

KEARNEY

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Court, and look to erase the hopes that the Ducks have carried over from last season's near victory at home against the 'Cats.

Arizona is led by mighty Damon Stoudamire, king of the Pacific 10 Conference. If during the game you are trying to observe the great Stoudamire in his quest for excellence, but have been never before graced by his presence, just survey the biceps of all the players, for there lies Stoudamire's name, tattooed on his arm.

The 14th-ranked Sun Devils then waltz into town on Saturday. Green's Gang has to face two top 15 teams in one weekend. Drink your Gatorade, guys, because if you get through this weekend in good shape, I think you will probably be ready to shoot one of those McDonald's commercials that involve jump shots from outer space.

This weekend has a major impact on this team's season. While the Ducks really don't have that much to gain with home wins over the two teams — maybe moving up a few spots in next week's polls — they have everything to lose. That is, possibly being counted out of the race for postseason honors

and dropping out of the two top 25 polls.

The women's team heads south for the Arizona schools, facing the Wildcats on Thursday and the Sun Devils on Saturday. No matter what you have to say about the two schools and how weak they may be, the road trip precedes a friendly little game with Stanford the following week.

Oh, by the way, Stanford is just the Pac-10 powerhouse for women's basketball, led by coach Tara VanDerveer, whose winning percentage is somewhere around one trillion. And just one more thing, Stanford is 14-1, and that loss didn't come at the hands of a Pac-10 team. Translation: the road trip is pretty much a must win for Jody Runge and her team, that is, if they want to stay in the hunt for a Pac-10 championship.

On Friday, the wrestling team faces Oklahoma. Excuse me, that is 12th-ranked Oklahoma, and a strong 12th-ranked team at that. Now, I don't know how many of you recall the meet against 21st-ranked Wisconsin, but the Ducks got beat. Badly.

But the hurt that the Badgers of Wisconsin put on the Ducks was not a reflection that Oregon is a bad wrestling team. On the contrary, I have seen some very impressive performances from

the Duck wrestlers. Wisconsin was just damn good. If the Badgers are ranked 21st and are that much "worse" than Oklahoma, Oregon very well could be going up against Hulk Hogan and Andre The Giant.

The team then flies to Stanford, where they will probably win. But the meet goes beyond the fact that the Ducks will most likely chalk up a victory. Stanford is going to throw out some tough competition in the lower-middle weight classes, so the Ducks can't just overlook the Cardinal and set their sights on a strong Oregon State team, who they wrestle in Corvallis the following weekend. Translation: leaving the Oklahoma meet out of the equation, Stanford is a definite must win if the team wants to end the season above .500.

So as most of us venture into the weekend looking forward to the Super Bowl or not looking forward to the start of midterms, the Ducks are basically putting their seasons on the line. No, I wouldn't say that there was any pressure on the teams to win in order to accomplish certain team goals. I would say that there is absolute necessity that they win.

Trevor Kearney is a sports reporter for the Emerald.



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