



## Ducks carry experience into regionals

*The Oregon women's golf team needs to finish in the top 11 at the West Regional to advance to the NCAA tournament*

By Tim Pyle  
Sports Reporter

With the exact same five-player lineup competing in the NCAA West Regional this season as last season, the Oregon women's golf team figures to be one of the most experienced squads in the 22-team field.

The Ducks' results in the 1997 regional — a sixth-place team finish and an individual tie for fifth by Paula Patterson — adds to their confidence heading into the 54-hole tournament, which begins today at Stanford Golf Club in Palo Alto, Calif., and runs through Saturday's final round.

Head coach Renee Baumgartner said having the same lineup as last postseason is a huge advantage. "We know what to expect,

and we can go out and shoot the score and move on to nationals," she said.

In order to qualify for the NCAA Championship, which begins May 20 in Madison, Wis., Oregon needs to finish in the top 11 at Stanford. Last season, the Ducks went on to claim seventh place at the championship, which was held in Columbus, Ohio.

Patterson, who is a senior and the team captain, joins Pam Sowden, Karen Bristow, Kylie Wilson and Anika Heuser to form Oregon's lineup.

"When those five are together, they play really well," Baumgartner said. "If someone doesn't play well, the other four always pick it up a notch."

Sowden is returning to the lineup after

missing the Pacific-10 Conference Championships because of a sore back. The team struggled in her absence as the Ducks, who are ranked No. 9 in the MasterCard Collegiate Golf Rankings, finished eighth in the 10-team field.

Sowden had the second-best score on the team at the 1997 regional, tying for 32nd individually. She is ranked No. 66, owns a 77.3 strokes-per-round average and has two top-10 finishes in nine tournament appearances this season.

Patterson was named second-team all-Pac-10 and led the team with a 76.4 strokes-per-round average and two top 5 finishes.

