



## OREGON SOFTBALL



NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

Jill Robinson and the rest of the Oregon softball team have their sights set on postseason play for the first time since 1994.

## Will Oregon extend its season?

Oregon, with four games left on its schedule, is one of the selection committee's bubble teams for an at-large bid

By Joel Hood  
Sports Reporter

With the NCAA's postseason selection show just around the corner, the Oregon softball team knows there are as many different scenarios as there are Division 1-A teams.

Here is some of what is already known: There are eight regional tournament brackets that hold four teams each. Of the 32 total teams selected, 16 are automatic qualifiers that include the champions of the 10 major conferences (Pac-10, Big Ten, ACC, etc...) and six play-in teams from several minor conferences. There are also 16 at-large selections that will fill out the tournament brackets, which will be announced at 5:45 p.m. on Sunday.

All of this means just one thing for the Ducks — win as many of the four remaining games they can (at California on Saturday and at Stanford on Sunday) and hope for the best.

Oregon (38-25 overall, 10-14 Pac-10) is

one of the selection committee's bubble teams for an at-large bid. One thing that works in the Ducks' favor should they receive an at-large bid is that each of the Pac-10 teams selected will be placed in a different region. That means Oregon wouldn't have to play another Pac-10 team — there have been as many as seven ranked in the top 25 this season at one time — until the College World Series on May 21 in Oklahoma City.

Each of the eight regional champions qualifies for the College World Series. Although the series bracket is single elimination, the four teams in each regional qualifying bracket will play double elimination.

The odds on a World Series berth for Oregon are better than one might think. While Oregon's only appearance in the College World Series came in 1989, the Ducks have made it to the postseason three times in the last nine years; the last appearance came in 1994 after they finished fourth in the Pac-10 at 12-12.

That is right where the Ducks are this season — fourth overall in the conference

with a one-game lead over California and a two-game advantage over Arizona State and Oregon State.

"I think we're in a good spot right now," said Oregon shortstop Jill Robinson after the Ducks' two-game split with Washington on Sunday. "Obviously, we need to win some more games, but we have a real good chance to make it to the postseason."

Coaches from around the conference can see as many as seven Pac-10 teams in this year's field.

"A lot depends on what Oregon does against California," Washington head coach Teresa Wilson said on Sunday. Wilson, who is also on the regional selection committee to determine the postseason brackets, said the Pac-10 should get seven teams into the postseason. However, that makes it difficult to put all the teams in different regions.

"It's just so dang crazy," said Stanford head coach John Rittman. "We beat the heck out of each other all season long. It's hard to get everyone the recognition they probably deserve. I'd like to see everyone get in, but the nonconference records will

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## Ducks hope Patterson saves the best for last

Senior Paula Patterson hopes to go out on a victorious note in her final postseason with the Ducks

By Tim Pyle  
Sports Reporter

Scratch-and-sniff stickers and pins give Paula Patterson's golf bag a peculiar aroma and decoration. They also provide Patterson, the senior captain of the Oregon women's golf team, with the recognition and motivation to get more. In a reward system similar to how football players gain helmet stickers for on-the-field achievements, Patterson's head coach, Renee Baumgartner, hands out the stickers and University Bookstore pins to her players for scintillating practice play and tournament rounds of 74 or lower, respectively.



PATTERSON

Patterson will be looking to secure more ornaments for her bag when she begins her final NCAA postseason at the West Regionals at Stanford Golf Club in Palo Alto, Calif., on Thursday.

"I would like to give my last two tournaments my all, forget about all that's been happening and take it one round at a time," Patterson says. "A top 10 finish would be nice."

If last season is any indication, the regionals could very well be the site of some pin-deserving play for Patterson.

She tied for fifth at the 1997 West Regionals in Tucson, Ariz., and etched her name in the Oregon record books by shooting a school-record 68 in the final round. That final round is a moment that Patterson says she counts among her most cherished in golf.

Baumgartner says that magnificent round propelled the Ducks into the 1997 NCAA Championships, where they claimed seventh place.

"She took that upon herself, like 'I'm going to play really well so that we don't even have to worry about whether or not we're going to make the cut,'" Baumgartner says. "That was the lowest score that day under some tough conditions. She just took it all, and I was so proud of her."

Following the national championships in which she tied for 40th, Patterson was named a first team All-American. She finished in the top 10 of all 11 tournaments in which she played before the NAAs, had a 75.7 strokes-per-round average and was named the team's most valuable player.

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## Rugby team survives scare, finishes second in tourney

The Oregon Club Sports men's rugby team was given directions to the wrong field but made it to its first game on time

By Eric Collins  
Freelance Sports Reporter

A huge sinking feeling gripped every player who had just endured a sleepless, expensive, red-eye flight across the country to Albany, N.Y.

Groggy members of the Oregon Club Sports men's rugby team had just stepped out of their rented van at noon Friday expecting a banner, or at least a poster, to signal the Division II national rugby championship tournament site.

But with their first game scheduled for 1 p.m., all they saw was a desolate sports field.

No one was there. The Ducks had been

given directions to the wrong field.

After posting one of the best Oregon rugby records in recent decades to qualify for the championships, not to mention miraculously raising \$13,700 in just weeks to pay for the trip, the sixth-seeded Ducks knew they could place no

higher than fifth if they forfeited the first game.

But after a few frantic phone calls and logging two hours in the van, the Ducks found their opponents, third-seeded Cali-

fornia University of Pennsylvania, patiently waiting for its Northwest challenger at the correct field.

The Ducks had 20 minutes to warm up. It just might have given the Ducks the edge they needed.

Despite the mishap, the Ducks defeated California University on Friday. They then tore through two-time defending Division II national champion Salisbury State University on Saturday before finally succumbing to UC San Diego in the Sunday championship game to finish second in the tournament.

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"We had really nothing to lose."

Chris Lampe  
UO rugby hooker