

SPORTS

Rugby team loses to the 'best'

By Steve Mims
Emerald Contributor

The Oregon rugby team came up empty at the West Coast Championships in Los Angeles last weekend after having three all-league players declared ineligible before the tournament.

Oregon's Steve Knaust, Ian Williams and Rich Miller were not allowed to play for the Ducks because their four years of eligibility ran out. All three entered the University before 1987.

Oregon head coach Bob Snyder said he thought any undergraduate could play but was told otherwise before the Ducks' first-round match.

The undermanned Ducks had to play top-ranked California in the first round and were defeated 36-4. Oregon's try, scored by Bob Pierce, turned out to be the only try scored against the Golden Bears in the whole tournament.

California went on to win the tournament by defeating Long Beach State 27-3, followed by a 48-3 victory over Cal-Poly in the final. The Bears now go to the college rugby championships in Aspen, Colo., next month.

"California is the best team in the country," Snyder said. "They were great. It was like watching a clinic."

The Bears have been the best team in college rugby for the last five years, and there is little question why. California is able to recruit the top rugby players in the nation because of a \$1-

million endowment given to the program.

After losing to California, the Ducks were defeated by St. Mary's 21-0 in the second round, followed by a 22-15 loss to San Diego State.

The Ducks were slow to start for their early morning game against San Diego State. Oregon fell behind 18-0 at halftime but outscored the Spartans 15-4 in the second half to make the game close.

Dave Van Dyke and Dick Dunn both scored tries for the

Ducks in the second half.

"Our kids got experience against the best teams on the West Coast," Snyder said. "I think we got intimidated because we were smaller than every team there."

Snyder said he has a good group of players coming back next year but added that they need to get bigger for next year. Oregon plans to recruit bigger people who are already on campus as well as work with this year's freshmen in an attempt to improve the team.

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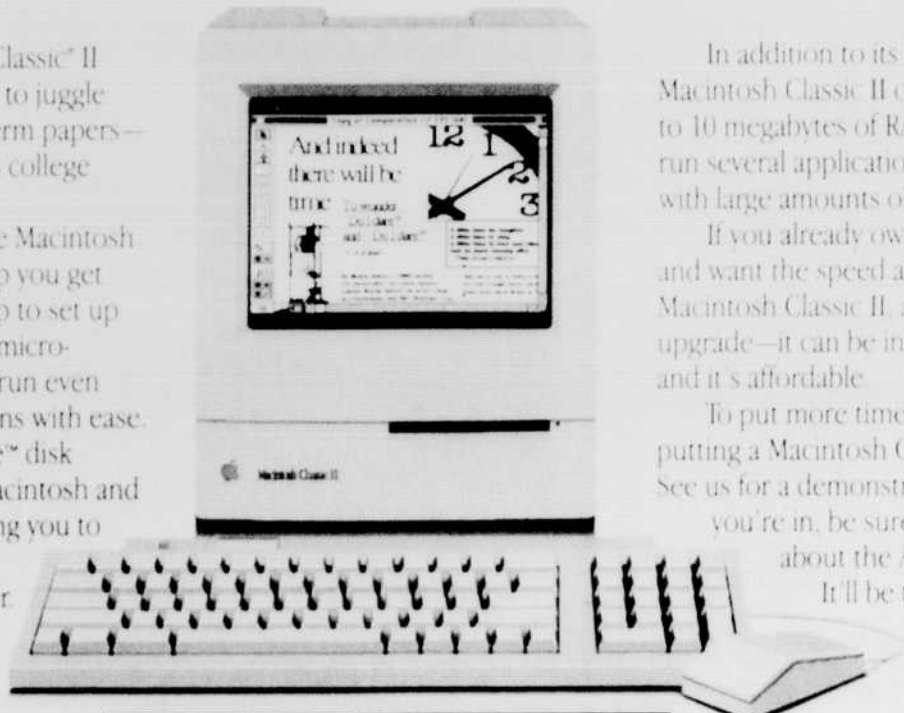
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