

Volleyball team signs top recruits

Two-time USVBA all-American heads stellar list

By Robert Weber
Emerald Sports Reporter

Why look elsewhere when what you're looking for is in your own backyard?

That appears to be the strategy employed by Oregon volleyball Coach Gerry Gregory, as he announced the signing of three top in-state recruits to national letters-of-intent on Wednesday.

Stephanie Warren, a two-time USVBA and Reebok all-American, is at the top of a list that Gregory deemed "the best recruiting class we've ever had."

Joining Warren at Oregon next season will be Angee Henderson, a 6-foot-2 middle blocker from Thurston High School, and LaReina Woods, a 5-foot-8 outside hitter from Corvallis.

Woods signed with the Ducks last year, but she didn't meet entrance requirements and has spent the past year attending Linn-Benton Community College in Albany.

Gregory, who appeared thrilled to finally have a chance to talk about his recruits, said, "all three players have the potential to help us next year."

"Warren has the most flexibility of all three because she has experience at playing all three front line positions and two of the three back row spots," he said.

Considered by many to be one of the nation's five or six best recruits, Warren, a 5-foot-11 middle blocker, racked up some impressive numbers while helping Gresham High School to three consecutive state titles.

Along the way, the versatile Warren picked up back-to-back player of the year awards in 1989 and 1990. As a senior, she collected 674 kills and averaged three blocks a game while compiling a 97 percent service percentage.

At 6-2, Henderson brings size and blocking ability to a growing Duck front line. In addition to her skills on the court, Henderson has shown

shown that she can perform in the classroom, as demonstrated by her 4.00 GPA at Thurston.

"Angee is one of the best blockers I've seen in a long time," Gregory said. "Because she's from Eugene, she doesn't always get the same attention as Warren, but she can play."

Warren and Henderson are getting a head start on being teammates by playing for the Northwest Juniors, one of the nation's top club teams.

People are saying the same things about Woods that they were saying a year ago — and with good reason.

A three-sport athlete at Corvallis High School and younger sister of Ducked nose tackle Marcus Woods, LaReina is considered by many to be one of the finest prep athletes to ever come out of Oregon.

Woods, who will also compete in track at Oregon, definitely has the tools to be a Pac-10 athlete, but Gregory said only time will tell how good she can be on the volleyball court.

"She's quick, hits hard and jumps high," he said.

What kind of problems could this new crop of talent cause on a team that returns everybody from last season?

"The kind of problems that we like to deal with," Gregory said. "Our team is closing the gap on UCLA and USC. How much the gap is being closed remains to be seen."

The new talent combined with the existing Oregon players will give Gregory his deepest team since he arrived in Eugene six years ago.

"I'm confident that our team will be significantly stronger next season," he said.

Gregory seemed almost as happy with the fact that all three players are Oregonians than he was with their playing ability.

"This past year saw a deep, talented recruiting pool in Oregon," he said. "And we got the best athletes in the state."

Ducks take on 'surprise' Cougars tonight at Mac

By Jake Berg
Emerald Sports Reporter

Most preseason Pacific-10 Conference polls predicted that by this point in the men's basketball season, both Washington and Washington State would be comfortably tucked away together in the bottom of the conference.

Last conference, Washington, 3-8 in the Pac-10 and 12-9 overall, is beginning to assume the basement role, but the Cougars, 7-4 and 15-5, have stunned basketball fans as sole owner of second place in the league.

Washington State meets Oregon, 10-10 and 5-5, at McArthur Court tonight at 7:35, and the Huskies travel to Eugene on Saturday for a 1:08 p.m. meeting.

"If there's a surprise team in the league, it's got to be Washington State," Oregon Coach Don Monson said.

The Cougars' personnel list reads like a long-range shootout, as Washington State boasts three of the conference's best three-point shooters.

Terrence Lewis, averaging 16 points a game, knocks down 43.4 percent of his treys, good enough for fourth place in the Pac-10. Teammates Eddie Hill and Bennie Seltzer are right behind Lewis in three-point efficiency, cur-

rently placing sixth and eighth in the conference standings.

The Huskies have lost some of the bite they had earlier in the season, falling in their last four outings, but one of Washington's three conference victories came against first place Arizona.

"Apparently, they're a little bit out of sync right now, but any team that can beat Arizona 70-56, you've got to be aware of," Monson said.

Forwards Doug Meekins and Dion Brown are at the point of the Husky attack. Both players average 17 points a contest, while Brown has grabbed nine and Meekins seven rebounds a game.

In Oregon's previous meetings with the two schools this season, the Ducks led at the half against each team before losing both games. Oregon dropped an 88-86 overtime decision in January to Washington, and two nights later, the Cougars came back in the second half to edge Oregon 82-79.

Those two losses frustrated Monson more than any of the Ducks' five conference setbacks this season.

"You felt at least you should have won one of them, if not maybe both of them, and if you did, it would be an entirely different world for us right now," he said.

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