

# Pond: Women face tough 10-game road trip

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first-hand look at what it takes to be one of the top programs in the country.

Who knows, along the way they might even upset one of those top teams. That would do a lot more for the program than consistently beating up on lesser teams.

At this point, the Ducks don't need a good win-loss record. It doesn't really matter right now. Nobody really cares if a second-year program has a sub-.500 record.

But in five years or so, the program will be somewhat established and the wins need to be piling up, and they need to be piling up against top-notch competition.

So why not start now? Why not take your lumps but gain valuable experience in the meantime?

Steffen should be commended for taking this approach and for seeing the big picture.

"I want to be at a point where we're playing these teams and beating them," he said. "If you don't ever play teams better than you, you just don't get better. I think that you kind of play to the level of your competition. In this case our competition is a level above us, so hopefully we're rising to that."

In Texas, they did rise to that

level. In North Carolina they didn't. But that can be expected with a young, inexperienced team.

Don't worry, there will be several chances as the schedule does not get any easier.

The Ducks, who have only five home games all season, are currently in the midst of 10 straight road games. They will travel to Utah, Weber State, Washington and Washington State before finally returning home.

A full Pacific-10 Conference schedule this season will add to the Ducks' learning experience, including matches with No. 22 UCLA and recent NCAA Tournament qualifiers California, Washington and Southern California.

When it's all said and done, the Ducks will have played 15 road games, many against very formidable opponents.

"It's good for us to get a little road tough," Steffen said. "To go and take these teams on in different places makes it just that much more difficult, and I think that helps us get stronger as a team."

That's what this season appears to be all about: getting tougher, getting stronger and gaining invaluable experience that will pay off down the road.

## SPORTS BRIEFS

### Women's basketball team earns high GPA

For the second straight year the Oregon women's basketball team posted one of the top grade-point averages in the country for the 1996-97 season, the Women's Basketball Coaches Association announced Wednesday.

The Ducks' cumulative grade-point average of 3.405 (4.0 scale) placed them fourth among all Division I women's basketball teams.

"I am very proud of our players since it is tremendously demanding to be a college athlete," head coach Jody Runge said. "For our players to keep their grades above a 3.4 is really outstanding."

### Eugene offers indoor soccer

The City of Eugene is now offering indoor soccer leagues for college students of all abilities. Men's, women's and co-ed leagues will be offered this fall for both competitive and recreational players.

Registration will take place from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Oct. 7-10 at the recreational office, 22 W. 7th Ave. in Eugene.

The league fee is \$270 per team for the six-game season, with games beginning the week of Nov. 3.

For more information or a registration packet contact the Eugene recreation athletic staff at 682-5333.



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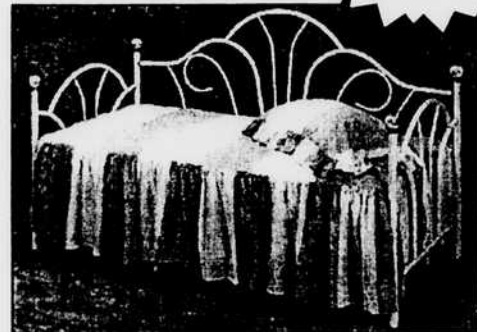
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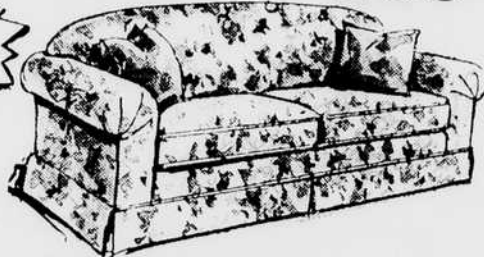


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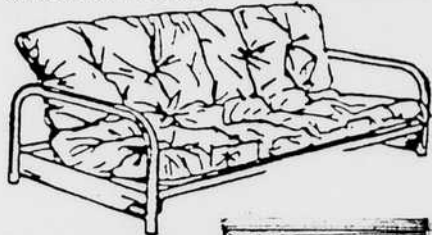
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