

Swimmers head for Pac-10 championships

By Jeff Lutzky
Of the Emerald

The men's swimming team will be trying to get themselves out of the cellar when they head to the Pacific-10 Conference swimming championships at East Los Angeles Community College today through Saturday.

"We want to beat the University of Washington, and if all goes well, we can," says assistant coach Jamie Hetzel. "The only problem is that it has been about five years since I've been involved in a meet where everything went right. We're probably still a year away from beating them."

But anything more than beating the Huskies is something the Ducks won't be considering — even in their wildest dreams. The meet features defending NCAA champion Stanford University along with many of the other top teams in the country.

According to Hetzel, Stanford should be able to defend their title, although they'll get a strong battle from the University of California, UCLA, and the University of Southern California should battle for third and fourth place, with the University of Arizona and Arizona State University fighting for fifth and sixth.

From there, it will be Washington and Oregon batt-

ling for seventh, and for the Ducks to beat Washington (they have already lost to the Huskies twice this year), they will have to do well in the qualifying events.

Hetzel said they are hoping junior Steve Nichols can do well enough to offset the Huskies top swimmer, junior Jay Benner, leaving the rest of the responsibility of overcoming the Huskies to some of the other swimmers.

Hetzel pointed to the 400- and 800-yard freestyle relay teams, as well as some individual events as being important for the Ducks' chances of overcoming Washington.

According to Hetzel, the Ducks must get junior Chris Doyle into at least a consolation race in one of the sprint freestyles. Also, Oregon needs senior Rex Watkins to make his way into the consolations or finals of one of his events, most likely the 200-yard freestyle.

They also need to have Brian Flick in a consolation race in the 100- or 200-yard butterfly and sophomore Vince Hiriyama in a consolation in one of the backstroke events.

"It's a mental sport, and the mental can take over," Hetzel says. "You never know what will happen. Someone like Doyle, who's a championship meet swimmer, could sneak in with the race of their life."

The problem of nerves for his team is also one of the things Hetzel is concerned about.

"We just take the four fastest splits in the 100- and 200-yard freestyle to make up our relay teams, so there will be some freshmen in there," Hetzel says. "They've probably never swam against Olympians before, and that can be kind of nerve racking."

Although the meet only awards points through the final and consolation races, the top 16 places, Hetzel also hopes Oregon is able to place a lot of people in the mini-consolation (17-24th place) races.

"It would be good for the program if we can place people in the mini-consolations," Hetzel says. "It would be nice if people like (freshman) Mike Perry can break their school records. It won't help us win the meet, but it will help the program."

Besides just helping the program, the Ducks will also be trying to qualify people for the NCAA championships to be held in Indianapolis, Ind., from April 3-5.

Barring nerves, Hetzel expects the 400- and 800-yard freestyle relay teams to qualify, along with Nichols, and possibly Watkins in the 200-yard freestyle.

"Nichols can qualify in four different events," Hetzel says. "Although you're only allowed to enter someone in three in-

dividual events, we'll start him in the 800-yard freestyle relay, and if you start you can use your split as your individual time in the 200-yard freestyle. He also can possibly qualify in the 50- and 100-yard freestyle, and the 100-yard butterfly. This is all wishful thinking, however."

Last year, Nichols qualified for the NCAA meet in the

50-yard freestyle, and Nichols' added training is the main reason Hetzel feels he can qualify in more events.

"All the weight training has enabled him to hold on in the 100- and 200-yard freestyles," Hetzel says. "This year he has also trained a lot more on the butterfly, and improved there greatly."

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In NCAA tourney

It's the Devils vs. the Devils

By the Associated Press

If the Delta Devils of Mississippi Valley State are looking for inspiration, they might consider the Flying Dutchmen of Lebanon Valley.

Mississippi Valley, the little school whose mailing address is "Highway 82, Itta Bena, MS, 38941," is receiving an untold amount of national attention because it has to play top-ranked Duke today in the opening round of the NCAA basketball tournament. The Blue Devils are seeded No. 1 in the East Regional at Greensboro, N.C.

The history of the NCAA tournament is littered with the broken dreams of unassuming little schools which found themselves vying for the national championship and all too quickly found themselves out of the running, with no more than a "Thanks for coming and drive home safely."

Rarely does a team of Mississippi Valley's stature survive a first-round meeting with a team as powerful as the Dukes of the world. Last year, for example, little Lehigh was pictured as being fed to the lions — accurately, as it turned out. The Hoyas of Georgetown licked their collective chops and swallowed Lehigh, 68-43.

Ahh, but once every so often...

In 1953, Lebanon Valley, now a Division III member of the Middle Atlantic Conference, was invited to the NCAA tournament. The Flying Dutchmen were decided underdogs against Fordham, but the kids from Annville, Pa., knocked off the big boys from the Bronx, N.Y., 80-67.

The dream died in the next round when Louisiana State beat Lebanon Valley, 89-76.

Mississippi Valley Coach Lafayette Stribling is delighted to be pursuing the dream this year. "We're not going in there with the attitude that we can't win," he said. "We respect all but fear none. I've always said that before you can be successful you have got to overcome obstacles."

Yes — but what about playing Duke?

"We are proud to be here, to be a part of the NCAA tournament. And playing a team like Duke is another honor. We'll just go in, play and do our best."

Yes — but how do the Delta Devils match up with the Blue Devils?

"We don't match up with anybody. Our lineup goes 5-11 and 6-3 at guards, 6-7 at center and 6-5 and 6-3 at forwards. And our center (Carl Curry) weighs 165 pounds. He's just skin and bones.

"But our kids have done a fine job. And we don't play scared. We use a variety of defenses, we are not reluctant to change defenses, and we put some motion in our offense. We also like to fast break and fill the lanes."

Yes — but what are the Delta Devils' chances of winning?

"We'll pray a lot," Stribling said.

In Thursday's two other East Regional first-round games at Greensboro, Oklahoma plays Northeastern and Virginia faces DePaul.

In the Southeast Regional first-round games Thursday at Baton Rouge, La., it's Georgia Tech vs. Marist, Virginia Tech vs. defending champion Villanova, Memphis State vs. Ball State and Purdue vs. LSU.

In Midwest Regional opening-round play at Dayton, Ohio, it's Jacksonville vs. Temple, No. 1 seed Kansas vs. North Carolina A&T, 1985 runner-up Georgetown vs. Texas Tech and Michigan State vs. Washington.

And in the West Regional first round at Ogden, Utah, it's Louisville vs. Drexel, Bradley vs. Texas-El Paso, Alabama-Birmingham vs. Missouri and North Carolina vs. Utah.

The rest of the first round will be played Friday at Syracuse, N.Y. (East), Charlotte, N.C. (Southeast), Minneapolis (Midwest) and Long Beach, Calif. (West).

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