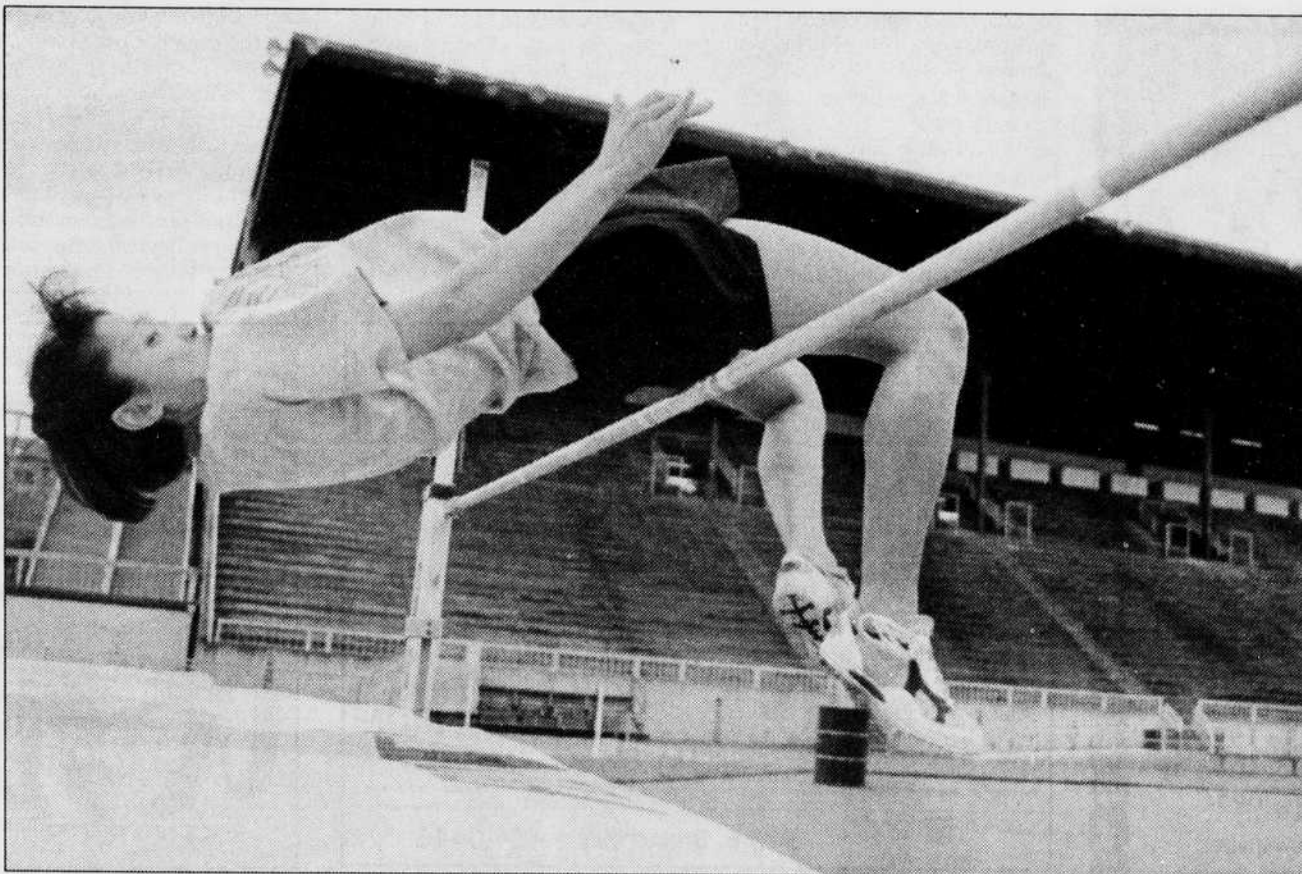
Turn to GOLF, Page 12

### On tap

- **WHO:** No. 9 Oregon women's golf team
- **WHAT:** NCAA west regionals
- **WHERE:** Palo Alto, California
- **WHEN:** Today through Saturday

*"Growing up in Portland, that was the big thing, to go to U of O and run track."*

Nonglack Somsanith, UO jumper



NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

Somsanith has qualified for the Pacific-10 Conference Championships in both the triple jump and high jump this season.

## A Leap of Faith

*Senior Nonglack Somsanith has travelled a long and arduous road to realize her dream of competing for the Ducks*

By Rob Moseley  
Sports Reporter

Oregon triple jumper Nonglack Somsanith stood at the end of the runway at last weekend's Oregon Invitational in driving wind and pouring rain and did the only thing she's ever known.

The 5-foot-5 Laotian native began her approach, slicing through the monsoon-like conditions with her lean yet muscular frame, then closed her eyes and, after a hop and a step, blindly hurled her tiny body into the maelstrom of wind, rain and sand.

"I knew I was drenched, but I was really focused on jumping," Somsanith says. "I thought to myself, 'Don't think about

the rain, don't think about the water. Just concentrate on yourself and your triple jump."

After brushing the sand from her body and the water from her face, Somsanith looked to the Hayward Field scoreboard for the results of her latest leap of faith.

When she finally opened those usually wide eyes that had been clenched shut during her approach, Somsanith saw a new personal best in the triple jump of 39 feet, 8 1/2 inches.

It was the latest in a long line of such

leaps, and something of a family tradition that began almost 20 years ago with her and her relatives' departure from Laos to escape the hardships of poverty and an oppressive government.

Spurred by her grandfather's quest for freedom, Somsanith and her family first came to Richmond, Va., in 1979. Less than a year later the clan moved to nearby Washington, D.C., before finally settling in Portland when Somsanith was just four years old.

Enjoying the peacefulness of life in a suburban setting, Somsanith defied centuries of cultural customs by joining her

Turn to LEAP, Page 12

## Men to play in postseason for first time

*The sixth-seeded Ducks will face third-seeded UC Santa Barbara in the first round of the NCAA West Regional championships*

By Alex Pond  
Sports Editor

For the first time in its history, the Oregon men's tennis team will get a taste of the postseason.

The Ducks (11-12 overall, 0-7 Pacific-10 Conference) were selected Tuesday to participate in the NCAA West Regional Championships, which begin May 15 on the UCLA campus.

"Qualifying for regionals is part of the evolution of our program," said third-year head coach Chris Russell. "It's definitely something we've been shooting for since I got here."

"It's also a tribute to the guys on the team, to all the hard work and commitment they've put in. It's a reward for them."

The Ducks, ranked 66th in the nation, are the No. 6 seed in the region and will open the tournament against the No. 3 seed, UC Santa Barbara.

The Gauchos, ranked 22nd in the nation, are the champions of the Big West Conference and already have one victory over Oregon earlier in the season, a 6-1 decision at UC Santa Barbara on March 8.

"However, we lost three matches in three sets in singles that conceivably could go a different way on a neutral court," Russell added.

Oregon's lone victory in that previous match came when Erwan Kergroach, ranked 52nd, beat No. 68 Corey Guy 7-6, 6-4, 6-0.

After losing their last six regular-season matches, the Ducks were on the bubble for postseason play, but Russell said the fact that his team plays in such a strong conference could have swayed the selection committee in Oregon's favor.

"We're also fortunate because we're in such a strong region," he said. "Two schools from our region got directly into the [NCAA] Championships back in Georgia and two other schools [California and Pepperdine] got shipped out to other regions because of their national ranking being high enough."

The two teams from the Pac-10 that received automatic bids were No. 1 Stanford and No. 7 Southern California.

