

IN TOUCH

Golf finishes in fourth against a tough field

□ Golf team prepares for final fall tourney

The Oregon women's golf team continued its excellent fall season last weekend by finishing fourth among a tough field at the Stanford Intercollegiate on Sunday.

The ninth-ranked Ducks opened the tournament with a 5-over-par 297 last Friday. The Ducks followed with rounds of 303 and 304 over the weekend to finish at 904, one stroke ahead of No. 1 UCLA.

"That was probably our best tournament," Oregon first-year head coach Lara Mack said. "We have had a string of great tournaments. We had some good scores; considering the course and competition I'd say it was our best performance."

No. 3-ranked San Jose State won the tournament at 863, followed by second-ranked Arizona State and USC, which is tied with the Ducks at No. 9. In addition to UCLA, the Ducks also finished ahead of third-ranked Stanford, seventh-ranked Arizona and four other teams ranked in the top 20.

"We just have great players," Mack said. "It has worked out well because almost every tournament someone steps up and performs really well, and the rest of the team also plays good."

Karly Mills paced the Ducks at Stanford, shooting a 1-over-par 220 to finish in sixth place. Mills opened the tournament with an even-par 73, followed by rounds of 74 and 73 over the weekend.

"Karly had a great tournament," Mack said. "Sixth place among that field is excellent."

GREGORY

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We are hurt in some ways, but Oregon still has some pretty good things to offer."

On the other hand, schools that may be academically more stable or have a well-heeled athletic department can't guarantee success, Gregory said. He pointed to Washington State and Oregon State, hardly the two most glamorous or prestigious schools in the Pacific-10 Conference, but two schools with rapidly improving volleyball programs.

The support the Cougars and Beavers are getting from their fans and athletic departments factors heavily in their success.

And how do you generate support?

"There's a relationship between crowd support and success. I think that's only right. We reward success in the United States. That's the way we do things. That's not only capitalistic, it only makes sense," he said.

— Scott Simonson

The Ducks got strong performances from the rest of the team as well, particularly Leigh Casey, who was tied for fifth after an opening-round 72 on Friday. Casey finished in 29th place at 228. Senior Cappy Mack recovered from a difficult opening round to shoot 74-76 over the weekend, finishing in 43rd place at 233.

Juniors Becca Giersdorf and Shannon Hare finished at 234 and 235, respectively for the Ducks. Hare shot a low round of 74 on Friday, and Giersdorf added a 76 in the second round.

The Ducks are currently preparing for their final tournament of the fall, the Pioneer/Bruin Classic in Temucula, Calif., on Nov. 1-3. Following that tournament, the Ducks will have three and a half months without tournaments.

During that time, the Ducks can have no formal practices, but the team will work out three times per week, have meetings and play together, although Lara Mack cannot be present or schedule the practices.

"The break will be nice," Mack said. "The team has played well and we are excited about going to UCLA."

— Steve Mims

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