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CROSS COUNTRY

Runners return home for meet

By Steve Mims
Emerald Sports Reporter

The Oregon men's and women's cross country team return to action this weekend with a home meet at Alton Baker Park on Sunday.

The two Oregon teams have combined to win three of the four meets they have run in this season and hope to continue the success this weekend against some nationally ranked teams at the Jeff Drenth Memorial.

The Oregon women are unbeaten in two meets this season and are ranked 10th in the country in the latest coaches poll. Oregon began the season by winning the Simon Fraser Invitational by 24 points, followed a week later by a nine-point victory over Washington at the Sundodger Invitational.

Oregon head coach Tom Heinonen said he expects this weekend's field to provide the stiffest competition for the Ducks so far this season. Third-ranked Wisconsin enters as the pre-race favorite, but Heinonen said he is looking forward to the competition.

"We've made tons of progress since the beginning of the season," Heinonen said. "With Wisconsin, this is our only chance to get a direct measurement with the rest of the nation. We don't want to rely on an at-large berth to make it to the NCAA meet, but how we do against Wisconsin will be our only barometer against teams outside our region."

Other teams that will compete in the race are No. 25 Washington, Portland, Portland State, Southern Oregon State, Washington State, Nevada, Humboldt State, Central Oregon Community College and Hawaii.

Senior Nicole Woodward has been the most impressive runner for Oregon so far this season, winning both of her races by an average of 13 seconds per race. "This will be a good test for Nicole Woodward, who needs to

be challenged," Heinonen said. "She seems fitter than ever and can definitely be an all-American this season, and possibly better than that."

Woodward has not done it alone for the Ducks this season, as they have received major contributions from all nine runners. At the Simon Fraser Invitational, the Ducks had six runners finish among the first nine collegiate runners, and at the Sundodger Invitational the Ducks had nine runners in the top 25.

Freshman Heidi Van Borkulo-Goldstein has been the top newcomer for Oregon, finishing in fourth and seventh places, respectively, in the first two meets. Despite the drop in finishes, Van Borkulo-Goldstein has lowered her times in the first two races from 17:35 to 17:32, in the 5,000-meter races.

Sophomores Jenna Carlson and Jill Callero have been consistent runners for the Ducks, both finishing in the top 20 at each meet. After finishing eighth at the Simon Fraser Invitational, Carlson improved her time by almost 40 seconds at the Sundodger Invitational, finishing fifth. Callero finished ninth at the first meet of the year, but despite improving her time by nine seconds, she finished 19th in the second meet.

Oregon senior Erika Klein has looked good early in the year, finishing 11th and 10th, respectively. Also running for the Ducks this weekend are juniors Monica Davidson and Joni Wareham, and freshmen Niamh Zwagerman and Ann Patton.

"Nicole, Jill, Jenna, Erika and Heidi will almost surely go to the conference championships with us," Heinonen said. "I will look at all three meets to decide who else will go, but we may take different combinations to each post-season meet."

This weekend meet will be the Ducks' final tuneup before the postseason begins on Oct. 31 with the Pacific-10 Conference Championships.

"This meet is always an impor-

'We've made tons of progress since the beginning of the season.'

Tom Heinonen,
Oregon women's
cross country coach

tant stepping stone to the Pac-10 meet," Heinonen said. "We need to break even with our top three scorers and let the others battle it out for the win."

The Oregon men will also be looking to add to a winning streak this weekend as they come off a win in the Willamette Invitational two weeks ago. The men beat Central Oregon by eight points at the meet, with the next best team 61 points behind.

"We have had two weeks to prepare, so I hope we will be even better than we were in Montana," Oregon head coach Bill Dellinger said.

Oregon won the meet despite running without freshmen Karl Keska and Tracy Hollister, the Ducks' two top finishers in the season's first meet. Keska finished eighth at the Mountain West Classic in Montana three weeks ago, seven spots ahead of Hollister, while the team finished second behind only second-ranked Arizona in the team competition.

"I wanted to give Karl and Tracy a different workout," Dellinger said. "They didn't really need to run and some of the other guys needed the work. Rick Mestler will be running this weekend, but whether or not he runs at Pac-10s depends on how well he runs."

Oregon got strong performances from three runners last week who finished among the top 10. Junior Jason Humble was the first Duck to cross the finish line at the Willamette Invitational, finishing fifth in a time of 24:38. Senior Colden Baxter and sophomore John Dimoff finished eighth

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