

Success comes to women's sports

□ Women's track teams lead an impressive list of successful teams

Over the years, the University's women athletes have played a big role in enhancing the reputation of the athletic program at Oregon.

The Ducks currently sport teams in tennis, golf, track and field, cross country, volleyball, basketball and softball, and all have had their fair share of success.

When people think of women's sports at Oregon, they most likely think of track first.

Oregon head coach Tom Heinonen has been with the Ducks since 1976 and has built up one of the most stable and successful programs in the NCAA.

Since the NCAA started having a national meet in 1982, the Ducks have placed in the top 10 seven times. Oregon has also had numerous individual NCAA champions. In the first NCAA meet in 1982, Leann Warren won the individual title in 1,500-meter race, leading the Ducks to a fourth-place finish.

Claudette Groenendaal picked up where Warren left off, winning the 1,500 the very next year. Kathy Hayes, another star distance runner, won the national crown in the 10,000 the same year. Together, Warren and Groenendaal led Oregon to a fifth-place finish.

Groenendaal shortened her distance the next year, and went on to win the championship in the 800, leading the Ducks to their first NCAA Championship in 1985.

In 1988, Annette Hand's national title in the 5,000 and Jill Smith's victory in the javelin helped the Ducks take third in the nation.

As it turned out, Smith was the first of a trio of throwers that have made the Ducks the team to beat in the javelin. Paula Berry won the national championship in the javelin in 1991, and last year, Ashley Selman won the title.

Selman's title, coupled with Kelly Blair's championship in the heptathlon boosted the Ducks to a fourth-place finish at the NCAA meet last year.

As if his wizardry on the track was not enough, Heinonen has also done a masterful job of building up a strong cross coun-



FILE PHOTO
Kelly Blair, the NCAA heptathlon champion last year, is one of Oregon's most successful female athletes ever.

try team.

Besides numerous Pacific-10 Conference Championships, the women runners have won the District VIII title 12 times in 17 years and have never finished lower than fourth. At the NCAAs, the Ducks won titles in 1983 and 1987. In 1983, Oregon was led by a third-place finish by Kathy Hayes and a 17th-place finish by Lisa Martin. In 1987, the Ducks landed three runners in the top 15 as Annette Hand, Penny Graves and Liz Wilson tore up the course.

Although not nearly as successful as the track program, Oregon's basketball team has its share of success.

The most glorious season of all came in 1989 when the Ducks beat DePaul to win the National Women's Invitational Tournament. It was the first and only national title for the team. The Ducks have always been competitive within the league. The Ducks won conference titles in 1979-80, 1981-82, 1983-84 and 1985-86.

One of the finest athletes in

Oregon history played for the Ducks from 1978 to 1982. Bev Smith led the team in scoring for two of her years at Oregon and led the team in almost every mentionable category in her final two years with the Ducks. Smith was a Kodak All-American during her junior and senior years and was also voted player of the year three times in the NWBA, which is now essentially the Pac-10.

Though it has never been able to make it out of the regionals, Oregon's volleyball team has compiled one of the best postseason records of any team at Oregon. The Ducks are 43-31 in postseason games dating back to 1970.

The Oregon softball team has had little luck in postseason play, but had one of its best seasons in 1989 when the team accumulated a remarkable 54 wins and only 18 losses, finishing second in the Pac-10. Pitcher Katie Wiese and Kim Manning led the Ducks that year and each were voted to the All-American team.

— Dave Charbonneau

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