

SPORTS

THURSDAY
Oct. 22, 1998**Best Bet**College Football
Stanford at Arizona State
7:00 p.m., Fox Sports NW

Dellinger treats Oregon runners with respect

There are some people in my life whom I wish I knew better. I met one of these people, recently. Until this year, however, I wasn't even aware of his existence. That is something I deeply regret.

I began to write about the Oregon men's cross country team as soon as I joined the staff of the Oregon Daily Emerald. I learned this was a team that had finished eighth last season at the NCAA Championships, and that they wanted to make a run at the title again this year.

OPINION



Scott Pesznecker

I learned about men's head coach, Bill Dellinger. I had heard he had been coaching the team for the previous 32 years, but that he decided last spring that this season would be his last.

I wanted to know what Dellinger's runners thought about their legendary coach. I wasn't surprised to learn that each of his runners described Dellinger as not only a great coach, but as a good person. Each player I talked to commented on the team's desire to win the national title this season to commemorate Dellinger's final year as coach.

I was sure Dellinger would be embracing this support from his team. But I spoke with him over the phone on one occasion, and when I asked him how he felt about his team's feelings toward him, his reply astounded me.

He said he didn't want the team to win the title for him. He said that if everybody was focused on that goal, then they would lose their focus toward themselves, their racing, and the team's.

Last week, I ventured out to Hayward Field to catch the team during practice. Until that point, I had never seen coach Dellinger, not even in a photograph. And I wasn't sure what to expect, either.

It took me a long time to find him, but when I did, I think my understanding of him — and of the foundation of his team — grew exponentially. As I waited for practice to end, I got to see him interact with his team.

I never saw him get angry or impatient with his runners. The respect he gave his runners reminded me of the respect that existed between a father and his sons.

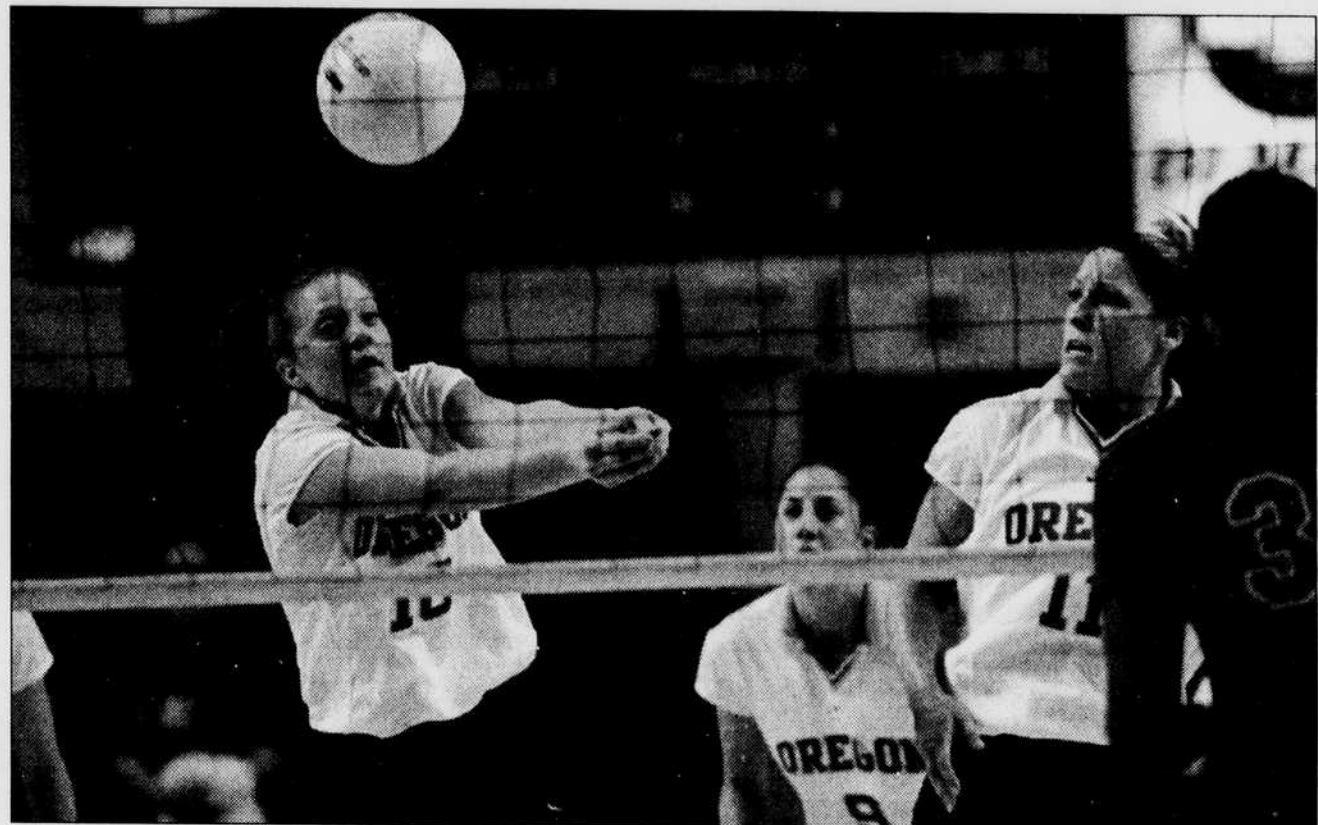
And make no mistake; Oregon has an incredible cross-country team. It would not be exaggerating to say that it does have a chance at taking the NCAA title.

