



OREGON TRACK



Martin Smith, who coached the men's track team at Wisconsin for 15 seasons, replaces Oregon's legendary track coach Bill Dellinger this season at Hayward Field. *Courtesy*

Smith eager to continue UO's tradition

Oregon's new men's track coach admits his transition will take more time

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

For a man like Martin Smith, the Oregon men's track program is the thing that dreams are made of.

In the last ten years, the Ducks have finished No. 1 in the nation twice, once in 1989 and again in 1995. Oregon also captured the Pacific-10 Conference's outdoor title in 1990 and 1991, and finished fourth overall at the NCAA Outdoor championships in 1992.

The Oregon men's track team has finished among the top-10 track teams on 14 occasions in its storied history. The men's

cross country team has won four national titles as well.

Oregon has also graduated many world class athletes. Retired track coach Bill Dellinger won the bronze medal in the 5,000 meters at the 1964 Olympics and the legendary Steve Prefontaine competed in the 5,000 meters in the 1972 Olympic games.

There is no question that Oregon track has had a rich history. So when Smith was offered the job of replacing Dellinger as head coach last summer, he enthusiastically accepted.

"Oregon's track and field program is probably one of the most storied programs in United States track and field," Smith says. "So the opportunity to coach here is a tremendous responsibility and a challenge. I was at a point when I was present-

ed the opportunity to come here to take that challenge."

And judging from his past, Smith should be a good fit in Oregon's program. As the head coach of men's track and field program at Wisconsin for the last 15 years, Smith compiled a list of impressive accomplishments, including 12 Big Ten Conference titles and 10 District crowns.

His leadership and coaching tactics have helped shape 77 NCAA All-Americans and four individual collegiate champions.

"What every coach wants is to create an environment that allows athletes to develop, and pursue the best athlete they can be," Smith says. "You need to provide athletes the environment to improve; to go

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UO needs to find go-to guy at crunchtime

The difference between the Oregon men's basketball team and its opponents in the upper half of the Pacific-10 Conference has become sparklingly clear in the Ducks' four straight home losses.

In each of those losses, which were decided by a total of nine points, the Ducks found themselves within reach of victory, only to see one player from the opposition step forward and take over the last few moments.

On Jan. 9 it was Baron Davis leading UCLA to a 65-63 win with 22 points, including a clutch jumper with four minutes, 35 seconds left that proved to be the game-winner.

Two nights later it was Southern California's Adam Spanich nailing two three-pointers in .08 seconds to beat the Ducks, 85-84, and cap a 16-point second half.

Last Thursday was the Jason Terry show at McArthur Court as the Ducks fell, 85-83, despite six players in double figures. One man was more than six on that night, however, as Terry was 11 for 21 from the field and perfect in 10 free throw attempts on his way to 37 points.

The perpetual one-man show continued Saturday, when Arizona State's Eddie House, one of just five Sun Devils to score, bettered his entire team by four points with his 34-point performance in Arizona State's 64-60 win.

Those four performances have amounted to a maddeningly frustrating month to be a Duck fan, especially considering that three of the Ducks' four road games in January have gone to at least one overtime.

But while it's becoming increasingly easy to cast the Ducks off as underachievers, it's also becoming easy to do what senior Terik Brown so glumly did after the loss on Saturday — look ahead to next year.

"Close games down the stretch, a lot of

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Oregon Men's Notes



Rob Moseley

Bowyer's return as Oregon's defensive ace will be a slow process

Oregon Women's Notes



Allison Ross

In your face. That's what the Oregon women's basketball team's defense is known for. The Ducks lead the Pacific-10 Conference in scoring defense, allowing just 55 points per game.

And they had been without their defensive ace, Lisa Bowyer, for the last six games. The 5-foot-8 senior guard sustained a broken finger against Portland on Dec. 29 and had not played a conference game until the Ducks' road trip to Arizona last weekend.

Before the trip, head coach Jody Runge said Bowyer could play if Oregon needed her, but that there would also be an adjustment period because the team had been doing so well without her.

On Friday, the Ducks needed her. But it was clear that Bowyer's layoff had hurt her more than her teammates had hoped it would.

Just five minutes into Oregon's matchup with Arizona, Runge went to the bench and called Bowyer into the game. But it wasn't the same Bowyer who led the team in steals, assists and

three-point shots before the injury. With her two middle fingers taped and a splint holding her injured finger in place, Bowyer was unable to find her shot.

In 12 minutes of action, Bowyer was 0-3 from the field and 1-5 from the free-throw line, while defensively she managed one steal.

It was a game in which the Ducks could have used a defensive spark, as they allowed the Wildcats to score 78 points — the most points any team has scored against Oregon this season.

But perhaps the lowest point of Bowyer's comeback against Arizona was when she was called for a technical foul. Bowyer didn't agree with a call and reportedly threw the ball at the referee.

Oregon doesn't fare too well in the rankings

Before Oregon headed to the desert last weekend, it broke into the Associated Press top 25 Poll for the first time since 1995. But all anyone could seem to remember about the 1995 Ducks and their No. 24 ranking was that it lasted only a week following tragic losses to Arizona and Arizona State.

Oregon dropped right out of the rankings in 1995 and didn't reappear until last Monday.

On Thursday, history would repeat itself. Not only did the Ducks lose to Arizona, but by the exact same score as in 1995, 78-74.

Starting lineup a question

Despite moving back in to sole possession of second place in the conference with its win against Arizona State, Oregon is struggling to find a starting lineup that works week in and week out.

Runge has used 11 different starting line ups in 19 games, including two different lineups last week.

"We have got to work on the consistency of our performances," Runge said. "We've had a lot of different people step up in a lot of different situations, but I think we've got to put it all together to be able to continue to have success in the conference. I'm in a situation as a coach where I'm just guessing who's going to show up every night."

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