



LaReina Woods is one of two returning starters this year.

GREGORY

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a surprise to the Pac-10 given that we stay healthy."

Gregory did mention that he was a little concerned about some nagging aches and pains of his players.

"We are working so hard and demanding so much of them that we have some sore backs, legs and shoulders — but nothing really bad," Gregory said of the first couple weeks of practice.

"It's predictable that when we work as hard as we are that there are going to be some aches and pains. And it's almost impossible to get your body ready for volleyball," said Gregory, who had his players running, jumping and lifting this summer in preparation for the season.

Gregory mentioned that the freshmen, having never experienced anything like this before, are a little more sore.

The youth of the team is undeniable with the breakdown of seven freshman, one sophomore, three juniors and one senior.

Gregory will be looking to see some leadership from his two returning starters, setter Kalie Kerr and LaReina Woods, swing hitter/play set hitter, and his lone senior Nicolle Hedberg, swing hitter/play set hitter. Hedberg and Woods have been named co-captains for the 1993 season.

The other three players with team experience are junior Angee Henderson, quick hitter/play set hitter; sophomore Karissa Meith, quick hitter/play set hitter; and freshman Amy McNeel, swing hitter.

McNeel redshirted last year. "I don't really consider her a freshman," Gregory said. "She knows the system and I think she is ready to do a good job in the Pac 10 and is well-prepared."

Gregory is concerned about the lack of depth on the team.

"We're probably one substitute deep in setting and one substitute deep in swing hitting. That doesn't leave much room for error. This team needs to stay healthy," he said.

Gregory is going to be looking for Meith and Henderson to defend the middle for him.

"I think we have two fairly experienced middle blockers in Karissa and Angee," he said.

Of his freshman, Gregory is expecting quality, if inexperienced, off-the-bench players.

"I'm hoping that even though the freshmen want to come in and make a big splash, that most of them will come in as substitutes," he said. "But I think a few of them are going to see some substantial playing time for us and going to help us get some wins this year."

Including McNeel, Gregory's freshman roster is: Dani Cordova, quick hitter; Emily Coleman, quick hitter/defensive specialist; Anna Gomez, setter; Kristen Ruschiensky, swing hitter/play set hitter; Anne Swayne, quick hitter/play set hitter; and Lara Weigel, defensive specialist.

Both Kerr and Woods said the higher intensity level at practice this year is, in part, because of two new assistant coaches.

Patty Jayne, recently the coach at Pacific University, and Kristen Frazier, recently the Churchill High School coach, are adding their skill to Gregory, who himself is a former Olympic team member.

"I think the intensity is higher, but I think most of the credit needs to go to the players, not the coaching staff," Gregory said.

Gregory said one of the keys to the new game for the team is its switch to a swing offense.

"Statistically, the thing we did poorly last year was hitting the ball. We made mistakes and didn't have the firepower we needed," he said. "We think this new offense is going to help us in that respect."

The team, though, has been in the top three in the Pac-10 in blocking and digging.

"In a nutshell," Gregory said, "a swing offense is an audible offense system where the hitters basically call the plays to the setter so the setter doesn't need to predetermine what the play is going to be. The offense initiates from the center of the court and oftentimes either stays in the center of the court or veers outside."

Stanford and UCLA are always tough competitors for the women, "but I really think we are capable of beating any and all of those teams," Gregory said.

The Ducks started their season with an exhibition game Aug. 28 and played a series of non-league games until the regular season began with the Civil War game at Oregon State on Sept. 17.

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