

# Baumgartner bidding for national title

By Steve Mims  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Renee Baumgartner is one of the main reasons why this week's NCAA Women's Golf Championship is in West Linn, and why Oregon is one of the 18 teams that qualified for the event.

However, Baumgartner is trying to put those emotions behind her and focus on winning USC's first NCAA golf championship. Baumgartner was a part of Oregon's women's golf program for six seasons before departing for the head coaching position at her alma mater prior to this season.

This year's NCAA Championship is special to Baumgartner because she placed the bid back in 1990 that brought the tournament to Oregon Golf Club. At the time, Oregon's women's golf program was only three years old and Baumgartner was in her first year as full-time coach, but she convinced the NCAA to venture to the Northwest for the first time.

"Oregon is the farthest northwest the woman's tournament has ever been," Baumgartner said. "It's also the first time in 10 years it's been on a private

course, so there's two unique situations."

The NCAA was leary of the Northwest because they want at least two schools that qualify to be within 500 miles of the site, Baumgartner said.

"I told them Stanford and San Jose State are near the boundaries," Baumgartner said. "And I told them, 'We'll be there.'"

It was a bold prediction from a coach whose team finished seventh out of nine teams at the previous year's conference championship, but the NCAA listened. Baumgartner lived up to her claim, leading Oregon to the NCAA Championships for the first time last year.

When Baumgartner left for USC, her sister Lara Mack took over the head coaching duties, and led the Ducks back to the NCAA Championships this season. With one sister coaching the team, and another, Cappy,

playing, Baumgartner remains an Oregon fan.

"I love the Ducks," she said. "I think I was more worried for Oregon at regionals than Lara was. But I told my team that at nationals, I'll have no mercy. I hope Oregon finishes right behind us."

When Oregon was awarded the NCAA tournament site, Baumgartner planned to play the role of party host this week, but the benefits at USC were too tempting to turn down.

"USC is probably the only school I would have left Oregon for," she said. "I feel good about the job I did at Oregon, and I felt like we accomplished a lot. I wanted to go somewhere where the weather is good and the finances are better, which gives me a better shot at a national championship."

Yet returning to Oregon for the NCAA Championships, a tournament that signals the Ducks' birth onto the scene as a national contender, will be difficult for the former coach.

"It's hard. My sister might want to kill me because of the work she has to do," Baumgartner said. "It will be more difficult once I'm there."

Baumgartner lists her team as one of four teams that should contend for the national title, along with Arizona State, San Jose State and Stanford. The Trojans played well in the spring, finishing in the top three at four consecutive tournaments before falling to sixth place at regionals.

USC is the most veteran club at the tourney with three seniors including Jill McGill, who had six finishes in the top 10 this year. Junior Jennifer Biehn, who's second on the team with a scoring average of 76, won the Pacific-10 Conference Championship last month.

"We've put ourselves in contention to win NCAAs," Baumgartner said. "My team is ready to play and I'm going to try and help us do that."

Baumgartner listed Oregon as the team that could be the biggest surprise of the tournament.

"I think Oregon will finish in the top 10 and that will blow some people away," Baumgartner said. "They are playing a course they are familiar with. The pressure is off them now that they qualified, and they have nothing to lose."



Baumgartner

# Wilkins gets an invitation to Olympic Festival

Freshman guard Kenya Wilkins will represent Oregon at this summer's U.S. Olympic Festival, USA Basketball announced Friday.

The four, 12-man teams will compete in St. Louis, Mo., July 2-5. Wilkins will play for the East team, coached by Dayton's Oliver Purnell. The Olympic Festival takes place July 1-10, with basketball beginning July 2. All preliminary rounds will be played at the Missouri-St. Louis campus, while medal round games July 5th will be contested at the St. Louis Arena.

A 5-foot-10, 160 lb. point guard, Wilkins helped the Ducks improve in the Pacific-10 Conference standings in his initial collegiate campaign by setting school freshman assist and steal marks.

Named Oregon's most improved player, Wilkins was named to the all-freshman team by league coaches. Besides being among the league leaders in assists, steals and three-point percentage, the Los Angeles, Calif. native added 11.5 points and 3.3 rebounds per game. He tallied 142 assists and 51 steals in 27 games.

Eligibility for selection to the Olympic Festival was limited to

graduated high school athletes who have not yet entered their sophomore year of college eligibility. The USA Basketball Men's Collegiate Committee made the selections.

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Oregon's Ted Snaveley shot a 1-under-par 71 in the final round Saturday to finish in an eight-way tie for 31st place at the NCAA Men's Golf West Region Championships at the Tucson National Golf Club.

UNLV shot 849 to win the tournament title by 15 strokes over Arizona State and Fresno State. ASU was awarded second place by virtue of a better fifth-man score than the Bulldogs. Arizona shot 866 to finish fourth, two shots ahead of Stanford.

UNLV's Edward Fryatt shot 68 in the final round to seize the individual title by three strokes over Friday's leader, Joe Acosta of Fresno State. Fryatt finished the three-round tournament at 207.

Gilberto Morales of UNLV took third place at 211, one stroke ahead of Pepperdine's Todd Andrews, UC Santa Barbara's Ryan Mitchell, Arizona State's Todd Demsey and

UTEP's Ryan Hietala.

Andrews and Hietala qualified as individual entries for the upcoming NCAA Championships in McKinney, Tex. on June 1-4. Qualifying as team entries are UNLV, Arizona State, Fresno State, Arizona, Stanford, UC Santa Barbara, San Jose St., Oregon State and New Mexico.

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Seniors Kelly Blair, Sara Wilson and sophomore Rick Cantwell were honored as Oregon's top student-athletes at its annual awards dessert Thursday afternoon.

Blair, a defending NCAA track and field champion as well as first-team academic all-American, was awarded the Emerald Athletic Trophy as the University's top senior student based on outstanding achievement in the fields of academics, athletics and citizenship.

In addition, Cantwell was the recipient of the Higdon Trophy as the school's top sophomore student-athlete while Wilson earned the Jackson Award as the athletic department's top senior female competitor.

A two-time Pacific-10 Conference heptathlon champion,

Blair has accumulated a grade-point average of 3.89 in business management and established the conference meet record in the heptathlon with 5,989 points a year ago. The Prosser, Wash., native proceeded to post a school record 6,038 points in winning last year's national collegiate meet before finishing fourth in the USA Track and Field Championship.

Cantwell, who has accumulated a 3.35 GPA, posted the fourth-fastest time in the Pac-10 this year in the 1,500 meters at 3:46.30. The former Jesuit high school standout also completed his first collegiate cross country season last fall as the Ducks' second district meet finisher (12th) and third NCAA finisher (55th).

Wilson completed her final year as the women's basketball team's 12th-leading scorer in history, while averaging 14.2 points and 7.4 rebounds this season. In addition, the GTE academic all-district choice paced the Pac-10 in field goal accuracy, shooting 59.3 percent from the field, to help lead the Ducks' to a third-place league finish and the second round of the NCAA tournament with a 20-9 record. The Newhall, Calif., center has earned a cumulative GPA of 3.44 in psychology.

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