fairbanks, Alaska.

Maxwell and Kind, along with sophomore Denise Garcia, form the nucleus of a young but talented Duck team that Boyd says is the "future of Oregon gymnastics."

If that's the case, then the future looks bright indeed. Although the Ducks finished with only a 2-7 record this season, which ends March 16 with the NorPac Championships in Corvallis, Maxwell and Kind have emerged as Oregon's best and most consistent performers.

Maxwell has placed within the top three meet competitors 22 times this season, including six first-place finishes in the vault, her best event. Kind won, placed or showed 15 times and boasts four first-place finishes in her specialty, the uneven parallel bars.

"Gretchen and Cyndee both have their strengths and weaknesses," Boyd says. "They complement each other."

Or, as Maxwell says, "We're complete opposites."

While that may be true in the gym, away from the sport, the two share many similarities. Both got an early start in gymnastics, tumbling on their front lawns as kids. Both were high school stars. Both are undeclared majors considering careers in sports medicine. And both turned down full-scholarship offers from other schools to come to Eugene.

Maxwell, who captained her 1982 Lindberg High School gymnastics squad in Renton, refused a full-ride from the University of Montana because "it was too far away and the school wasn't as good. It was cold. I came here mostly for the school."

Kind had a similar experience.

"I was going to go to Boise State or here," she says. "The gymnastics at both places were good, but I ended up here because Boise State didn't have as good a program."

Due to budget restraints, Oregon cannot afford to offer full scholarships to out-of-state recruits. Both Kind and Maxwell are on partial scholarships that they expect will offer a little more money next year.

Kind, a three-time Most Valuable Gymnast at West Valley High School in Fairbanks, was actually recruited as a walk-on to the Oregon pro-

gram because injuries forced her to miss most of her senior year. Boyd, although he knew of her, never saw her compete in high school. She intended to send him videotapes of her ability. However, just as she was regaining full strength, Kind broke her hand and was unable to show her talents.

Boyd first saw Maxwell compete for the Pacific-Cascade Gymnastics Club in a United States Gymnastics Federation regional meet. Boyd says he was impressed by her "big tricks."

"Ed saw me and just started talking to me, and I ended up here," says Maxwell, who spent a year between high school and college competing and coaching before enrolling at Oregon.

Once here, both Kind and Maxwell have had to adjust from club gymnastics to college competition.

"College is more team-oriented" than club competition, Kind says of her days with the Gymnastics, Inc. Club during high school.

This season was especially hard, though, says Maxwell, because due to Oregon's lack of depth "everyone had to compete in every event, no matter what. We couldn't specialize in one thing. It kind of wore everybody out."

The next adjustment for the two was getting used to Boyd's coaching methods.

"We had to adjust to a different kind of coach," Kind says. "When you're so used to one you learn what he wants, and often it's hard to adjust to a different style."

At first, learning Boyd's system was rocky for both gymnasts.

"We went through some hard times because we didn't know him, and he didn't know us," Maxwell says of Boyd. "Everybody has their different personalities. It's like we all need a different type of coach. Ed had to coach us all the same way pretty much because he didn't know us."

Now, though, Kind says the adjustments have been made, and the team is on the right track.

"If we keep building, I think we can make it to regionals next year," Maxwell says. "If we hit our routines in meets like we do in practice, we'd be scoring a lot higher. We just need the confidence and experience. Experience, mostly, because we came in here not knowing what to expect."

Part of that learning will take place Saturday in Corvallis when the Ducks compete in the NorPac Conference Championships at 7 p.m. Host Oregon State University is one of the favorites in the meet, and the Ducks, because of their youth (seven freshmen), don't figure to be in the running for the team title.

Sports Shorts

The Oregon men's tennis team took an easy 7-2 victory over Whitman College at the 15th Street Courts on Wednesday.

Freshmen Chris Brilhante and Sean Campbell led the way for the Ducks, 2-1, with victories in the singles matches. The two then combined for a doubles victory over Whitman's Jim Barrio and Jeff Northam, 6-2 and 6-1, to close out the match.

Oregon takes on Seattle University on Friday at 2:30 at home.

Oregon wrestlers Glenn Jarrett (134 pounds) and Mike Harter (177 pounds) will begin their matches today in the National Collegiate Association Championships held in Oklahoma City.

The three-day affair will feature some of the top wrestlers in the nation.

The Oregon men's volleyball team placed third in the Warner Pacific Invitational last weekend. The Ducks were the top finisher among the Oregon schools.

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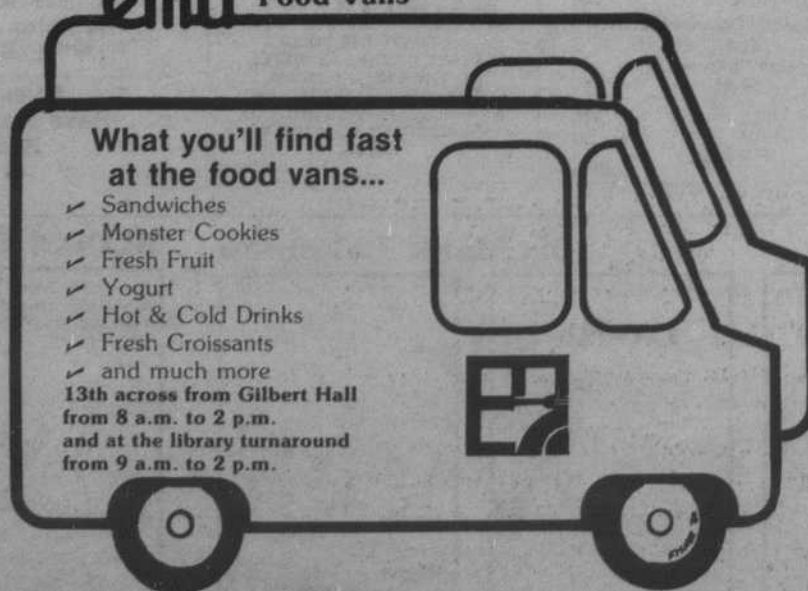
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