

NBA Playoffs
Utah at Houston,
TNT (27) 6:30 p.m.

UO ready for spring finale

Kevin Parker has emerged as the No. 1 tailback, while Jed Weaver leads all tight ends

By Alex Pond
Sports Editor

Several questions have been answered for the Ducks already this spring.

The Oregon football team hopes those questions that haven't been answered will be when the Ducks travel to Keiser for the team's annual Spring Game on Saturday.

The scrimmage, scheduled for 1 p.m. at Volcano Stadium, will be the Ducks' final spring workout.

Heading into practices a month ago, the main holes head coach Mike Bellotti was looking to fill were at tailback, fullback, tight end, the defensive line and in the kicking game.

Bellotti said senior Kevin Parker has emerged as No. 1 on the depth chart at tailback, and it will be interesting to see who stands out at fullback Saturday. Chad Chance and Chris Young are currently battling for the top spot going into the fall.

"[They] have sort of elevated themselves with their play," Bellotti said, "but I think they still need a lot of work."

Parker said he hopes to further solidify his starting role with a strong performance in the scrimmage.

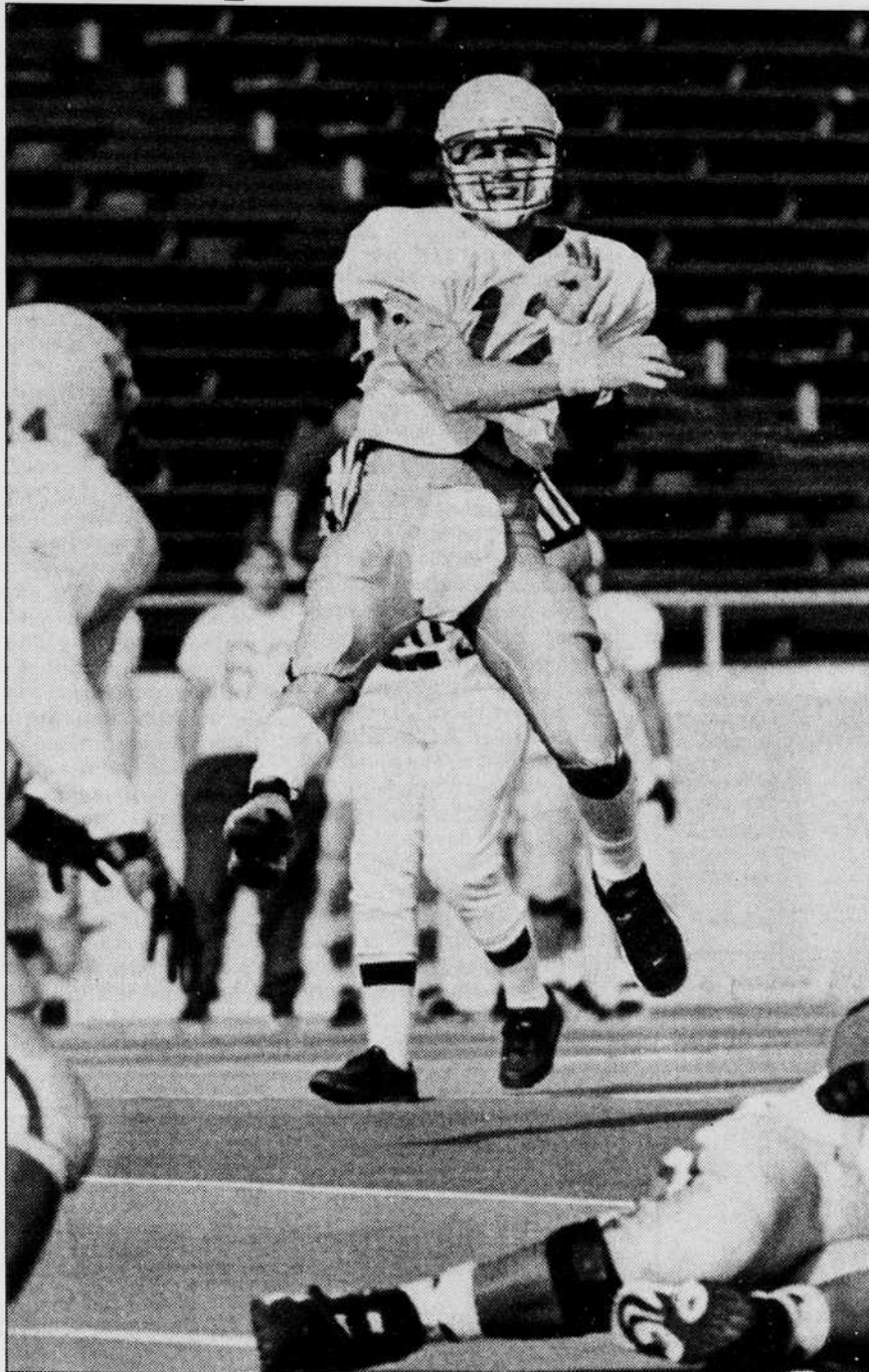
"Going into the spring game, I'm just looking to put up some nice numbers because in [three previous informal] scrimmages, we haven't been running the ball that much," he said. "Hopefully, I can show myself out there."

