

WESSELL

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sell and Wilson have claimed the top two spots this season. Neither Wessell or Wilson have been defeated by an opposing runner this year.

Wilson claimed top honors in the Minnesota GBS and Emerald City Invitational, with Wessell coming in second each time.

At the Jeff Drenth Memorial in Eugene, the two switched spots with Wessell as the top collegiate finisher with Wessell second.

"I'm relatively pleased with my performance this year," Wessell said. "I think that I'm performing consistently this year. Last year and the year before I couldn't be sure of how well I was going to run."

Heinonen credits Wessell's improvement this year to her maturity as a runner.

"Stephanie has really matured over the last year as both a runner and a leader," Heinonen said. "Last year, she was unexpectedly thrust into a leadership role when Liz got hurt and that placed a lot of pressure on her."

That fact was never more evident than in

last year's NCAAAs. The NCAAAs were a disappointing finish to a disappointing year for the Ducks.

Wessell was the Ducks' only representative in the nationals last year as Oregon failed to qualify for the NCAAAs for the first time in Heinonen's fifteen years at Oregon.

"Last year was hard because we didn't make it to nationals," Wessell said. "It was hard on Tom not to go. Individually, I think that I really choked at nationals last year and that was a really bad note to end the year on."

Heinonen believes that Wessell's performance at nationals last year had something to do with the fact that she was there as an individual.

"It absolutely played a role in her performance," Heinonen said. "It was the first time ever that we ended up with a single individual at the NCAAAs. I've seen the same thing happen to other individual runners year after year."

Wessell says that although she missed having her teammates at the meet last year, it isn't an excuse for her poor performance there.

"I went back there with Tom and the

men's team," Wessell said, "but I didn't have the rest of my team to warm up and get over the pre-race butterflies with."

"I thought I was in great shape heading into the race," she said, "but during the race I had a hard time getting into it. I just didn't run as well as I knew I could have and it was really frustrating."

Wessell hopes to join the long list of Oregon all-Americans by being one of the first 25 finishers at this year's meet.

"I wanted to be an all-American last year," Wessell said, "but I really think that I will accomplish that this year."

It was that long list of Duck all-Americans that helped Wessell decide on Oregon.

"There's always been a certain mystique about Oregon's women's runners," Wessell said. "When I think of running, I think of Oregon. I used to come to the Oregon track camp when I was in high school and I really got a taste of what it's like to run in Eugene."

On Nov. 19, the Ducks will be out to prove to the country that last year was a fluke, and Wessell will be looking to put the number 58 to rest.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Predictions are based on anticipated point spread as determined by individual voters. A correct response is credited each time the favored team wins by at least the predicted margin. The numbers following each player's name represent that individual's overall record. These predictions are intended for entertainment purposes only.

	UCLA at UO	OSU at ASU	UA at UW	WSU at Stan	Cal at USC	Colo at Neb
A. Conklin (21-14)	UO +10	ASU +1	UW +10	WSU +1	USC +6	Colo +1
P. Morgan (19-16)	UO +13	ASU +1	UW +10	Stan +3	Cal +3	Neb +6
R. Weber (19-16)	UO +6	ASU +8	UW +10	WSU +2	USC +3	Colo +1
M. Ross (18-17)	UO +2	ASU +2	UW +2	Stan +2	USC +2	Neb +2
C. Blair (23-12)	UO +10	ASU +3	UW +10	Stan +3	USC +7	Neb +7
C. Bouneff (18-17)	UO +7	ASU +3	UW +10	WSU +3	USC +7	Colo +1

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