

Ducks riding tide of fans' expectations

Before the Oregon men's basketball team began its season, many people had very low expectations for the Ducks. Oregon was coming off a trip to the NCAA Tournament, but had lost all of its starters except Kenya Wilkins and had only five returning players.

The new team now included Wilkins, two transfers from Santa Barbara, one player coming off a redshirt year, another who played less than half the season last year because of a foot injury, and four fresh-faced freshman straight out of high school. Head coach Jerry Green — one of the few returnees — was going to have a very trying year.

Even in the media guide sent to the press, Green admitted his team wasn't as good as the team he had coached last year.

"This year will be exactly the opposite of what we had last year — lots of new faces who will be expected to contribute immediately. Last year, we were very, very deep and this year we'll need to depend on some newcomers and have them be impact players for us to be as competitive as I'd like us to be."

Not many people thought the Ducks would be going to a post-season tournament, and there was no pressure on the team to do so. But then they began to win.

By the time they started the Pacific-10 Conference season, they had a winning record. Although most fans probably couldn't have named more than five players on the team, people were beginning to believe the Ducks had a chance. The crowd at Mac Court quickly learned the names and faces of the new Oregon squad.

Everybody knew Wilkins because he has been such an instrumental player for the previous two years, but this season he was being asked to lead an unfamiliar team.

Kyle Milling quickly became a crowd favorite as he showed that he wasn't afraid to play a physical game on the inside. Milling's Santa Barbara counter-part Rob Ramaker also began to hear the cheers from Oregon fans as he grabbed rebounds, dunked off alley-oops and even hit three-point shots.

Jamal Lawrence played

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Ducks gear up for Pac-10 Championships

■ **WRESTLING:** Oregon looks to pave its way to National Championships

By Chris Hansen
Sports Reporter

The Oregon wrestlers will look to this weekend's Pacific-10 Conference Championships to spring-board them into a position to compete in the NCAA Championship meet on March 21-23 in Minneapolis, Minn.

The Ducks ended their dual meet season 7-5-1 overall (2-4-1 in the Pac-10) and as winners of five of their last seven meets, losing only to Pac-10 rivals Arizona State and Oregon State.

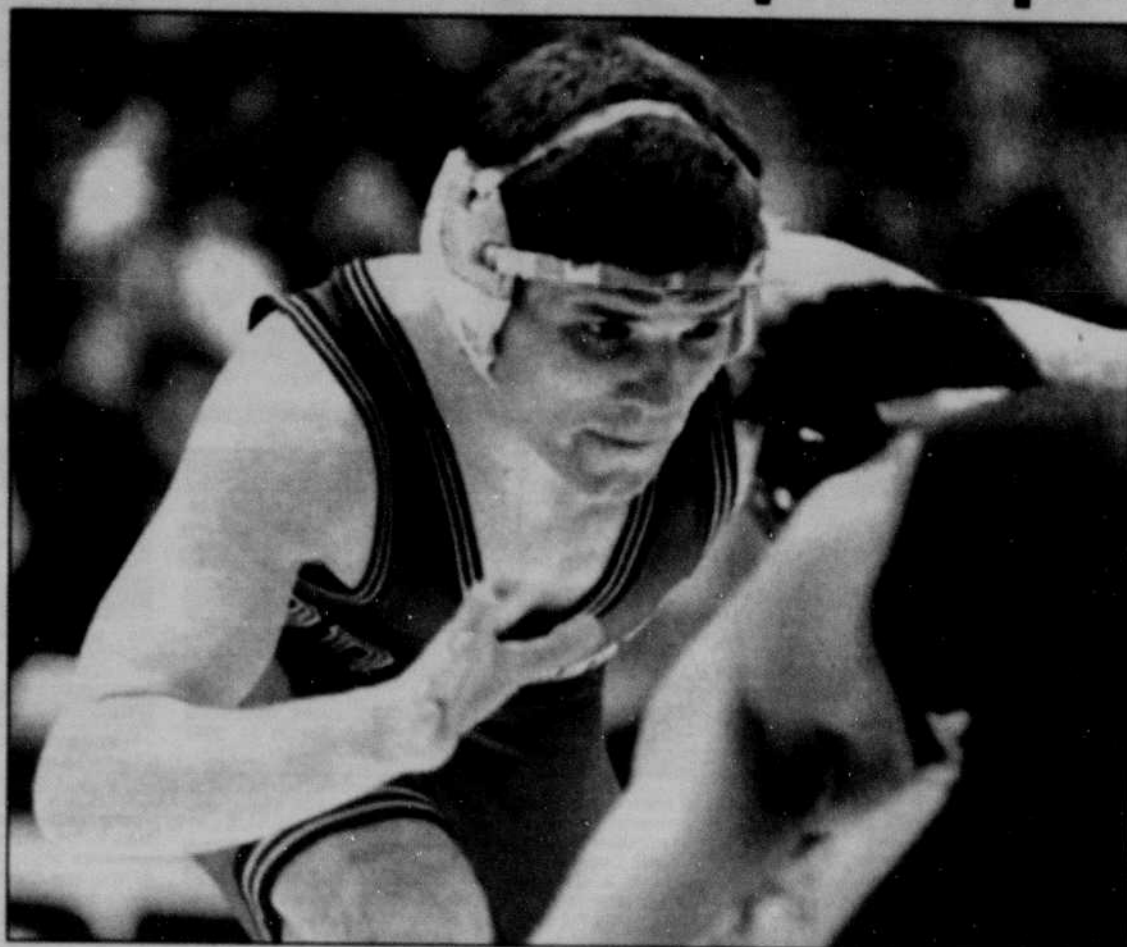
The Pac-10 tournament will feature three top 20 teams. Host Cal State Bakersfield is ranked 13th in the nation, last year's Pac-10 champion Arizona State is 14th and Oregon State is 20th. Oregon is currently ranked 26th.

