

Softball readies for tournament

By Steve Mims
Emerald Sports Reporter

The Oregon softball team will travel south in search of its first victory of the season this weekend at the Capitol Classic in Sacramento, Calif.

The Ducks are coming off an abbreviated appearance in their opening tournament in Las Vegas last weekend when they lost their first two games before rain forced the Spring Fling to be canceled. The Ducks dropped their season opener 7-2 against Sacramento State on Friday morning before falling 7-0 to 12th-ranked UNLV in the afternoon.

Catcher Laura Schmidt and shortstop Kathy Stahl had half of Oregon's 12 hits last weekend to lead the young Duck squad which features six freshmen and no seniors. Oregon head coach Tami Brown plans to start four freshmen this weekend and a fifth freshmen will be a top reserve.

Stahl, a freshmen from San Jose, Calif., had three hits in five at bats and walked once in Las Vegas, and leads the Ducks with a .600 batting average. Schmidt, who will return to her hometown of Sacramento this weekend, is batting .500 with a home run and both of Oregon's RBI's.

Sophomore Leanne Brooks is the only other Duck hitting above .300 after getting two hits in six at bats to boost her average to .333. The rest of Oregon's team has only four hits in 37 at bats so far this season.

Catcher Laura Schmidt returns to her hometown this weekend batting .500.

The Ducks have struggled on defense as well, committing six errors in two games, with Stahl leading the squad with three errors. Oregon's six errors resulted in seven unearned runs.

Oregon pitcher Natasha Dumoski was the biggest victim of the errors, as she picked up the loss in the Ducks-season opener despite allowing only two earned runs. Dumoski gave up eight hits and struck out two batters in Oregon's 7-2 loss against Sacramento State.

Rachelle Taylor got the loss in Oregon's second game when she allowed 10 hits and walked three batters en route to giving up five earned runs. Taylor is expected to be the Ducks top pitcher this season after starting half of Oregon's games last year with an ERA of only 1.51.

Oregon will face Sacramento State again Friday morning, followed by games against eighth-ranked Long Beach State and St. Mary's in the afternoon. Oregon will move on to face Notre Dame and San Jose State Saturday before bracket play on Saturday and Sunday.

Oregon will open their home schedule with a doubleheader against No. 1 UCLA on March 14th.

Boxer may have tried to bribe way out of loss

NEW YORK (AP) — The chairman of the New York State Athletic Commission said Wednesday he is investigating the Feb. 6 Jesse Ferguson-Ray Mercer fight amid reports Mercer offered Ferguson \$100,000 during the bout to lose.

Ferguson scored a unanimous 10-round decision over Mercer on the undercard of the Riddick Bowe-Michael Dokes heavyweight title fight. The loss cost Mercer a \$2.5 million payday as Bowe's next opponent.

Both heavyweights denied

the allegations after reports surfaced last weekend that Mercer offered the payoff to Ferguson during clinches.

"It's a preliminary investigation that could lead to a full-blown one," said Randy Gordon, the chairman of the New York State Athletic Commission.

"I'll be watching tapes of the fight at HBO on Thursday," said Gordon, who will have a lip-reader with him in an attempt to determine just what Mercer was saying.

"I'll speak to everyone involved," Gordon said.

CORRECTION

In the March 3 edition of the *Emerald* a headline incorrectly stated the new coaching position of Nick Aliotti. Aliotti was named as Oregon's defensive coordinator.

The *Emerald* regrets the error.

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