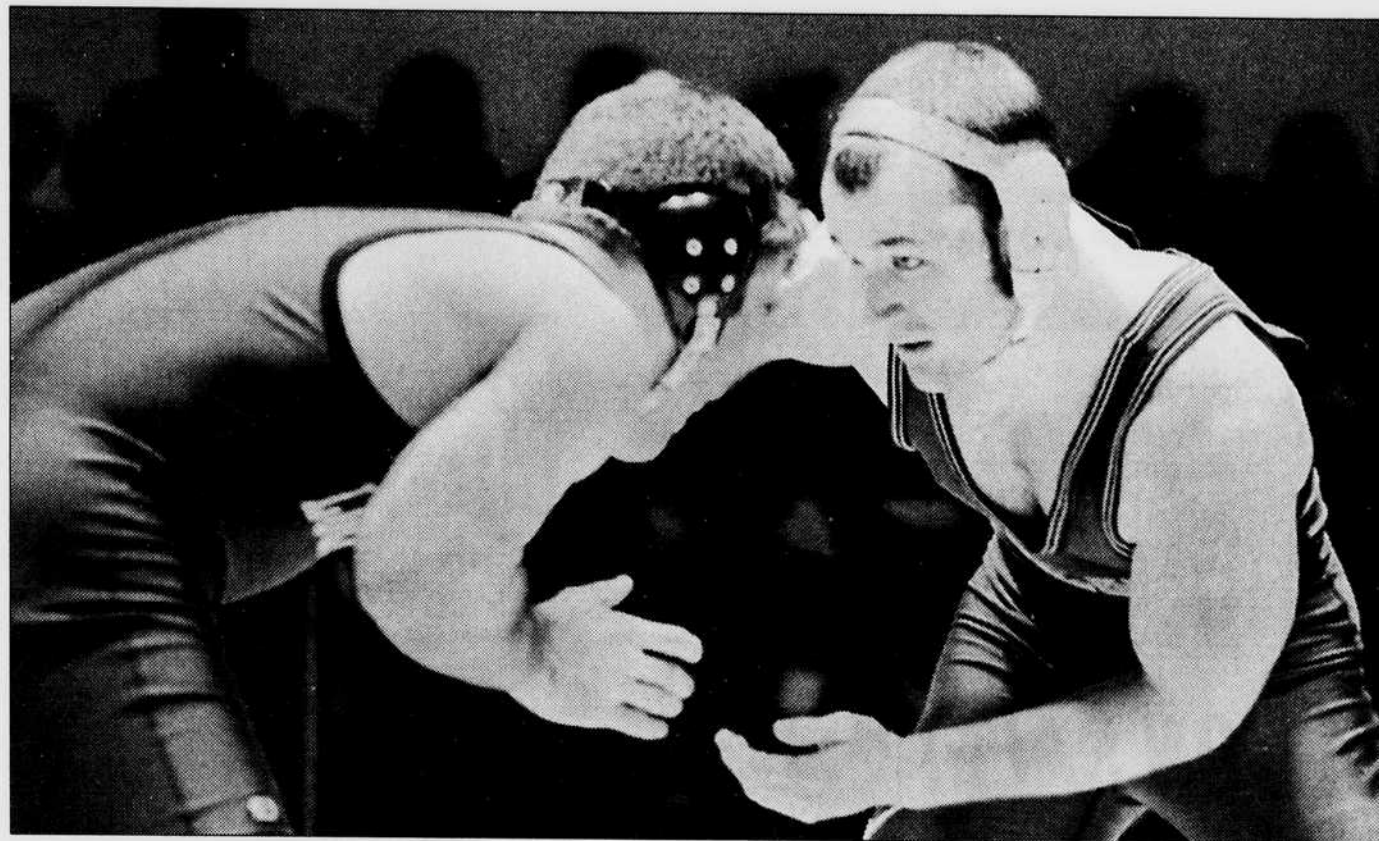




OREGON WRESTLING



"He's the best leader this team has ever had in the years I've been here."

Chael Sonnen
Oregon wrestler

Sean Morgan's teammates say the mild-mannered Oregon senior is the perfect person to lead the Ducks as they try to get back into the Pac-10 title chase.

Captain leads in and out of locker room

Sean Morgan has overcome numerous obstacles to solidify his place as a leader on the Oregon wrestling team

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

Before each of the Oregon wrestling team's meets, the team gathers together in the locker room to hear what team captain Sean Morgan has to say.

