

# Oregon tallies two straight wins

■ **TENNIS:** The Ducks beat Idaho and Cal Poly, play at Arizona State next

By Joel Hood  
Freelance Sports Reporter

A three-match home stand over the weekend proved to be just what the struggling Oregon men's tennis team needed to regain mid-season form. With wins over Idaho and Cal Poly on Saturday and Sunday, the Ducks upped their season mark to 2-1.

Playing in the No. 1 spot on Sunday, Carlos Navarro beat the Mustang's Chris Magyary 7-5, 6-3, earning the Ducks' only straight-set victory of the afternoon.

Oregon pounded out three more victories in singles competition, but all of them were hard-fought three setters.

In the No. 2 spot Oregon newcomer Joaquin Hamdan defeated Tony Piccuta 6-7, 7-5, 6-1. Co-captain John Devorss outlasted Cal

Poly's Sevan Zonopian 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 and Miguel Arriaga clinched the team win for the Ducks with a 4-6, 6-1, 7-5 victory over Nadar Izadi.

Sunday's victory over Cal Poly was especially gratifying for coaches Chris Russell and Greg Smith because Oregon had lost to virtually the same Mustang squad 7-0 last season.

"This is the kind of team we would have lost to last year," Smith said. "We're looking at this as a breakthrough match."

Saturday's win over a tough Idaho team was just as impressive for the Ducks. Oregon streaked, winning two of the afternoon's three doubles matches. Navarro and Hamdan won easily at the No. 2 spot, 8-4, while Christian Fylkesnes and Henry Oldham held on for an 8-6 victory in the No. 3 position.

Oregon's lone loss of the weekend came Friday at the hands of the Washington Huskies. The

Ducks' only win of the day came at the No. 1 doubles spot where DeVorss and Mike Goldstein defeated Washington's Nick Williams and Mark Wooley 8-5.

Despite the 6-1 loss, Oregon held its own in singles competition taking three of the six matches to three sets.

"I liked the progress we made against the Huskies," Russell said. "We set a good tone at the start and showed we were here to play. We weren't able to pull any [wins] out in the singles, but the matches we went to three sets in were ones we were in position to win."

Oregon will take its 2-1 record to Tempe, Ariz. on Feb. 7 to face Arizona State. The Sun Devils are one of the toughest teams in the conference this season and will come into the match with a national ranking.

That match is the first of two in Arizona with the Wildcats scheduled for Feb. 8.

# St. Louis set to hire new head coach

■ **NFL:** Dick Vermeil has worked as a college football analyst for ABC-TV in recent years but will reportedly take the job with the Rams

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The St. Louis Rams, not long after indicating that Jim Mora was their man, have set a news conference for Tuesday to announce they've hired Dick Vermeil instead.

Broadcast reports in St. Louis and from ESPN said Monday night that Vermeil, who has been out of coaching since 1982, would be given total control of the team. If the Rams fail to come to terms with Vermeil, the fallback choice would be Jim Mora.

Vermeil's wife, Carol Vermeil, confirmed that a news conference would be Tuesday. But she wouldn't confirm that her husband was about to be hired by the Rams.

Asked whether her husband was excited about the prospect of returning to coaching, she said: "Everything new is always exciting."

Vermeil is the only coach to take the Philadelphia Eagles to the Super Bowl, losing 27-10 to the Oakland Raiders in 1981. He had a 57-51 record from 1976-82 with the Eagles before resigning, complaining of burnout. He since has turned to broadcasting, working as a college football analyst for ABC-TV.

Vermeil tried to return to coaching in 1995 with the Eagles before contract talks fell through. Owner Jeff Lurie broke off negotiations, saying too many problems remained unresolved.

Earlier in the day, Rams president John Shaw said he expected to hire Mora, the fifth man interviewed for the job, by the middle of the week. Shaw is leaving for the Super Bowl on Thursday in New Orleans and wants to get the situation settled before then.

But he also said he'd explore some "remote possibilities" that included one last stab at ex-San Fran-

cisco 49ers coach George Seifert in the next few days. Seifert turned down a reported five-year, \$10 million offer from the Rams last week.

"I'd like to get this done," Shaw said. "But there are no guarantees."

Last week the Rams finished second in the bidding for Bobby Ross (Lions) and Kevin Gilbride (Chargers).

Mora, 61, said Monday in a telephone interview that he hadn't heard from the Rams since Saturday when he had a telephone conversation with Shaw. He interviewed for three hours on Friday in St. Louis.

Mora didn't seem to mind that the Rams were still chasing Seifert, who won two Super Bowls in eight seasons with the 49ers and built the best winning percentage in NFL history. Seifert, who was 108-35 in San Francisco, resigned last Wednesday.

"(Shaw) told me what his plans were," Mora said. "I'm anxious to get back in coaching, but if I don't, I'll do something else."

"I believe the Rams could be a good situation."

Mora was 93-78 with the Saints, leading them to their only four-playoff berths in franchise history, but slumped after a 12-4 season in 1992. In his last 3 1-2 seasons, the Saints were 24-32.

Mora resigned in October, a day after a profane tirade following a loss to Charlotte that dropped New Orleans' record to 2-6, and the Saints finished 3-13 under interim coach Rick Venturi. Shaw said he talked about the outburst with Mora.

"It's something we spent a lot of time on in the interview," Shaw said. "It was, of course, of great concern to us. I feel confident that won't happen again."

"One never knows 100 percent, but I'm comfortable."

The Rams have been looking for a coach since firing Rich Brooks following a 6-10 season. Brooks was 13-19 in two seasons.

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