



Major League Baseball
Baltimore at New York,
ESPN (34), 4:30 p.m.

SPORTS

Oregon Daily
Emerald

Experienced Ducks primed for title run

With the same lineup that finished seventh last season, the Oregon women's golf team begins play today in the NCAA Championships

By Tim Pyle
Sports Reporter

In keeping with its recent history, the Oregon women's golf team has earned the right to play for a national title on collegiate golf's final stage.

The Ducks begin play today at the NCAA Championships in Madison, Wis., marking the fifth time in six seasons that they have competed in the championships. Oregon's seventh-place finish at nationals last season is its highest ever.

Returning the exact same five-player lineup that it used at the 1997 champi-

onships in Columbus, Ohio, and having already competed once this season at Madison's University Ridge Golf Course, Oregon heads into the tournament with a wealth of experience on its side.



In mid-September, the Ducks finished ninth at the 6,888-yard, par-72 course in the NCAA Fall Preview, which was their first tournament of the season. Senior Paula Patterson, who was a first-team All-American last season, led the team by tying for fourth.

"We played there in the fall and got to know the course," Oregon head coach Renee Baumgartner said. "We feel like we can go there, and it could be in our favor. It could be really cold, wet and rainy, and we're prepared for that."

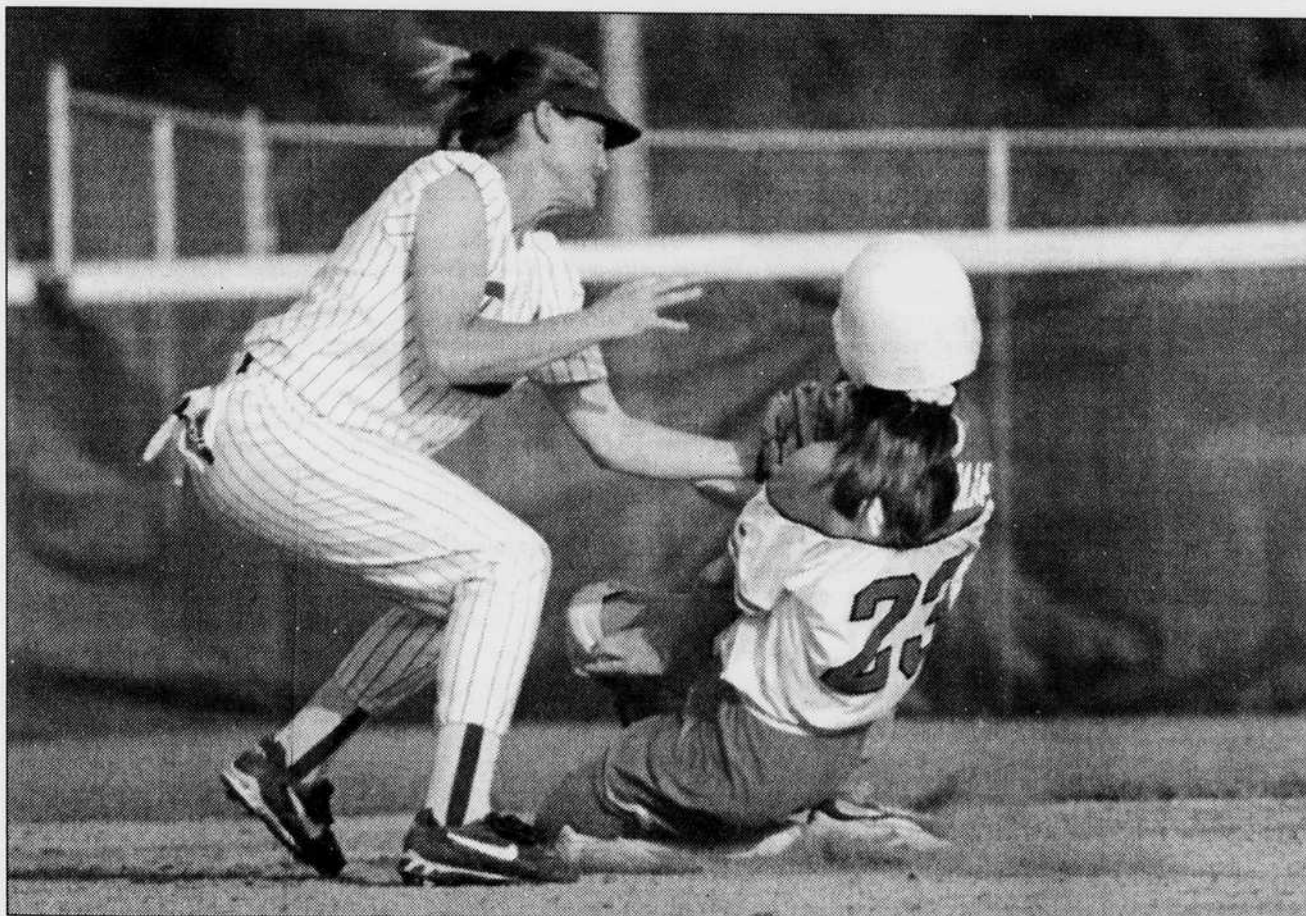
Oregon, which is ranked No. 10 in the MasterCard Collegiate Golf Rankings, almost didn't have the chance to top its 1997 finish. At the NCAA West Regional earlier this month, the Ducks barely made the 11-team cutoff for the championships by tying for 10th.