Sometimes he is serious, sometimes he jokes around. But he always speaks from the heart. And when the time comes for the Ducks to charge into the arena to meet their opponent, the senior only has one thing to say:

"It's time to get funky!"

As Oregon's leader, the 165-pound Morgan takes it upon himself to make sure everyone stays relaxed and has fun while competing. He developed his pregame motto to help break the tension, but he has other reasons for saying it, as well.

"It's how I wrestle," Morgan says. "I always go out there and get funky with the guys. Sometimes I've got to do weird stuff, but I do whatever it takes to win. Plus, it makes everybody laugh when I say it."

Chael Sonnen has wrestled with Morgan for three years. Sonnen admires Morgan for his ability to keep his spirits up in any situation. It is for that reason that

Morgan is a team captain, Sonnen says.

"His outlook on wrestling and life is all positive," Sonnen says. "He's the best leader this team has ever had in the years I've been here."

Morgan's days as a wrestler go back a long way. As a six-year-old, he and his brothers would wrestle around on the floor of his home in Alderwood, Wash. And Morgan has been going at it ever since.

When he turned nine years old, Morgan joined a local club called the Wrestling Rhinos in Washington. He continued to be involved with the sport until he reached Lynnwood High School, where he earned a spot on the wrestling team and led it to a share of the Westco

League co-championship during his sophomore year.

By the time Morgan departed for Oregon, he was a three-time state champion.

"I was kind of successful before high school," Morgan says. "I liked the mental aspect of controlling my own destiny. I liked getting out there and beating on a guy. It is a barbaric side to men."

Despite the promise he showed in high school, Morgan's career as a collegiate wrestler could have been over before it began. After redshirting as a freshman, Morgan tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee just two weeks into practice as a true freshman.

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Point of attack: Young players guard the greatest of the Pac-10

Women's Pac-10 Notes



Joel Hood

We all know the Pacific-10 Conference has an astonishing number of talented freshmen and sophomores who are already making a big impact on the title chase. But what has been surprising to most coaches around the league is that the impact has come from the point guard position.

Seven conference teams are, or have at some point this season, started a freshman or sophomore at the point guard position. The results have been mixed, resulting in only one team remaining in the Associated Press top 25 (UCLA at No. 8). But don't be surprised if Oregon, Washington, Stanford and Arizona all make runs at the top 25 in ensuing weeks.

If so, look for these teams' point guards to lead the way.

"The key ingredient is leadership," said Arizona head coach Joan Bonvicini about what Wildcat point guard Felicity Willis brings to her team. "Whenever you have a really good team, your point guard is the catalyst."

Arizona State head coach C. Turner Thorne agrees.

"No question, a solid point guard has to be No. 1 on your list in terms of recruiting," Thorne said. "That's what you need to build your program around."

Not surprisingly, the Pac-10's two top teams, UCLA (15-4 overall, 7-0 in the Pac-10) and Oregon (15-4, 6-2) have benefited from stellar point-guard play this season.

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Point guards direct offenses, teams to top of men's Pac-10 standings

Word around the Pacific-10 Conference is that the main ingredient separating the upper-echelon teams from the cellar-dwellers so far this season has been the play of point guards.

No. 3 Stanford (17-2 overall, 7-0 Pac-10) has Arthur Lee in control, No. 13 Arizona (13-3, 5-2) is in the capable hands of Pac-10 leading scorer Jason Terry, sophomore star Baron Davis runs No. 11 UCLA (14-4, 5-2) and even Oregon State (10-7, 4-4), a surprise at fourth place, is led by Deaundra Tanner.

"Usually, with most teams, leadership comes under the direction of the point guard," California head coach Ben Braun said. "The point guard is the first person to greet the defense

and the first person to initiate the offense, so there's a lot of responsibility that player has.

"The good ones direct their teams and get their teams in the flow. I think you're seeing those teams at the top are all having good years as a result of solid point guard play."

In addition to their leadership contributions, all four of the aforementioned point guards are also putting up some gaudy statistics.

Lee is averaging more than five assists and two steals per game, and he paces the Pac-10 in three-point shooting at almost 48 percent. Terry leads the league in scoring (21 points per game), steals (almost three per game), assists (nearly six per game) and free-throw percentage (85 percent).

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Men's Pac-10 Notes



Tim Pyle