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by Martha Spence,

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Oregon runners NCAA bound

By Steve Mims
Emerald Sports Reporter

The Oregon men and women's cross country teams advanced to next week's NCAA Championships with a pair of second-place finishes at the Region VIII Championships on Saturday.

The Oregon women tied Arizona for second place but gained the NCAA berth because the Ducks' fifth runner, Jill Callero, finished 32nd in a time of 18:39, 17 places ahead of Arizona's No. 5 finisher.

The Ducks could have possibly won the team title, but Pacific-10 Conference champion Nicole Woodward did not finish the race because of flu-like symptoms. Woodward, a senior who has led the Ducks at each race this year and has three victories, dropped out of the race during the first two miles.

"Our goal was to make it to nationals," Oregon head coach Tom Heinonen said. "But we didn't want to make it this close. If we get Nicole healthy, we could do well there. The temperature combined with the dryness took its toll. It's really going to depend on Nicole's health."

Freshman Heidi Van Borkulo-Goldstein made up for Woodward's loss by running her best race of the year, finishing the 5,000-meter race in 17:38 to finish fifth.

Oregon's only other senior, Erika Klein, also ran one of her best races of the year, finishing 15th with a time of 18:11. Although Jenna Carlson was questionable for the race because of an illness, she came on strong to finish 23rd with a time of 18:27. Niamh Zwagerman was Oregon's fourth finisher with a time of 18:35, finishing 29th overall.

"Erika finished strong like she did in the Pac-10 meet," Heinonen said. "Jill rebounded well from her illness, and Niamh Zwagerman ran an-

other strong race."

Joni Wareham was the final runner to finish for the Ducks, coming in with a time of 19:03 to finish 42nd.

Washington won the team title with 90 points, four ahead of Oregon and Arizona, and Stanford's Louise Watson won the individual title.

The Oregon men's team easily qualified for the national meet with 64 points, 20 points ahead of third-place Washington, but 37 points behind Arizona.

Senior Rick Mestler, who is completing his eligibility this fall, led the Ducks for the first time this year, finishing seventh with a time of 31:42 on the 10,000-meter race.

Freshman Karl Keska, who had led the Ducks in all three races he ran this year, finished 13th with a time of 32:02, four seconds ahead of teammate Jason Humble, who was in 14th place. Junior John Dimoff and senior Colden Baxter were next across the finish line for Oregon, finishing 16th and 19th, respectively, with times of 32:18 and 32:24.

"Arizona ran very well, but we won when it counted two weeks ago," Oregon head coach Bill Dellinger said about his team's victory at the Pac-10 meet on Halloween. "We wanted to train through this meet so that we can do something at the nationals. This has been a good year."

Tim Julian and Tracy Hollister ran for Oregon but did not score points. Julian covered the course in 33:14 to finish 38th, followed by Hollister in 49th with a time of 33:44.

Both Oregon teams will now travel to Bloomington, Ind., to compete in the NCAA Championships next Monday. The men return to the meet after failing to qualify last year, and the women have made the race in 16 of the last 17 years.

Perfect script goes sour for kicker

By Erick Studenicka
Emerald Sports Reporter

The conclusion of Saturday's football game with UCLA was seemingly perfect, like a Hollywood script that Rich Brooks himself had written.

With little more than three minutes left in the game, the only thing separating the Ducks from a victory over a stubborn UCLA team and a potential bowl invitation was a 19-yard field goal attempt by kicker extraordinaire Tommy Thompson.

For Thompson, it seemed a 19-yarder would be almost anti-climatic, below the standards Thompson had set during his All-American candidate season. Thompson had already played another strong game, scoring on field goals of 47 and 30 yards, and continually pinning the Bruins deep in their own half of the field with his booming punts.

So when Thompson ran out to kick the chip shot with 3:19 left to play, the only question racing through fans' minds was whether or not the Oregon defense could hold off the Bruins one last time and preserve the apparent 9-6 victory.

But the unmentionable happened. Thompson, the only "sure thing" the Ducks have had during this roller coaster season, booted the ball wide left.

It was a moot point when UCLA kicked a final field goal with two seconds remaining to gain the 9-6 win. Thompson's miss ensured Oregon could gain only a tie with the Bruins, with a tie being as bad as a loss in the attempt to gain a bowl berth.

Thompson did not mince his words after the game.

"I don't care what anyone else says. I feel this loss rests on my shoulders," a despondent Thompson said. "It's my

job to make the field goals."

Thompson said the sharp angle from the left hash-mark was not the reason for the failed attempt.

"I still had a large margin of error," Thompson said. "Even if I had kicked the ball from the middle of the field, I still wouldn't have made the kick."

"There was nothing wrong with the snap or hold, I just didn't hit the ball right," Thompson said. "Maybe I took it for granted."

Other Oregon players were reluctant to place responsibility for the loss squarely on Thompson's shoulders.

"We win and lose as a team," linebacker Joe Farwell said. "You can't blame any one guy. Tommy has been saving our butts all season."

In the end, the perfectly scripted conclusion for the game served only to leave Tommy Thompson miscast as a scapegoat.

LOSS

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down."

Five plays later UCLA quarterback John Barnes hit receiver J.J. Stokes on a 28-yard fade pattern to tie the game at 6-6. Oregon's Tony Koker blocked the extra point to keep the game even.

Stokes, playing in place of All-American Sean LaChapelle, caught 10 passes for 143 yards.

Following the touchdown, a bad kickoff gave the Ducks the ball at their own 35-yard line. The Ducks kept the drive alive on a third down and 10 at the Oregon 35 when quarterback Danny O'Neil hit redshirt freshman Cristin McLemore on a slant for 38 yards.

After another third down conversion failed, the Ducks were given a second chance when UCLA was called for roughing the passer, giving Oregon a first down and goal at the five-yard line. The Ducks were stopped twice on runs and on third down when O'Neil slipped and threw an off-balance pass incomplete to the end zone, thereby setting the stage for Thompson's miss.

UCLA elected to start Rob Walker at quarterback, but he was ineffective, and was replaced late in the first quarter by Barnes. Barnes, who for-

merly played at Western Oregon, was not much better than Walker, as UCLA managed only 81 total yards in the first half.

Oregon only gained 118 yards in the first half but was able to score on field goals of 47 and 30 yards by Thompson.

For the Oregon seniors, it was their final home game and possibly their toughest loss.

"Personally this is tough," Oregon defensive lineman Jeff Cummins said. "I haven't played against UCLA in the two years I've been here, and they recruited me until the end, when they didn't offer a scholarship. I personally had a vendetta against them."

"I'm disappointed for my family," Oregon offensive guard Jon Tattersall said. "They have enjoyed coming up to watch me for four years. My best friend plays for UCLA, so I am happy for him, but sad for us."

Oregon, 5-5 overall and 3-4 in the conference, appeared to be headed for a bowl game with victories in its two final games, but with that scenario all but impossible, the Ducks now must look to salvage the season at Oregon State next weekend.

"This is a tough loss because we were riding so high," Farwell said. "Now we must relight the flame and take it out on Oregon State."