

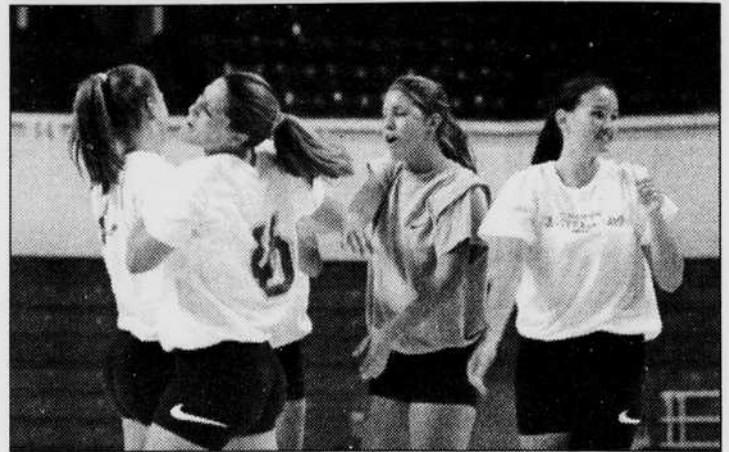
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LAURA GOSS/Emerald

Oregon's veterans, along with Nelson, hope to rebuild the program.

Volleyball: Nelson wants improvement in clutch time

Continued from Page 1E

The Ducks opened the season with six consecutive home matches including the two-day Nike Invitational Sept. 4-5 at McArthur Court. They then traveled to Minnesota for a two day tournament before returning to face Oregon State at home on Sept. 18.

Oregon came out strong in their first match on Sept. 1 against Portland St., beating the Vikings 15-7, 15-7, 15-9 in front of 574 fans. The Ducks were led by senior co-captains Ernst and White, who tallied 15 and 12 kills, respectively. Gerlach proved she is the setter to watch as she led the team with 38 assists.

The Nike Invitational exposed Oregon's youth as the Ducks posted a 2-2 record, failing to capitalize when they had the lead. Especially frustrating was the 15-12, 15-13, 15-6 loss to Fresno State because Oregon had an early lead. Although Ernst and White combined for 28 kills, and Gerlach posted 40 assists, the Ducks couldn't finish the job.

"We weren't pleased with the Fresno State match," Ernst said. "You have to give Fresno State credit, they played a great match, but we control what's on our side of the net and we're not doing that right now. When it comes down to crunch time, when the score is 11-11, we're folding,

we're not making the other team perform."

The Ducks have not lost sight of their goal, but to compete in the Pacific 10 conference they know that determination won't be enough. The Pac-10 boasts five teams in the top 25, including No. 3 USC and No. 4 Stanford.

Despite some disappointing losses in the pre-season, Nelson feels her team is still on track for a winning season.

"Regardless of the record, the team has never once lost belief in what they can do," Nelson said.

But knowing and performing are two different things, and Nelson will work on getting the Ducks mentally prepared for a challenging season.

"When the game is on the line we have not performed well," Nelson said. "We need to be a more emotional and a more steady team."

With so many players competing at the college level for the first time, it will be up to the returning players to put the heart of this team into action on the court.

"Right now we have as much heart and desire as anyone else, but right now the next step is taking it to execution and actually doing it," Ernst said. "Everybody can believe it, but belief is only going to get you so far."

TO BE OR NOT TO BE...

A preview of the UO Greek Community men's rush events week of Oct. 1-9

October 1st rush kickoff
greek community party, live band
@ humpy lumpy (the lawn by the Hamilton Complex)

October 2nd sports day
@ the lawns by the Carson complex

October 3rd
all greek community service project

October 4th - 9th
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