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## - Oregon Daily Emerald Sports —

## Wrestlers among Pac-10 elite

By Erick Studenicka Emerald Sports Reporter

Just when a person begins to think Oregon and Oregon State may never again be simultaneously competitive in any sport within the Pacific-10 Conference, wrestling season begins.

Both the Ducks and the Beavers, along with Arizona State, figure to be in the hunt for this



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year's conference title. The Ducks travels to Corvallis this weekend for what could be a key match in deciding the conference dual-meet champion.

In order to win the title, Oregon will have to overcome the loss of four NCAA tournament participants to graduation, including Dan Vidlak, a threetime All-American.

Pat Craig, the second-place finisher at 150 pounds in last year's conference tournament, said the replacements for the graduated wrestlers are more than capable.

"You can't really replace someone like Vidlak," Craig said. "But we have people stepping in who are just as tough. We're a young team, but we'll be there in the end."

Ron Finley, Oregon's head coach, also said the team will not be weakened much by the loss of four top wrestlers.

"Overall, we didn't lose too many people," Finley said. "We have two wrestlers, Kevin Roberts and Chris Jensen, battling for the starting job at 118 pounds. James Stephens looks to be solid at 126 pounds."

Roberts and Stephens are both redshirt freshmen and former Washington state high school champions. The middle weights will be

The middle weights will be anchored by Craig, one of only two seniors on the team. Craig has yet to wrestle this season as he is still recovering from knee and shoulder surgery, but Finley hopes Craig will be ready for the conference opener against Oregon State.

"As one of our older, more mature wrestlers, we look to Pat to provide some stability." Finley said. "He's coming along pretty well in practice and should do well in the conference."

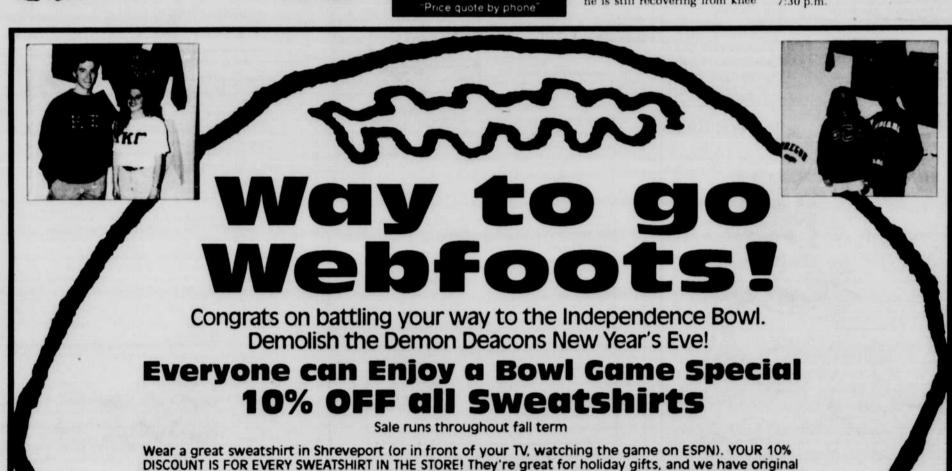
Other starters for the Ducks in the middle weights include Pat Harai at 134 pounds (coming off a 9-7 record last season) and Jason Muggy at 142 pounds (8-5-1 last year).

Mat Sprague, at 158 pounds, is Oregon's only nationallyranked wrestler. Sprague redshirted last season after a 12-7 record his freshman year.

The Ducks will look to Chris Anderson, at 275, to anchor the heavyweight division. Anderson finished last year with a 7-8-1 conference record.

Oregon State is the defending conference champion and is ranked No. 10 in the country, but the Beavers have lost their top wrestler. Babak Mohammedi. Mohammedi transferred to Illinois after former Oregon State coach Mark Johnson accepted the head coaching position for the Illini.

1992-93 Home Schedule: Jan. 15 - Boise State at 7:30 p.m.; Jan. 16 - Brigham Young at 1 p.m.; Jan. 23 - Portland State at noon; Feb. 12 - Oregon State at 7:30 p.m.



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