

Sports

Softball

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vous about the upcoming season.

"I'll be happy if I can accomplish what I did last year, and I hope to work up to doing better," she said. "Last year I got a lot of recognition for just pitching, and I didn't think about the pressure. Now, a lot of people are expecting me to do well, and I'm a little nervous."

Sophomore Jan Larson and sophomore transfer Anna Poore have made tremendous improvements in their pitching, and should be able to relieve some of the pressure from Wiese, Brown said.

Also returning with All-America honors is sophomore Kim Manning, who was named to the second team as a designated player. The first team All-Pac-10 Conference pick, who hit .324, scored 35 runs and stole 19 bases last year, will enter the line-up at third base this year.

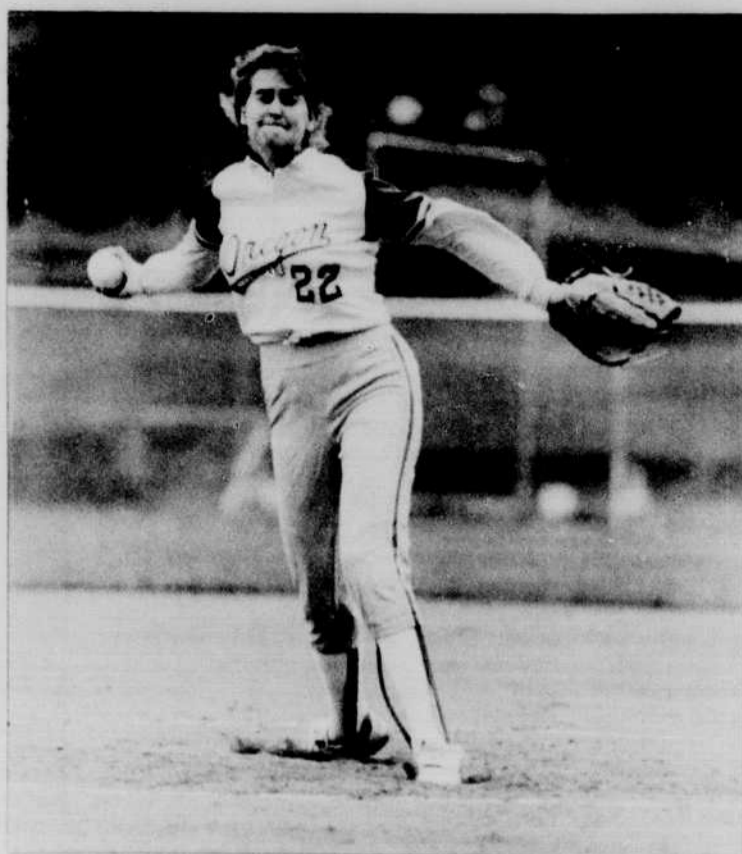
"Kim works hard and is real confident. She is one of our best kids," Brown said. "She's a good hitter and will be even better when she stops being so hard on herself."

Junior catcher Julie Cavanaugh joined Manning on the All-Pac-10 team last year with a .324 batting average, and returns this year as one of the team's strongest leaders, according to Brown. It's a role Cavanaugh said she enjoys.

"I love being a leader — it gives me a reason to talk all the time," she said. "I like having control and working with the pitchers."

Sophomore shortstop Danny Senner and sophomore first baseman Tracey Simmons each earned second team All-Pac-10 honors last year, and are expected by Brown to keep improving this year. Junior Kristl Okuhara provides solid defense at second base to round out the infield.

The outfield provides the team with its most stability and experience. Three seniors, Vicki Fry, Jeanna King and Ces Coulson will start in left, center



File photo

Pac-10 Player of the Year and all-American Katie Wiese will be back on the mound as the Ducks seek a national championship this season.

and right fields respectively.

Brown said that she brought a new attitude to the Ducks style of practice and play — a style that emphasizes a unified intensity.

"We have a different mentality this year. We're a team unit — I think we are real unified, and I think that's why we'll win some games," she said.

"If we can execute 90 percent of the time, we will be successful," she said. Despite UCLA being the pre-season favorite to repeat as national champions, Brown's expectations are high and hopes that the Ducks hard work and success this year will lead to the national title.

"We're in it for one reason — to win nationals," Brown said.

Oregon opens the season Saturday with a doubleheader at Oregon State. Game time is 12 p.m.

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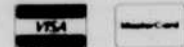
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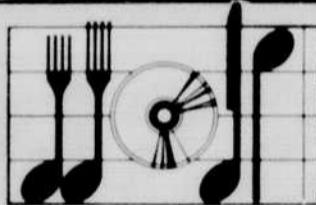
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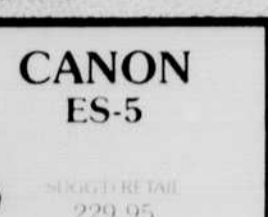
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