Maybe Dellinger doesn't want his team to focus on him, but I don't know if that is possible. This is a man who, in 32 years with Oregon, has captured 19 top-10 NCAA finishes, 15 Pacific-10 Conference championship titles and 5 NCAA titles.

I could not think of a more perfect tribute to Dellinger than his team making one last run at the title this season.

Scott Pesznecker covers Oregon cross country for the Emerald. He can be reached via e-mail at spesznecker@gladstone.uoregon.edu.

OREGON VS. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Senior Tanya Minion, who gives the Ducks depth off the bench, sets the ball for her teammates against Stanford last Sunday at McArthur Court. *Matt Hankins/Emerald*

Challenge awaits Oregon volleyball

Marinkovic and Kessy lead the Ducks against two ranked opponents

By Allison Ross
Oregon Daily Emerald

Talk about a challenge. Oregon volleyball will host two nationally ranked teams this week at McArthur Court — No. 11 USC tonight and No. 25 UCLA on Sunday.

The Trojans enter tonight's match second in the Pacific-10 Conference with a 7-2 record, and a 22-6 all-time record against Oregon.

Leading the Trojan attack will be

all-American middle blocker Jasmina Marinkovic and outside hitter Jennifer Kessy. Marinkovic is fourth in the Pac-10 in hitting percentage (.346) and first on the USC career charts in block assists, second in total blocks and solo blocks. Kessy is second in the conference, behind Oregon's Madeline Ernst, in kills, averaging 5.40 per game.

"Jasmina and Jennifer really make their team click," Oregon head coach Cathy Nelson said.

We won't necessarily stop them, but we need to control them."

Oregon dropped its first match with USC on Sept. 27 at the North Gym. But since then the Ducks have made changes in the lineup and know what they need to do to prepare for this potent USC team.

"We've played them before so we know what we have to do to beat them," outside hitter Monique Tobaggi said.

Tobaggi did not start the first time around, but is scheduled to start tonight. Since becoming a starter against Stanford on Oct. 18, she has complemented Ernst by

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On tap

WHO: Oregon vs. No. 11 USC
WHERE: Mac Court
WHEN: Tonight at 7 p.m.

Starter at tailback unknown, Bellotti says

This weekend's game could be a coming-out party for Jerry Brown, the coach says

By Rob Moseley
Oregon Daily Emerald

Two days before the Ducks face Southern California at Autzen, Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti is still unsure of just who will start at tailback.

Junior Reuben Droughns had surgery Monday to repair the ligament damage and broken fibula he suffered in last week's loss to UCLA. With Herman Ho-Ching and Kevin Parker also out with injuries, junior Derien Latimer and sophomores Jason Cooper and Jerry Brown are left to fight for the starting nod.

"Reuben didn't play in two games this year, and we still ran the ball very well," Bellotti said. "Our commitment to the running game is not going to change. Certainly Reuben is a great running back, but I tend to think these other guys are not too bad."

Latimer is listed as the starter for the time being, but Cooper, who is third on the team

in rushing this season, and Brown, who hasn't played since 1996 because of injuries, are both being seriously considered.

"Jerry Brown, this may be his coming out party," Bellotti said. "I'm sure that he'd love to play because of his ties back there in L.A. County."

Brown missed all of last season with a hamstring tear and has sat out the first six games of this season with an ankle sprain.



Sacred Heart Medical Center after Monday's procedure, which went well, according to Bellotti.

"He is in great spirits," said Bellotti, who visited Droughns on Tuesday. "He has so many visitors, I think they're taking numbers outside his room."

"Certainly this whole injury thing and rehab is tough on anybody. There's peri-

ods of depression that you have to deal with, when you realize that you're not able to play and that you're missing your family, which is our football team, but he was in great spirits."

Bellotti said Droughns, who will probably miss spring practice while rehabilitating his damaged right leg, will be at the game on Saturday.

Other Injuries

Also sidelined against the Trojans will be Parker and tackle Marco Aguirre, both injured against the Bruins.

Parker suffered a severely sprained ankle and has been wearing a cast this week, while Aguirre partially tore ligaments in his right knee and will miss at least four weeks.

On the bright side, two players who have missed major playing time this season could return on Saturday. Linebacker Jeff Simpson is listed as questionable, while defensive lineman Zack Freiter, named by Bellotti as possibly the strongest player in the history of the program, should play against the Trojans.