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Sports_



All-Pac-10 catcher Julie Cavanaugh is one of eight returners as the Oregon softball team opens the season Saturday at Oregon State.

Brown, softball team look to title

By Darin Linnman Emerald Contributor

If the success of last year's team is any indication, new Oregon softball coach Tami Brown shouldn't have any trouble getting excited about this year's team — and she hasn't.

Brown, who in 1987 guided the Stanford Cardinal to a 25-5 mark and has been an assistant at Arizona State for the last two years, said she is very excited about her move from the sunny southwest to rainy Eugene.

"I'm excited to coach Oregon, and I love the University. It's a great program because it's like a family atmosphere and I love it." Brown said.

But Brown has more than a family atmosphere to be excited about. She has inherited a team that last season compiled a 54-18 overall record and finished second in the Pacific-10 Conference with a 13-7 league record to eventual national champion UCLA.

The second place finish qualified the Ducks for their first-ever NCAA tournament. They went on to win the Northeast Regional, earning a spot in the College World Series.

From that College World Series team. 14 letter winners return, including 8 starters and four players who earned Pac-10 or All-America honors. With a team so rich in talent and experience comes a great deal of expectations, but Brown remains immune to outside pressure.

"We have to not think about last year and not worry about what people think." she said. "I know what we have and I am really confident in my team and really confident in my staff."

The abundance of returning talent gives Brown good reason to be confident.

Leading the way among the returners is sophomore pitcher Katie Wiese. As a freshman. Wiese led the nation and set an Oregon record with a mark of 42-13. Her 42 wins and her 0.52 earned run average earned her the Pac-10 Player of the Year and first team All-America honors.

"Katie is a one-of-a-kind player and person. She is our franchise player," Brown said.

Wiese said she hopes to improve upon last year's performance, but admits she's a little ner-

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