The Ducks will head to Bakersfield with three nationally ranked wrestlers, five wrestlers ranked in the top five of the Pac-10 individual standings and one defending Pac-10 champion.

Scott Norton, ranked third nationally at 150 pounds and first in the Pac-10, won the first title of his career last year when he beat Stanford's Tod Surmon 2-0.

Surmon got his revenge three weeks ago when he upset Norton at McArthur Court, giving Norton only his second loss of the year. Surmon will now wrestle at the 142-pound weight class in the tournament, ending any possibilities of another Norton-Surmon showdown.

Looking to settle the debate of who is the best 118-pounder in the Pac-10 will be Oregon senior Kevin Roberts. The two-time All American, ranked third in the



Senior Kevin Roberts is looking to beat rival Danny Felix of Arizona State for the Pac-10 118-pound title this weekend at the conference championships. The Ducks ended their dual meet season 7-5-1 overall.

country, will face defending champion Danny Felix of Arizona State. Roberts (25-1) has finished second to Felix for the Pac-10 title the last two years in a row. Felix also dashed Roberts' hopes of an undefeated season when he beat him for his only loss of the year on Feb. 9.

Roberts, who is closing in on 100 wins, has had a stellar career at Oregon and is hoping to end it with his first Pac-10 championship.

"Roberts has been training hard and feeling good," head coach Ron Finley said. "[The whole team] has been running two-a-days. Our practices are getting a lot quicker, so we will get maximum performances."

Although Norton and Roberts are sure bets to place high enough to earn a trip to Minneapolis, they will most likely not be heading there alone. John Taylor (126-pounds) and Jeremy Ensrud (134-pounds) also

appear to have a better-than-good chance of not only qualifying for the NCAA championships, but of winning the Pac-10 title in their weight classes.

At 21-8, Taylor is ranked second in the Pac-10 behind Cal State Bakersfield's Coby Wright.

Ensrud is ranked sixth in the nation and third in the Pac-10

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Oregon skier qualifies for national championships

■ **CLUB SPORTS:** Her performance last weekend will send Sarah Momsen home to Vermont

By Ryan Frank
Freelance Sports Reporter

Oregon's Sarah Momsen is going home.

Momsen, a native of Vermont, finished first in the giant slalom and fifth in the slalom in the Western Regional Collegiate Ski Championships to win the women's division at Mount Brundage in McCall, Idaho. Momsen's showing in the Regional Championships qualified her for the United States Collegiate Skiing Championships in Vermont from March 6-9.



MOMSEN

"I am really excited," Momsen said. "I kind of wish that the whole team could go, but I am happy to be going as an individual. I think that the team was unlucky with a couple of injuries."

Oregon's Allison Bigsby and Brooke Siler were both suffering from injuries at the regional meet.

The United States Championships will take place from March 2-10; the giant slalom will be held at Mount Snow and the slalom

at Haystack Mountain.

"She is a very smooth and powerful skier," Oregon's Alan Siler said. "She is [in] contention for the national title."

Oregon's entire women's team qualified for the regional tournament at Mount Brundage, which took place from Feb. 21-23. The team included Momsen, Brooke Siler, Jessica Burke, Bigsby, Jen Jensen and Kelli McGinness. Jensen, who placed seventh, was the only other Oregon team member to place in the regional meet. Alan Siler qualified as the lone representative for the men, but did not place.

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In a back and forth game, Oregon's rugby club team managed a tie with Evergreen State College, 17-17. Alex Beram, Roland Lemmens and Keith Heger scored for the Ducks. Heger scored in the last seconds, but missed the extra point kick for the win.

"We didn't have a few people at key positions," Heger said, "but we were satisfied with the way we played with the personnel we had. It was good to play a college side, we haven't played one since last term."

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Both Oregon's men's and women's ultimate frisbee club sport teams will travel to

Stanford this weekend for a tournament. The Stanford Invitational, which will include teams from across the nation, will be the men's last collegiate tournament before it hosts the sectional tournament on April 20. The sectional tournament will include Oregon State, Washington, Washington State, Whitman and North Humboldt.

Last weekend the men competed in two games against Oregon State in Corvallis. The Ducks went 1-1 on the trip, losing the first and winning the second.

Beginning with a home tournament on March 16, Oregon will compete in four tournaments spanning four weekends. The four-week tour will include three road tournaments on March 23, 30 and April 6.

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The Oregon's women's water polo club team will be competing in California this weekend. The Ducks will travel to University of California at Davis to play a minimum of four games with the possibility of a fifth game. Oregon will play Marin and UC Davis on Saturday. Its opponents for Sunday will not be determined until after Saturday's games.

"All the girls are real excited," head coach Jess Paulson said. "But I am a little tentative. It is our first game and it is in California where the competition is a lot tougher than anywhere else in the nation."