

Oregon grapplers look ahead to Pacific 10 tournament

By Ron Gullberg
Of the Emerald

Oregon wrestling coach Ron Finley enters this weekend's Pacific 10 Conference wrestling championships with a focus on individual performance.

The meet will be at Oregon State University's Gill Coliseum in Corvallis both Saturday and Sunday. Action will start at 1 p.m. on Saturday, and championships are scheduled for 1 p.m. on Sunday.

"I think it would be unrealistic to expect us to win the meet (as a team). We're looking to qualify guys for the nationals," Finley said.

Two-time defending champion Arizona State University heads the list of team favorites, while Finley expects Oregon, who finished with a regular season record of 8-13 overall and 3-5 in league, and Oregon State to finish in the middle of the pack.

"ASU is definitely the favorite," he said. "They're really sound in every weight class." Either Fresno State University or Utah State University will finish second, he added.

The Duck's hopes will mainly

ride on the shoulders of Roberto Pelayo (118), Shon Lewis (126) and Chuck Kearney (167). "I think all three of them should qualify for nationals, and have a good shot at placing first in the Pac-10's," Finley predicted.

Pelayo, Oregon's only returning national qualifier last season after finishing second at the Pac-10 meet, ended this season's regular schedule with an impressive 22-10-1 overall record, 15-5-1 in duals.

"Pelayo is a real steady performer; he keeps getting better every time he steps on the mat," Finley praised. "He's the hardest worker on the team — very intense."

Lewis (25-3-2 and 24-6-0) and Kearney (17-2-2 and 17-3-0) are both proven winners, but can expect to be "pointed-out" by opponents on Saturday. "Lewis has to beat a guy, Chip Park of Arizona, that beat the number one wrestler (in the country) earlier in the season," Finley said.

Kearney gets a rematch with Cal Poly's Erick Osborne, who beat him by one point in an earlier match and is currently ranked sixth in the nation.

The Ducks won their last con-

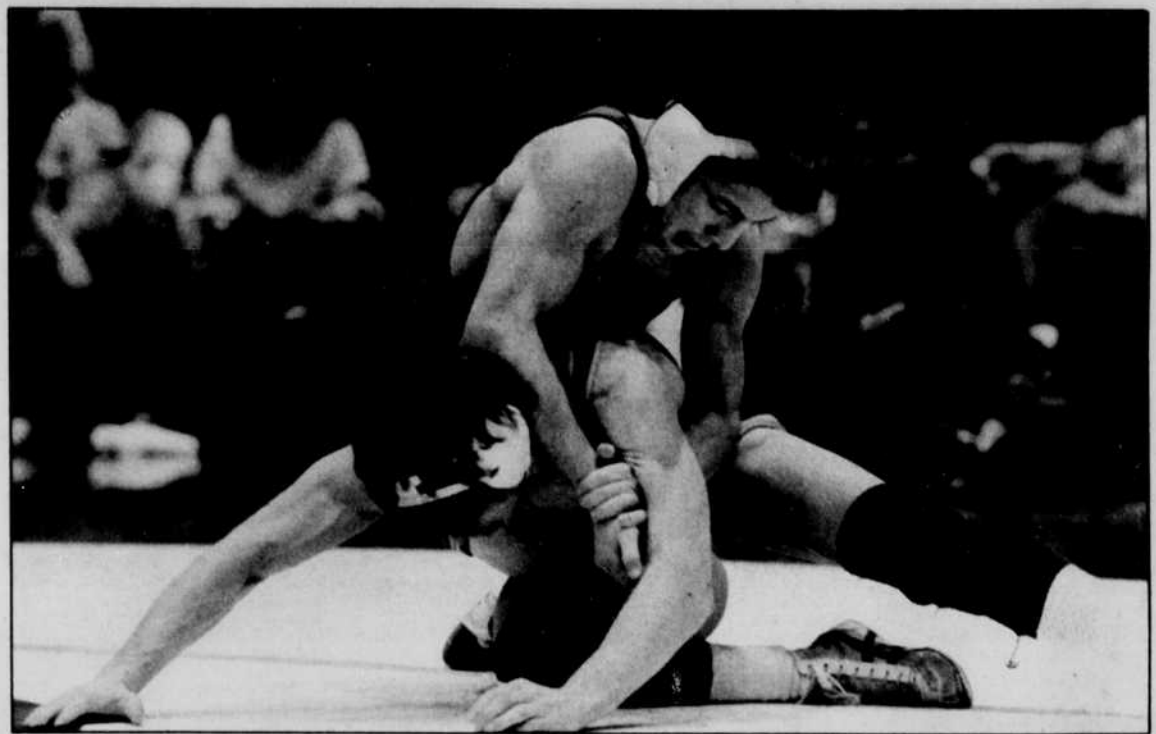


Photo by Tim Jones

Roberto Pelayo is one of Oregon's hopefuls to bring home an individual championship from the Pac-10 wrestling tournament this weekend.

ference title in 1982.

Oregon's last Pac-10 champion was Mike Harter at 177. Glenn Jarrett won an individual

title in 1985 at the 126-pound class.

Pelayo, Lewis and Kearney all hope to join John Miller as

Oregon's only NCAA champions. Miller captured the 118-pound weight class in 1969.

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