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Softball team to play trio of doubleheaders

By Steve Mims
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon softball team's journey through the west has finally reached home.

After playing their first 24 games on the road, the Ducks will play three doubleheaders at Howe Field this weekend. The Ducks play their home-opener Friday against Division II Portland State, followed by conference games against Arizona and Arizona State on Saturday and Sunday, respectively.

"It will be nice to finally be home," Oregon head coach Tami Brown said. "The team is tired from the road trips, and they really deserve a break."

The Ducks (13-11, 5-3) have been hot and cold at different times this year, opening the season 10-5 and then losing six out of seven games before sweeping Washington last weekend.

"I am pleased with how the kids have meshed together," Brown said of her team, which includes six freshmen and no seniors. "They have showed a strong mentality and played well together for such a young group. We have come out of the beginning of the season good, and I expect us to get better."

Oregon's offense has been led this season by junior catcher Laura Schmidt and freshmen sensation Kathy Stahl. Schmidt leads the team's regulars with a

.385 batting average and 17 RBIs. Schmidt has also been strong behind the plate, committing only two errors in 24 games.

Stahl, a shortstop from San Jose, Calif., is second on the squad with a .356 average from the leadoff spot to go along with 14 RBIs. Stahl and Schmidt are tied for the team lead with five home runs and 10 extra base hits apiece.

"Laura and Kathy have been great," Brown said. "I expect a lot out of Laura, and Kathy has been a great player for us."

Oregon's pitching staff has been solid this year as well, allowing only 1.18 earned runs per game. Junior Rachele Taylor (8-8) has been the workhorse of the staff, pitching 120.3 innings with an ERA of 1.22. Natasha Dumoski, Oregon's No. 2 starter, has given up only three earned runs in 35.7 innings while compiling a 4-3 record.

The Ducks biggest problem this year has been in the field, where they have committed 56 errors, 20 more than their opponents. The errors have led to 36 unearned runs; Oregon's pitchers have given up only 28 earned runs.

Saturday's doubleheader begins at 1 p.m., and Sunday's game against the 16th-ranked Sun Devils begins at noon.

Men's golf prepares for finals

By Steve Mims
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon men's golf team will battle for a post-season position next week when it travels south for its final two regular season tournaments of the season.

The Ducks are coming off consecutive third and fourth place finishes last week in the Fresno State Intercollegiate and Southwestern Intercollegiate tournaments. The Ducks shot a 4-under-par 284 in their opening round in Fresno and led by five strokes entering the final round before settling for third place.

Oregon started strong again in the Southwestern Intercollegiate, shooting 288 in the first round, but slipped to fourth place after the second round and finished in the same spot.

"We had a chance to do better," Oregon head coach Steve Nosler said. "But our strong finishes should help us qualify for post season."

Senior Jeff Lyons led the Ducks in both tournaments, finishing sixth at the Fresno State Intercollegiate before

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