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Volleyball team expects to improve

By Gary Henley
Of the Emerald

Many people thought 1986 would be a rebuilding year for the Oregon volleyball team after it lost head coach Chris Voelz and All-American Sue Harbour the previous season.

The Ducks, with six freshmen on the roster, had other ideas, compiling a 22-12 record in their initial Pacific 10 Conference season and earning a berth in the N C A A tournament.

Even though the Ducks were ousted by Stanford in the first round, Oregon players are optimistic they can go farther in 1987.

"I think we have a lot more depth than we've had in the past," said Senior outside hitter Teri Kramer. "We have a real strong bench this season."

Oregon was considered an underdog by many of their opponents last season and consequently were able to catch them off guard, she said.

Second-year head coach Gerry Gregory said the turning point for last season may have been the team's match with Arizona, which was the Ducks first Pac-10 match. Oregon won it in four games.

The Sept. 6 match at home against Nebraska was pivotal, even though the Ducks lost it in five games, Gregory added. By showing their strength against a national power like Nebraska, the Ducks showed themselves, the Pac-10, and, for that matter, the rest of the country that they were a team to be reckoned with. Apparently most of the teams didn't get the message.

It's not fair to say the Ducks "snuck up" on all of their opponents. Oregon jumped into both national polls (the NCAA

and the Tachikara/Collegiate Volleyball Coaches Association poll) the week of Sept. 23, less than a month into the season.

"I think a lot of people just misjudged the quality of our team last year, and we ended up being a surprise to some," Gregory said.

The team closed out September with wins over Stanford and the University of Southern California, and went

thwest Region.

The Ducks know they have a hard road to travel and a rough way to go if they are to regain the success they had in 1986, when they finished 15th in both national polls.

"I don't think anybody will take us lightly this year," Kramer said. "We have a lot more experience now and know what to expect."

To stay in contention, the Ducks need to do several things, according to Kramer.

"Some of the things we might need work on are spreading the offense and communication," she said. "Once the game starts, we need to leave our personalities off the court and be aggressive out there."

The Ducks are led by Kramer and sophomore Michele Krebsbach.

Kramer led the nation in

kills per game (5.38) and set an Oregon record by hammering down 703 kills last season. Krebsbach was named Pac-10 freshman of the year in 1986.

The two are part of the "Special K's," which includes Kramer, Krebsbach and middle blockers Lauri Krejcha and Denise Kuhn, who is currently injured.

The Ducks have no major weaknesses as much of last year's team has returned. The team has two experienced setters in Stephanie Snyder and Tina Adolph.

Also returning are sophomore Stephanie Drier, outside hitter Melissa Terzian, junior backrow player Michelle Crowston and senior specialist Monica Camp.

Gregory listed freshman outside hitter Mindee Adams from Irvine, Calif.; junior-college transfer Eva Windlin from Kussnacht, Switzerland; and Lisa Madrid, a transfer from Oregon State and former Churchill High School star as the teams top newcomers this season.



File Photo

The Oregon volleyball team prepares for a tough season in the Pac-10. The team hopes to advance farther than the first round of the NCAA tournament this year.

on to win 11 of 14 matches in October. The Ducks swept their season series with Arizona, California, USC, Washington State and Oregon State.

Gregory sees a tough battle in the Pac-10 this season.

"Stanford and UCLA look like the top two going in," Gregory said. "There could be several teams that have a chance for third. Oregon, Arizona State, and USC are all threats."

Gregory is a proven winner, having had only one losing season since he began coaching in 1980 at Oregon State.

He stayed with the Beavers for three years, moved on to the University of Wyoming in 1983, and came to the Ducks in 1986, bringing with him a combined record of 126-92-3.

Oregon's performance last season earned Gregory Coach-of-the-Year honors in the Nor-

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