

Rugby faces 'must-win' games

By Steve Mims
Emerald Contributor

The Oregon rugby team has built a large hole for itself early in the season, but the Ducks are looking to start turning things around this weekend with a game against Western Washington.

Oregon lost its first two league games, but still remain in the hunt for a berth in the West Coast Championships. The top two teams from the Northwest League advance to the tournament in Los Angeles, and the Ducks feel they still have a good shot at the second spot.

Oregon State currently leads the league at 2-0, and Washington is second at 1-0.

Oregon head coach Bob Snyder said the next two games, both at home, are must-wins.

"We tied Western Washington two weeks ago in a non-league game at Portland," he said. "We feel we know what they look like plus we were not at full strength (at the time) because I held some players out to see how others would play."

The Ducks won three of four at the Portland tournament and feel it should be a stepping stone for the regular season.

"Last year we went undefeated through the preseason and then got overconfident," Snyder said. "I think we're a lot better prepared this season."

The strength of this year's Duck squad is the front line featuring Ian Williams, Bob Pierce and Steve Knaust, all of whom made the Northwest Representative team. The back line is young and inexperienced but appears to be improving.

This Saturday's game begins at noon at South Bank Field. Next weekend, the team will face Central Washington.

In other Oregon Club Sports news:
• Oregon's two indoor soccer teams

pulled off the unexpected last weekend by placing 1-2 in their co-ed tournament.

The Oregon gold team won the tournament, beating the green team 3-2 in a shoot-out following a 3-3 tie in the championship game.

Howard Uvaelive and Mariys Hofland led the gold team, scoring all three regulation goals in the final game. Andy Gagnier, who scored two of the green team's goals in the title match, was the tournament's leading scorer with 10 goals.

"There were lots of upsets," Oregon head coach Mike King said. "The level of play over the weekend was very high."

The eight-team tournament featured two round-robin divisions with the top two teams from each advancing to the finals. The gold team pulled off the biggest upset of the weekend by defeating Eugene's World Cup team 4-2 in the semifinals while the green squad defeated the Kickers For Jesus in the semifinals.

The Kickers For Jesus won the consolation title by shooting past the World Cup team 3-2 in a shoot-out following a 4-4 tie.

With the title match tied at 3-3, the gold team got off to a good start during the game, scoring on its first two opportunities while goalie Mike King shunned the green team's first two shots. The green team converted on its next two, but it wasn't enough as the golds put their fourth shot past the goalie for the winning score.

King said he was excited about the teams' performances over the weekend.

The two teams are now off until March when the spring season begins.

• The Oregon club baseball team won its opener Wednesday, 10-8 at Lane Community College.

Lane went ahead 8-2 after seven innings before the Ducks' six-run spurt in the eighth put the game away.

Skiers to race at regionals

By Ted Burnham
Emerald Contributor

The Oregon club ski team travels to Montana this weekend to compete in the National Collegiate Ski Association Western Regional race.

The women's team was one of only two Oregon schools to qualify for the event by placing eighth in the Northwest Conference Championships at Mount Bachelor, Feb. 8 and 9.

The Oregon men's team is sending one racer, Kevin Wuepper, who qualified as an individual. The race will be held at Bridger Bowl near Bozeman, Mont.

The region encompasses Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and Utah. Two Canadian schools will also be competing at the event.

The Duck women will be led by sophomore Heidi Binder, who placed 17th in the giant slalom at the conference championships and has several top-10 finishes at division races.

Binder will be joined by freshman Summer Swanson, who placed in the top five in a slalom earlier this season at Mt. Bachelor. Sophomore Kristen Klindt, whose best finish is a sixth in a slalom at Anthony Lakes, will also compete.

Rounding out the women's team are senior Amy McNeese and freshman Karlissa Schwartz. McNeese placed eighth in a slalom at Willamette Pass, and Schwartz has had several top-20 finishes.

Wuepper, who placed in the top 15 in the giant slalom at the conference championships, was one of three men in the Northwest Conference to qualify as an individual to attend re-

gionals.

"We are excited to be going to this event," said McNeese, who serves as the ski team coordinator as well as being a racer. "We will be competing against some of the best teams in the nation."

In Montana, the Duck women will race against several nationally ranked teams, including Central Oregon Community College and Western Oregon State College, whose women's teams placed first and second at NCSA Nationals last year.

Other strong teams competing at the regional race will include College of Idaho, which placed third in the giant slalom last year at nationals and Brigham Young, which tied with Idaho for fourth place overall at nationals.

Whitman College, which has placed in the top 15 at nationals in years past, will also be racing at Bridger Bowl, as will Seattle University, which has its strongest team in recent years.

"We are competing in what is by far the strongest region in the nation," McNeese said. "The competition at regionals is as strong or stronger than at nationals. The winners at regionals nearly always win at nationals."

The NCSA includes more than 200 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. The NCAA, by contrast, includes only 16 schools. Next year, the NCAA plans to merge with the NCSA and ski under one broad division.

"For a club sport receiving very little funding, we are very proud to have made it this far," McNeese says.

"We are underdogs. We must have the best runs of our lives to make it to nationals."

BYRNE

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run a clean system. The football team was just recently taken off probation, and the basketball team has also had its share of problems.

Byrne said the good standing Oregon has maintained may have been a reason he was nominated.

"Oregon has a reputation of running a clean program," he said.

Byrne did not apply for the job, rather he was chosen by a search committee at Florida.

"I was 'recruited' by Florida," Byrne said with a grin. "I have not been out seeking an opportunity to get away from the University of Oregon."

If Byrne is hired by Florida, Oregon would have to find a replacement quickly because the position starts as soon as someone is hired.

"Obviously, we'd have to go out and find someone to replace him," said Sandy Walton, senior associate ath-

letic director. "For Bill, I think it's a great opportunity."

But Walton will miss Byrne, should he leave.

"For me, I think it's rotten," she said. "I've enjoyed working with Bill, and I'll be sad to see him go if he does get the job."

"Leaving Oregon is the biggest disadvantage to the Florida job," Byrne said. "I love the University of Oregon, but every once in a while you get a shot at the brass ring and have to go for it."

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