

Women take third consecutive Pac-10 crown

By Kurt Zimmer
Emerald Contributor

The potent one-two punch of All-Americans Liz Wilson and Penny Graves carried the Oregon women's cross country team, ranked second in the nation, to its third consecutive Pacific-10 Conference championship Monday morning at the



Liz Wilson

Stanford University Golf Course in Palo Alto, Calif.

The Ducks, the only team ever to win the conference championship, won four consecutive NorPac crowns before Pac-10 women's competition began in 1986.

"I'm really happy with the way (the Ducks) performed because our team isn't all that healthy right now," coach Tom Heinonen said.

"I almost didn't let Liz Wilson run the race. She's had a nagging muscular pain in her calf which we really can't pinpoint at all."

Wilson began tentatively, but steadily gained ground through the middle of the race, Heinonen said. Wilson took over the lead after about a mile and a half and never looked back, becoming the third straight Duck to claim the individual crown. Graves captured the title in 1986 and Annette Hand won it last year.

Depth was a key factor for the defending NCAA national champions, as Kathy Tracy, Karen Rayle and Stephanie Wessell provided a solid 11-14-15 backup to round out Oregon scoring with 43 points. Also competing for the Ducks were Francie Faure and Norwegian transfer student Lise Johansen, who finished 21st and

31st respectively.

Eighth-ranked UCLA finished a distant second with 75 points, edging out 13th-ranked California, which compiled 77 points. Other finishers were Washington State (114), Arizona (120), Washington (143), Stanford (155), Arizona State (170) and Oregon State (272). Southern California does not field a team in the sport.

Wilson ran the 5,000-meter

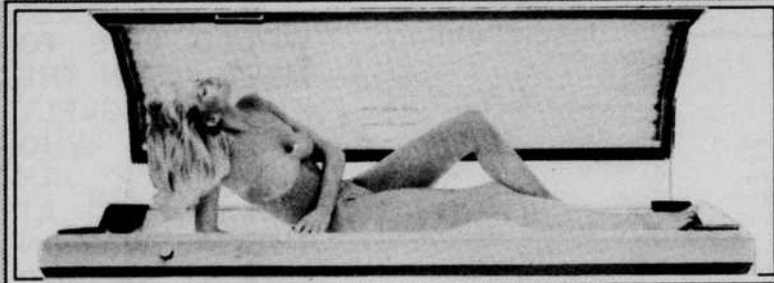
course in 17:06, six seconds ahead of Graves. The rest of the top 10 were Sally Wood (Cal), Theresa Barrios (ASU), Jennifer Robertson (WSU), Carol Gray (Stanford), Bridget Smyth (Arizona), Sabrina Han (Cal), Laurie Chapman (UCLA) and Zenny Koehler (WSU).

"I was happy with Kathy Tracy because she hasn't really raced for three weeks," Heinonen said.

Oregon should be favored to claim District VIII's automatic berth in the NCAA national championships, as Heinonen expects only California-Irvine to challenge the Pac-10 powers. The Ducks have won nine of the past 12 district meets, placing second twice.

The district meet is slated for Nov. 12 in Fresno, Calif., with nationals set for Nov. 21 in Des Moines, Iowa.

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