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Ultimate: These guys are the ultimate, and they're headed for the big time



Photo by Michael Wilhelm

By Allan Lazo
Of the Emerald

It would be hard to overlook a team that was the defending regional champions with national championship aspirations this year, but that would seem to be the case with the Club Sports men's ultimate frisbee team.

Last year, it was no easy task, but the Oregon contingent won the 16-team regional tournament in Santa Barbara, Calif. Oregon, the only team from outside of California, entered the tournament as the sixth seed, and eventually defeated Stanford University, 17-15, to win the tournament and qualify for the national-level competition.

This year, the team thinks they may have a shot at earning the number one seed in the regional tournament as well as taking home another title, and who's to say they shouldn't be able to do it? Not the numbers, that's for sure.

Of the 18 people on this year's competing team, 14 have returned from last year's squad, and according to coordinator Jeff McBride, a total of 14 people on the team are also graduating this year, so this is our big chance.

The team hasn't really had a competitive season. Instead, they have used spring's nice weather to travel to various tournaments to tune up for the two upcoming major regional and national events.

This season, the men's team won two of the tournaments they participated in and finished third, when they split their regular team into two different teams, in the tournament they held on campus.

In their last action before the May 3-4 regionals, the team travelled to Portland to play against two Seattle teams and a Portland team. The Oregon club team won all three games.

"Our main concern is getting the opportunity to go to nationals, but we want to try to be the top seed from the West when we go," McBride says. "We feel pretty confident — we've already bought our plane tickets for St. Louis," he adds with a laugh.

There are six regional tournaments, and the top three teams from each region qualify for the national tournament.

This year, the nationals will be held in St. Louis on the May 24-26 Memorial Day weekend. Last year the University of Pennsylvania won

the national title, and McBride says the Oregon team finished somewhere around seventh.

Last year's national 12-team field was divided into two pools, and McBride says his team didn't make it to the semi-finals, so he couldn't tell exactly where they finished.

McBride says the team has been gearing up for the tournament all year, training hard and talking about their goals. "For about a year, that's all we've been talking about," he says. "When you're around ultimate players, five minutes can't go by without the conversation going back to ultimate."

Senior Tim Moloney, another of the returning members, agrees this team is hungry for victories, even though he feels the team may have lost some "strong, power players."

"I think we have a huge potential, but we just don't have that many tournaments to prove ourselves in," Moloney says. "I think we can go further (than last year) but it is still sort of an unknown."

"We have some new talent that has been growing in leaps and bounds," Moloney says.

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Changes may mean success for crew

By Pat Patton
Of the Emerald

Things are definitely changing with the men's and women's Club Sports crew teams. In addition to having acquired new head coaches recently — Andy Josa for the men and Dave Baugh for the women — the team also boasts one of the youngest and most talented rowing crews in the Northwest.

The team, which is made up mostly of freshmen, has also made other changes. Among them, the legendary early morning practice sessions are no longer the rule.

The crew team consists of some 30 people, all of which, according to Josa, have an exceptional dedication to crew. Fifteen men and 15 women actively participate in the sport. What gives the team its near underdog status is the fact that it is hindered not only by small numbers, but also by its relative lightweightness.

Consider the fact that one member recently raced seven times in one day. Of the 30 members on the team, only 10 have prior crew experience. Josa feels the team can only get better, having been fortunate enough to start with enthusiastic athletes.

Josa also conveys optimism regarding the racing season. In preparation for the team's competition this season, he has altered some of the training methods, switching from the more traditional land-based activities to having more water time.

New physiological studies indicate that land-based training is not as effective in

preparing for rowing as actual water time, Josa says. Consequently, Josa has reduced time for running and weightlifting, while increasing rowing time. This has played a major role in the success of the team this season.

In their most recent action at the Tri-Cities Regatta in Richland, Wash., Oregon boats captured three first places. The mixed eight, men's open four and women's varsity light eight all took first places at the regatta held last Saturday.

According to Sasha Stone, a member of the women's light eight team, the boat looks to be as strong as ever. Last year, the varsity light eight boat went all the way to the national regatta after winning the regional event and capturing second at the Pacific-10 Conference Rowing Championships.

Of the eight rowers in the boat, five have returned from last year, and so far this year, they have beaten Oregon State University, the University of Washington and lost to Oregon State at the Corvallis Regatta.

At this year's Pac-10 championships, Stone says the main competition for the light eight team will come mostly from OSU and a team from San Diego. The top three finishers at the championships will qualify for the national regatta.

Earlier this season, OSU beat the San Diego team that the light eight boat has been worried about, so Stone thinks Oregon should be among the top three finishers.

The Pac-10 regatta, May 11-12, in Sacramento, and the Northwest Regionals,

May 17-18, in Seattle, Wash. will round out most of the rowers' season. The national championship regatta is scheduled for the weekend of June 14-15 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

According to Josa, Gil Gamble, crew coach at the University of Washington, says, "the men's varsity eight team is the best from Oregon in years."

With a new racing shell, which is 50 pounds lighter than the previously fastest shell, the team is looking forward to a season of victories.

The future looks very bright for the Oregon crew team. With the youth and enthusiasm of the team, it is easy to predict the team will soon be reaping the benefits of those assets.

Tri-Cities Regatta

Saturday, April 26 at Richland, Wash.
WOMEN'S VARSITY LIGHT EIGHT — 1: Oregon, 8:10; 2: Oregon State, 8:26. No third.
MEN'S VARSITY EIGHT — 1: Washington State, 6:31; 2: Oregon, 6:53; 3: Oregon State, 7:07.
MEN'S NOVICE EIGHT — 1: Gonzaga, 6:42; 2: Oregon State 'A', 6:46; 3: Oregon State 'B', 7:16; 3: Oregon, 7:38.
MIXED EIGHT — 1: Oregon, 1:39; 2: Washington State, 1:40; 3: Gonzaga, 1:41.
MEN'S OPEN FOUR — 1: Oregon, 2: Oregon State, 3: Washington State.
MEN'S LIGHT FOUR — 1: Oregon State, 7:52; 2: Washington State, 8:10; 3: Gonzaga, 8:22; 4: Oregon, 8:33.
MEN'S NOVICE FOUR — 1: Pacific Lutheran, 8:15; 2: Gonzaga, 8:28; 3: Washington State, 8:55; 4: Oregon, 8:56.

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