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UO men, women try to rebound

The teams will greatly benefit from winning high-profile matches

By **Mirjam Swanson**
for the Emerald

Both the Oregon men's and women's tennis teams will be in action this weekend as they look to rebound from last week's losses to ranked teams.

The women travel north to face the Washington schools in non-conference matches on Friday and Sunday, while the men will face No. 31 UC Santa Barbara in their second match of a four-game home stand.

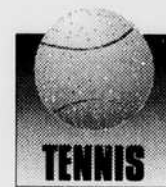
The men's match, at noon on Sunday at the Eugene Swim and Tennis Club, will give the Ducks yet another chance to knock off a perennially successful program.

Team members say they think they can beat high-caliber teams, and a win this weekend could prove it. The Ducks narrowly lost to No. 24 California and No. 28 San Diego State, and they played tough against No. 18 Washington

on Saturday.

They are eager to come up on the winning end of a close contest, head coach Chris Russell said.

"Our energy level is good," he said. "Our guys are very motivated to turn the corner after having a lot of close results."



A win would attract attention to the Ducks' improved play. And that could help lift their national ranking, which was one of the team's goals going into the season.

"It would be a big step forward for us," Russell said. "It would be our biggest win to date, as far as a national ranking."

Beating Santa Barbara for that elusive high-profile win would be especially satisfying for Oregon. Last season, the Gauchos swept the Ducks in their first NCAA Regionals appearance. The Ducks are hoping to exact revenge on the program where their head coach

both played and coached before he arrived at Oregon.

"I've logged a lot of hours at UCSB," Russell said. "So it's kind of nostalgic in a lot of ways."

"But they've beaten on us for the last four years, so it's not so nostalgic any more. I respect what they've achieved, but we've paid our dues. We could see a good result."

Both Washington and Washington State beat on an injury-riddled Oregon women's squad last season.

The women are also looking to avenge last season's losses.

Already, Oregon (5-3) has recorded more wins than it did all of last season.

Individually, freshman Adeline Arnaud has become a leader for the Ducks. She heads into this weekend with an 11-5 record as Oregon's No. 2 singles player.

The Ducks face No. 52 Washington State (2-4) today, and No. 42 Washington (8-2) Sunday.

The Cougars and the Huskies have recorded impressive wins this season, including wins over No. 29 New Mexico.

Sports Brief

Ducks on their way to Easton Showcase

Rather than snowflakes, the Oregon softball team should find only softballs dropping out of the sky this weekend at the Easton Showcase in Fullerton, Calif.

The No. 15 Ducks (11-5) are looking to add to an impressive streak of nine wins in their last 11 games since starting the season 2-3.

After sweeping Loyola Marymount and claiming the Matador

Invitational title in Northridge, Calif., last weekend, Oregon has moved up 10 spots in the USA Today softball poll heading into its fourth tournament of the young season. The new ranking represents the highest the Ducks have been since head coach Rick Gamez was hired three seasons ago.

Today, Oregon will meet Santa Clara at 10 a.m. and Northwestern at 2 p.m. to get the weekend started.

On Saturday, the Ducks battle

Illinois State at 10 a.m. and Cal State-Fullerton, the tournament's host, at noon. On Sunday, Oregon concludes the tournament with games against Auburn at 9 a.m. and Pacific at 1 p.m.

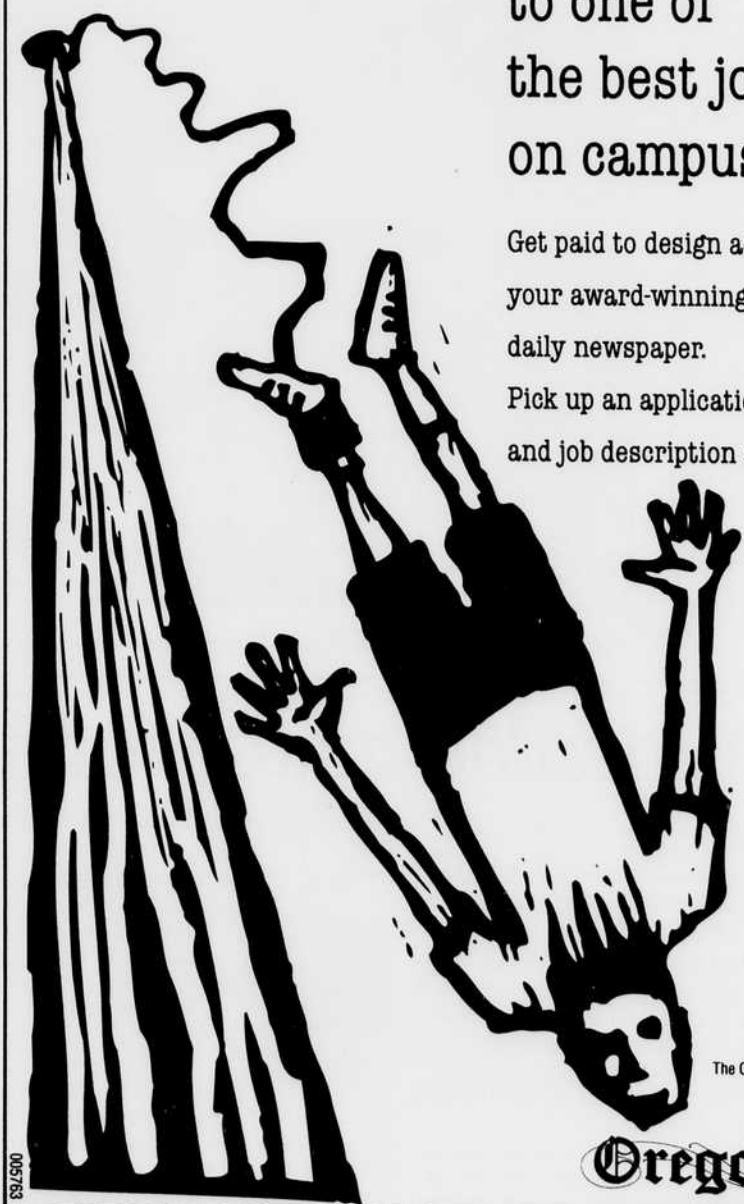
It has not taken freshman Missey Coe long to adjust to NCAA Division I-A softball from her high school days in Medford. Coe leads the team with a .500 batting average, including eight doubles, and she has struck out just three times in 48 at bats.

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