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On tap

- **WHO:** Oregon women's golf team
- **WHAT:** NCAA Championships
- **WHERE:** Madison, Wis.
- **WHEN:** Today through Saturday

OREGON SOFTBALL



NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

Jill Robinson and the Ducks compiled a 3-3 record against rival Oregon State this season en route to fifth place in the Pac-10.

Success brings confidence for future

Oregon's loss to Nebraska in the Midwestern Regionals capped its most successful season since 1989

By Joel Hood
Sports Reporter

For cynics, the Oregon softball team's season ended precisely the way it began: botching a late-game lead on the road against a top 5 opponent.

But in reality, it's what happened between those two losses that may have changed Oregon softball forever.

Following its season-opening loss to then-No. 2 Fresno State at the ASU Coca-Cola Classic in Phoenix, Ariz., on Feb. 13, Oregon began a remarkable stretch of victories against top 25 opponents that resulted in one of its best early-season starts in school history.

During this stretch, the Ducks beat five ranked opponents, including then-No. 21 Florida State, then-No. 25 Tennessee, then-No. 8 Colorado State and then-No. 12 Oregon State twice. This streak culminated in a 19-6 record and a No. 17 ranking — Oregon's highest national ranking in four seasons.

With success comes confidence, and as the Ducks (40-31 overall, 10-18 Pacific-10 Conference) prepared themselves for conference play, their confidence was at a level almost unheard of around Howe Field before this season.

"We knew we could go far real early in the season," sophomore shortstop Jill Robinson said. "I think we established that we were one of the top few teams in the country after the start we

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had. We really opened people's eyes."

Many of the eyes they opened were those of West Coast sports writers, who, before the season began, ranked Oregon's starting unit last out of eight Pac-10 teams. It's hard to imagine now, but one sports writer even went as far as to say the Ducks' lineup had little or no power at the plate and lacked focus in the field.

So, he got one out of two.

Oregon struggled mightily on defense this season. The Ducks committed an amazing 126 errors in the field — the next highest was Oregon State

with 76 — and turned a league-low four double plays. Those numbers lead to a .940 fielding percentage, easily the lowest in the Pac-10 this season.

Combine Oregon's erratic defense with a pitching unit that ranked last in the Pac-10 and it's a wonder the Ducks finished as high as they did, alone in fifth place in the Pac-10.

Oregon's not-so-secret weapon this season came in the batter's box.

The Ducks were one of the most consistent hitting teams in the conference, second only to No. 1 Arizona in team batting average (.290), hits (514) and runs (331). And the team's power numbers were even more impressive. Oregon hit a combined 42 home runs, had 282 runs batted in and a .416 team slugging percentage.

As the Ducks entered the postseason, it was clear that they were going to go only as far as their bats could take them. And it turned out to be quite a trip.

Oregon lost its opening game to No. 19 Iowa 5-2 last Friday on the first day of postseason play, but regrouped the

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Former Ute transfers to Oregon

David Jackson will be played at the wing position in 1999-2000 after sitting out the mandatory one-year period for transfers

By Rob Moseley
Sports Reporter

The Oregon bench will have a different look next season with the recent addition of transfer David Jackson and the subtraction of assistant coach Jay John, who took a similar job at Arizona on Monday.

Jackson will spend next season for head coach Ernie Kent in a suit and tie while he sits out the mandatory one-year period for transfers. The former Utah Ute will become eligible to play as a junior in 1999-2000.

"He is a player who won't play a single minute or make a bucket for us next season, but who improves this team tremendously with his work ethic, his maturity, and having been successful at Utah," Kent said.

Jackson, a 1996 Parade All-American guard from Wilson High School in Portland, averaged 14.6 minutes and 3.5 points per game last season as the defensive stopper for Utah head coach Rick Majerus. He gained national attention for his efforts guarding Arizona point guard Mike Bibby in the Utes' 76-51 tournament upset of the Wildcats.

Despite a well-publicized clash with the player, Majerus said he would miss Jackson.

"He has accomplished a great deal in the classroom as well as on the court," Majerus said. "Dave's style of play and his wanting to be in a more up-tempo program is a wish we are happy to help him fulfill. It is my desire that Dave have success in the classroom and on the court because he is such a good person, a nice young man and a player probably better suited to a different style of play."

Kent said Jackson will play the wing position for Oregon and will be asked to score from the perimeter.

"When he is able to play for us, he brings tremendous physical ability and mental toughness," Kent said. "I think the year off will help his confidence after struggling in Utah's system last season."

Jackson also considered transferring to Kansas and Oklahoma, although his only other official visit was made to Arizona State, The Oregonian reported on Tuesday.

"I sat down by myself, thought about it, and decided that Oregon was where I wanted to go," Jackson told The Oregonian. "I think coach Kent will give me the freedom to help a team win. They have some great guys on that team who already have bought into coach Kent's system."

Jackson played at Wilson with another

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