Parker has been battling illness this week but said he will play.

At tight end, Jed Weaver is firmly locked into the No. 1 spot. The battle to watch for Saturday, Bellotti said, is between freshmen Danny Pulido and Justin Peelle, who are the top candidates for the second tight end position.

Bellotti said he'll be closely watching the defensive line during the scrimmage, although many of the questions he had in that area have been answered.

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NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

Jason Maas will look to earn the top spot on the depth chart during the Ducks' annual Spring Game Saturday afternoon at Keiser's Volcano Stadium.

UCLA first up in critical homestand

Head coach Rick Gamez says Oregon must do a better job on routine plays against UCLA and No. 4 UW this weekend

By Joel Hood
Sports Reporter

It's no surprise that the Oregon softball team's final homestand is also its most important. With just eight games remaining in the regular season, the Ducks are likely just a few wins away from nailing down their first postseason berth since 1994.

Oregon can take a giant step toward that goal this weekend when it hosts UCLA in a doubleheader matchup at Howe Field on Saturday and No. 4 Washington for two games on Sunday. Both games will start at 1 p.m.

"Obviously, this is a big weekend for this team," Gamez said. "We're going to have to do a better job for our pitchers. We need to make the routine plays on defense and make plays all the way around. The offense should take care of itself."

That offense ranks second in the Pacific-10 Conference with a .298 team batting average and has gotten Oregon's defense out of jams much of the season.

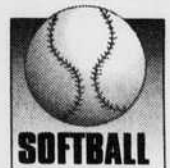
However, against the Huskies on April 19, the powerful Ducks' lineup could produce only five hits and one run in two games against Washington's pitching. Washington's Jaime Graves, who was an all-American last season, leads the Pac-10 with a .072 earned run average and is holding opponents to just a .188 average at the plate.

Graves' teammate, Jennifer Spediacci, ranks second in the conference in ERA (1.00) and leads the Huskies with 131 strike outs — an average of nearly seven for every seven innings of work.

To counter Washington's superior pitching, Oregon (36-23 overall, 8-12 Pac-10) will try to stay aggressive on the base paths, Gamez said, and continue to make good decisions at the plate.

Against Oregon State on Wednesday, the Ducks drew five walks in a critical 7-1 Game

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Oregon men, women set sights on individual performances

The lack of team competition will allow the men to work on NCAA qualifying marks by competing in their primary events only

By Alex Pond
Sports Editor

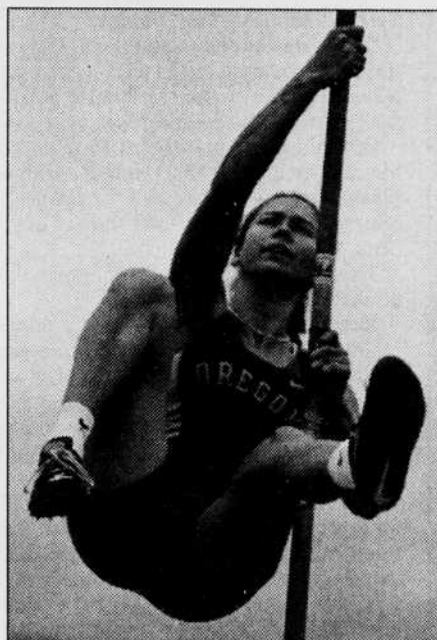
With the season beginning its stretch run, the Oregon men's track and field team will concentrate on posting qualifying marks for the NCAA Championships during the Oregon Invitational this weekend at Hayward Field.

The meet officially gets underway tonight with the men's and women's 10,000 meters, which begin at 7:15. The rest of the meet is scheduled for Saturday, however, and is divided into two sessions. The day session gets underway at 10:15 a.m., and the twilight session, featuring the elite athletes, will begin at 3:40 p.m. with the men's javelin. The first running event of Saturday's evening session is set for 5 p.m.

As Oregon athletes begin to set their sights on the Pac-10s (May 23-24) and the NCAAs (June 3-6), the Ducks' focus this weekend is much different than in the past two meets at Hayward Field — a dual meet with Washington State on April 4 and the Pepsi Team Invitational on April 18.

The Ducks' attention will shift from the team to the individual, Oregon head coach

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NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

Karina Elstrom, Oregon's record holder in the pole vault, will face some stiff competition this weekend.

Oregon's Marie Davis will compete in a 3,000 meter field that includes former Olympian Vicki Huber

By Rob Moseley
Sports Reporter

This weekend's Oregon Invitational means different things to different athletes on the Oregon women's track and field squad.

For sprinter Nicole Commissiong and hurdler Tish Henes, it's a chance to work on their speed at shorter-than-usual distances. For Marie Davis, the 24-team meet is an opportunity to run 3,000 meters against some of the country's top competition.

Heinonen said Davis should benefit because there is a lack of team competition, and therefore no need for standouts to compete in multiple events.

"It's an opportunity for really good competition in the 3,000," the coach said of a field that will include former Olympian Vicki Huber. "If that means leading the whole way, this is the time; there's no team score."

The two-day event begins today with the men's and women's 10,000, then continues Saturday with two sessions. The morning session will feature mostly qualifying heats but will include some finals.

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