

OREGON VOLLEYBALL PREVIEW



Photo by John Stoope

Senior hitter Dawnn Charroin is one of five returning starters on the Oregon volleyball team, which has been dispatching opponents so far this year.

Coach, players expect strong season

By Jake Berg
Emerald Sports Editor

How could the Oregon volleyball team not be better this season?

An improvement on last season seems a given for the Ducks, considering Oregon graduated no players from last year's 15-14 squad, and that a strong recruiting class could help out the veterans.

"It helps we didn't lose anybody to graduation, and we have a nice influx of talented young people coming in," sixth-year Oregon coach Gerry Gregory said. "We have a chance to be a really improved team this year."

Returning Oregon starters are blocker Mindee Adams, hitters Julie Jeffery, Ali Watkins and Dawnn Charroin, and setter Molly McGrath. All of the starters are seniors this season.

Junior Marcie Price, a starting blocker last year, broke her finger during a late August practice and will likely be lost for the first four to six weeks of the season.

Junior hitter Gretchen Hughes and sophomore hitter Nicolle Hedberg also return for the fall.

"We have strong leadership where we probably haven't had that in every year that I've been here," Gregory said.

Newcomers include freshmen Angee Henderson out of Thurston in Springfield, High-school all-American Stephanie Warren of Gresham, Lareina Woods of Corvallis, and redshirt freshman Kalie Kerr of South Salem. Sophomore Jean-Marie Lillard, who played basketball for the Ducks last season, joins the volleyball program this fall.

Gregory said Henderson, Woods and Warren could definitely be fighting for playing time.

"Stephanie Warren has really shown that she is a quality player, and that she is going to push for playing time this year," Gregory said. "Lareina Woods may be one of the finest athletes that Oregon volleyball has ever had. Once she figures out the system and gets used to the Pac-10 competition, she is a person that can really push for playing time."

In only the first part of the season, veterans Charroin and Adams can feel the possible impact

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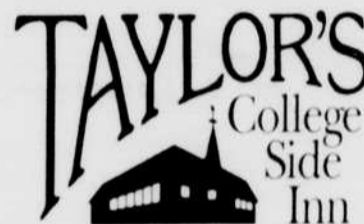
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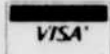
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