

Oregon wrestlers battle weight

By Erick Studenicka
Emerald Sports Reporter

Forget about Tommy Lasorda's endorsements of Ultra-SlimFast. Cancel the appointment with the Jenny Craig counselor. Skip the Weight Watchers meeting.

If you really want to learn about weight loss, talk to the campus expert on the subject, Oregon wrestler Cory Sonnen.

Sonnen, the Ducks' starting wrestler at 134 pounds, loses an average of 12 pounds each week in order to make his weight limit — the most of any Oregon wrestler. During the wrestling season, his weight is constantly in flux, yo-yoing between his natural weight of 155 pounds and his weight limit of 134 pounds.

"The whole process starts

about four days before a meet. I drink a lot of water and then begin to be careful about the types and amounts of food I eat," Sonnen said. "For example, about the only things I'm going to eat this week are bananas, toast and milk."

Much of the loss comes in the form of bodily fluids.

"It's not too unusual to lose 10 pounds during a practice," Sonnen said. "Once I saw Jason Muggy (Oregon's 142-pound wrestler) lose 18 pounds in one day."

Head coach Ron Finley guards against dehydration by making sure the wrestlers drink throughout practice. The old-fashioned mentality that associated drinking fluids during practice with mental weakness no longer exists, Finley said.

"It's silly not to drink, espe-

cially when you're trying to lose weight," Finley said. "The best way to lose weight is to cut back on food and eliminate the fats from the diet."

Sonnen said wrestlers quickly regain weight after wrestling in for each meet. Between the time he weighs in and the time he wrestles, Sonnen said he gains back about 10 pounds.

Sonnen said he occasionally feels side effects from the rapid weight loss.

"I notice my attention span is a lot shorter, and I can't concentrate as well when I'm cutting weight," Sonnen said.

It should be noted, however, that the type of weight loss experienced by the wrestlers is temporary and should not be attempted by ordinary people wishing to shed a few pounds.

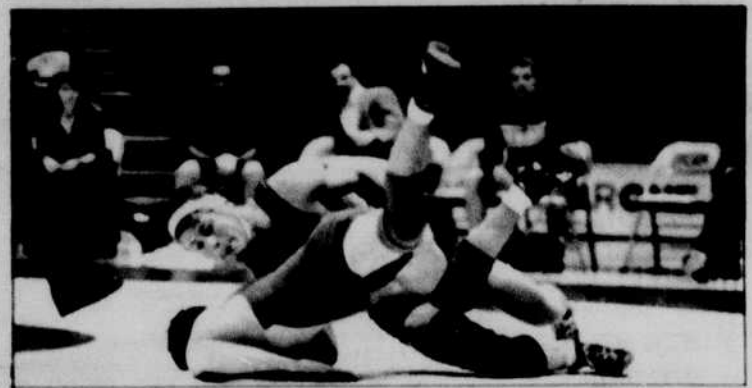


Photo by Michael Shindler

Oregon wrestler Cory Sonnen's weight fluctuates between his 134-pound wrestling weight and his normal weight of 155 pounds.

Excessive fluid loss can result in dehydration and death.

"The wrestlers are in top physical shape, and their weight loss is closely monitored," said Dean Adams, head athletic trainer.

In his 23 years of coaching, Finley said he has seen every imaginable shortcut used in dropping those final few ounces.

"The funniest thing I've ever seen was back at the NCAA tournament a few years ago," he said. "Time was running out for one wrestler, and he was still a quarter-pound over the limit. So he stood on his head for two or three minutes, and I'm still waiting for a physics professor to explain how, but it worked, and he made his weight."

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