

Sports

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than I like," Strahm added. "We're good friends, but once we're competing against each other, the friendship ends."

Finley said they've been able to help each other. "Curt's older brother Cam (a sophomore on the wrestling team) and Chuck Kearney have also been working with them," he added.

At Centennial High School in Gresham, Strahm won the district title twice and was state freestyle champion while Myers helped Newberg High School win the state AAA wrestling championships in 1986 and 1987, and finished as the runner-up in 1987 at the Oregon Freestyle championship.

Wrestling runs in Strahm's family, as Curt followed his older brother Cam to Oregon. The elder Strahm, a sophomore heavyweight, won the state AAA championship as a senior at Centennial, compiling a 35-0 record and placing third in the Iowa Junior Nationals.

Myers came to Oregon because he wanted to stay in-state, but he added the quality coaching also drew him.

"Coach Finley had a lot to do with me coming here — they have great coaching here. I'm learning a lot. It's been real competitive at the college level because there's a lot more intensity. I need to work more on the mental toughness, but I've been pleased with my season so far."



Photo by Bobbi Lo

Curt Strahm and Scott Myers are two of the talented freshmen on this year's Oregon wrestling team.

Strahm sustained a recent knee injury, which has caused him to miss two weeks' worth of action, but he said, "things have been very positive so far. I've made a lot of progress since high school. The competition's

a lot tougher and you have to keep up the intensity level, but the coaching here is great and I've learned a lot."

"Very seldom do you see freshmen making a big impact in top-notch competition," Finley said. "Many of them never even make the team."

"You can usually tell the toughness of a team by the number of freshmen in the lineup. The freshmen are usually considered the weakest part of your team, but we have two or three right now, and they're holding their own. They're doing very well."

Both Myers and Strahm have been wrestling in the 177/190 class, backing up senior Chuck Kearney, last season's second-place finisher at the Pac-10 tournament.

Pehling, competing in the 142 and 150 weight classes, is a two-time Washington state high school champion and won the state freestyle championship after placing second in 1984 and 1985.

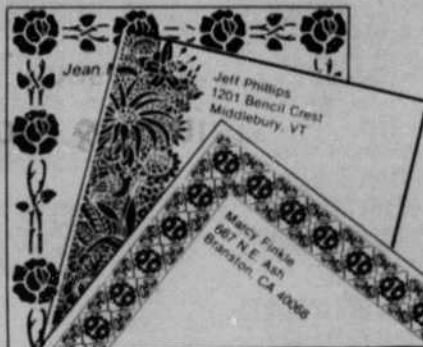
Dan Vidlak, a two-time AAA state champion at Hidden Valley High School in Grants Pass, rounds out the key newcomers in Finley's 1987-88 freshman class, a class that the Ducks coach, in his 18th year at Oregon, calls one of his best.

Finley said it's "a class with a lot of potential."

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