

## Preview: Exhibitions strengthen Ducks' squad

"I think we did things pretty well considering we've had only 20 practices," head coach Jody Runge said, "but yet it is good to play because I think at this point the kids think they are good because they are running against an offense that they know defensively and they can cheat."

Oregon's first preseason game gave Runge an opportunity to evaluate her team's early progress.

"I think we need to do a better job of defending the ball, boxing out and rebounding," Runge said. "We need to improve our free-throw shooting; we need to improve running our offense and being productive in it."

Guard Lisa Bowyer also said the Ducks can improve on their performance against Slovan Slovakia.

"I think just executing our offense a bit better, feeding our posts because we didn't do that really well on Saturday night," Bowyer said.

But Runge said now is a good time to play games that won't count on the Ducks' record because they will have time to improve before the regular season begins.

"It is a good time for us to have exhibition games now because

we have a couple of weeks left of practice, and when you just practice and practice, it gets kind of boring," Runge said.

"But when you have exhibition games, you have an opportunity to take a look at yourself on film and identify some things that we need to work on and present new motivation for working hard in the next two weeks."

Boyer, who has been involved in her share of preseason games during her four years at Oregon, looks forward to exhibition games.

"Exhibition games are a good warm up to real games," Boyer said. "It is where we can go in and judge how the first four weeks of practice have been and take a reading of that and see the things that we need to work on."

Runge said that Boyer, Bowyer, Fegent, guard Cindie Edamura and forward Mendy Benson will repeat as the starters for the Ducks' second game of the season.

After tonight's game, the Ducks will return to practice for two more weeks before opening their regular season with the Pepsi Shootout at McArthur Court Nov. 29.

The Ducks will open the Shootout against Idaho State.

## Player: Mentality keeps her competitive

Continued from Page 7

her make the transition. While at Los Gatos she collected a state championship, two-time all-league selection and the most valuable player award on the team her senior year.

"It was overwhelming," White said. "Fortunately, I came from a pretty experienced club team. We won the Junior Olympics that summer. Playing at a higher level I think helped, but definitely the Pac-10 is like nothing else."

White is an intense competitor on the court, but she explains that it's her preparation for the game off of the court that helps her compete at a highly consistent level.

"I tell everyone and I believe that volleyball is 99 percent mental and so a lot of it has to do with my mental focus," White said. "Before the game I have some cheesy routines that I do. I do everything in a certain order. I listen to a certain tape that has all of the music that I like on it."

"Before [a home game] I come to the gym, I go through the game in my head. If I do that before every game I know that the pattern helps me, it gives me a little edge confidence-wise. I'm definitely superstitious. I always tie my right shoe before I tie my left shoe."

Whether it has been superstitions or rituals that have helped White with her game, they have definitely been working. White

nearly had a triple double in the Ducks' win over Oregon State this season. She finished the game with 15 kills, 12 blocks and nine digs against the Beavers. Her personal best of 12 blocks in one match was also the third-best all-time performance by an Oregon player. White has also had career bests in almost every category this season, including kills (19 vs Weber State), kill attempts (44 vs Arizona) and digs (21 vs Arizona State).

She is also leading the team in total blocks (99) and has tallied 223 kills and 191 digs on the season, putting her numbers among those at the top on the squad.

All of her success is more or less planned out, she says. Goal setting has played a major part in determining a course for her career and so far she is on the right path.

"I don't think that the people on my team realize how much goes on in my head outside of the gym," White said. "I set goals for myself, I write down a lot of things and I think that contributes to all of [my success]."

"I know that I have to compete for my spot on the court. I don't know how much people realize that. I put a lot of pressure on myself to do well and I expect that of myself. I know that it's going to be tough but I think that writing down those goals or having them in my head really helps."

White, along with the help of her teammates, hopes to bring winning back to the Oregon volleyball program and bring fans back into McArthur Court to cheer on the team.

"I think that overall we've improved so much," White said. "Even though we don't have those wins. People aren't seeing it because they aren't seeing those wins."

As far as playing in front of large crowds, the Ducks got a taste of that this year when they played in front of nearly 4,000 fans at Mac Court for their match against Oregon State. White enjoyed the experience.

"That was the best feeling I've had since I have been here," White said. "All the fans were awesome. It was like a feeling that I've never had. I would get so jealous when I went to women's basketball games when I saw all of those people, but volleyball is a sport that's really growing, so hopefully that will help."

White and her teammates only have four more matches before the end of the season, starting with their match against the University of Portland tonight. The Ducks defeated the Pilots in three games in their first meeting earlier in the season.

The game will be Oregon's last non-conference match before finishing out the season with three league matches.

## DeYoung: Both Stanford teams should be strong contenders

Continued from Page 7

conference, and the Associated Press named the Cardinal as No. 1 in the country in its preseason poll. Guess who that puts the pressure on? Stanford.

The Cardinal was thought to be a contender for the NCAA title last season, and this season it has added pressure coming through on that expectation.

The Ducks were picked to finish second. That's a pretty good spot. And it's a realistic spot, too. There is no team that can beat Oregon when the Ducks are playing at the top of their game, and the experience of these players who have played together all last season can only help.

Runge recognizes that her team is a title contender.

"The first two years of going to the Tournament were great," Runge said in an interview during the summer. "But three in a row means we are building a tradition. We're done playing for second place. We think we can challenge Stanford for the league title."

On the men's side, UCLA was picked first in the Pac-10 by the coaches, but one of the coaches who voted isn't around any-

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more. And that happened to be the Bruins' coach — Jim Harrick. How can a team dominate the conference when it loses its head coach with two weeks to go before it takes the court? Interim coach Steve Lavin might have to sit back and let the team come together to find what it takes to win. On the other hand, a strong head coach is a must for a team that has yet to play a com-

petitive game together.

The rest of the Pac-10 falls into place in the poll with Arizona picked for second place and Stanford in third. Head coach Jerry Green agrees that these three teams will be the ones to beat.

"Looking at the league overall, I think that you've got to look at UCLA," Green said early last month. "I think they won the league last year by about two games, and basically have everybody back. But they're not very deep. They've got enough talent to win the league. They're certainly going to be an NCAA team."

"I have to believe Arizona is going to be good with the recruiting class they have. With the tradition and players they've got, I think Arizona is going to be better later in the year than in the beginning of the year."

"Stanford has the potential of being a better team than most people think. All the publications think that Brevin Knight is one of the two best point guards in the nation and an NBA prospect. I think Stan-

ford can be very good."

The Ducks were picked by the coaches to finish fourth. This could be a very good thing for Oregon. This team finished tied for fifth in the conference last season and still is trying to prove that it belongs with the other teams atop the standings. The Ducks' placement isn't a lack of respect, although you would never know it after the NIT selection committee passed them up even though they won seven of their last 10 games last season. Anytime a team brings all its starters back, it deserves to be counted as a contender for the conference championship. The Ducks should be there, and as long as they believe that they can be there, they will be.


McArthur Court has the potential to showcase some excellent basketball this season. The Pac-10 season is a month and a half away, but the countdown for April begins right now.

Andrea DeYoung is the assistant sports editor for the Emerald. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the paper.

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