



NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

The Oregon softball team ended a four-year postseason drought by winning its games by an average of 4.5 runs.

UO: Success will help build softball program

Continued from Page 7 following day to pound fourth-seeded Coastal Carolina 11-3 and even its playoff record at 1-1. The win kept Oregon's season alive and gave it a Saturday rematch with Iowa for the right to play host Nebraska in the region's championship finale last Sunday.

If that were the stage, then Lindsey Welch provided her greatest performance.

Welch capped the Ducks' remarkable come-from-behind 10-9 victory against the Hawkeyes with a one-out, grand slam over the right-center field fence in the bottom of the seventh inning.

"That's just the greatest feeling," Welch said. "I held off from running for a second because I didn't think it was going out. When it did I just couldn't believe it. It was the greatest moment of my life."

The swing lifted Oregon to the championship finale and its best postseason finish since 1989. Although their season ended with a 9-7 loss to No. 5 Nebraska in Lincoln, the Ducks were able to put this season's incredible accomplishments in

"We peaked at just the right time, and we're all so proud of how we finished out."

Jill Robinson
UO shortstop

perspective.

"That last weekend was the highlight of our season," Robinson said. "We never got down on ourselves throughout the entire tournament. That was the first time that had happened this season. We peaked at just the right time, and we're all so proud of how we finished out."

And postseason success is the best way to build a young team for the future.

"It's going to be a positive all the way around for us," Robinson said. "It's going to help our recruiting and continue to open more eyes to Oregon softball."

That could be this team's most important contribution to the program in the years to come.

Season highlights

- Postseason berth for the first time since 1994
- 41 victories are the second highest total in school history
- Ranked as high as No. 17 on March 16
- Ranked second in Pac-10 in team batting with a .290 average
- Ranked second in the Pac-10 in home runs with 42 and runs batted in with 282
- Ranked second in Pac-10 with 331 runs scored
- Freshman Triawn Custer named Pac-10 player of the week on Feb. 31
- Best postseason finish since 1989
- Scored a season-high 15 runs in five innings against St. Mary's on March 21
- Had a team-record five straight victories against ranked opponents
- 10 conference wins is the most since 1995
- Had at least one player ranked in the top 10 of every major offensive category in the Pac-10
- Beat opponents by an average of 4.5 runs per game.
- Had only one game rained out the entire season

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