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Men's soccer gets in groove

■ After a loss at Oregon State, the Ducks rebound with two wins and a tie going into a weekend tournament

By Dave Grenley
for the Emerald

The Oregon men's club soccer team has begun another season on the pitch.

A year after finishing 13-1, the Ducks return 12 players to a lineup that includes 13 new faces after a record-setting, three-day tryout.

Player-coaches Andy Lanier and Dave Woodward witnessed 70 participants put their skills to the test. Lanier, a junior midfielder, and Woodward, a returning senior goalkeeper, turned away 45 student-athletes who were hoping to make the team.

The Ducks began the season with a loss at Oregon State but have since rebounded with two

wins and a tie, brining their record to 2-1-1 heading into a tournament at Lane Community College beginning Saturday.

Oregon looked impressive in its home opener on a new turf field against Lane. A win at George Fox has put them right where they want to be heading into tournament play.

"We are definitely an improved team," Lanier said. "There is a definite increase in our skill level from last year. The team is returning a lot of good players as well as six very skilled freshmen."

The strength of this team lies in returning skilled players on both offense and defense. The Oregon defense is quick to the ball, allowing only three goals in its last three games. The Ducks' transition

game up and down the field is effective as well.

"We have very few weaknesses on this team," Lanier said. "Our defense is very strong because we return all defensive starters from last year."

The Oregon team is also anticipating a return trip to the National Soccer Championship Tournament less than a month from now in Statesborough, Ga. After a disappointing loss to Virginia in the quarterfinals of last season's tournament, the Ducks know they must prove something not only to the rest of the country but to themselves as well.

"Being one of only two teams from the West invited to take part in this tournament... we know that we must show the world that we belong to be there just as much as anyone else," said Ross Minckler, a senior midfielder.



Series to decide team of decade

By Ben Walker
The Associated Press

ATLANTA— There it is, engraved right on the ring Atlanta general manager John Schuerholz proudly wears: "Team of the 90s."

To him, Atlanta already owns that title. No debate needed on the team of the decade, not even if the New York Yankees take home this World Series trophy.

"To answer that question for the 1,442nd time, we don't need to do anything," Schuerholz said. "We've won more games than any team, we've won 100 games three years in a row, we've won eight straight division titles."

"If you choose any criteria except one narrow criteria — World Series championships — we lead

it," he said.

Of course, that's not such a narrow category. Not to the Yankees.

"Aren't we the team of the century?" New York GM Brian Cashman said Wednesday. "World championships, that's the goal."

Fittingly, the clubs that had the majors' two worst records in 1990 got a final chance to make their cases starting with Game 1 Saturday night at Turner Field.

Orlando "El Duque" Hernandez, MVP of the AL Championship Series, probably will start for the Yankees. Atlanta can pick from any of their Big Four of Tom Glavine, John Smoltz, Greg Maddux and Kevin Millwood.

For Atlanta, it's an opportunity to win that elusive second World

Series title. Atlanta beat Cleveland in 1995 — prompting them to put that boast on their rings — but have nothing else to show for eight straight trips to the NL Championship Series.

For the Yankees, it's a chance to win their record 25th title and third in four years. That recent run began when they beat Atlanta in six games in 1996.

"We've got another shot at them," Atlanta third baseman Chipper Jones said.

Atlanta earned their fifth trip to the World Series in the 1990s by beating the New York Mets 10-9 in 11 innings Tuesday night in Game 6 of the NLCS. The Yankees beat Boston in five games in the ALCS.

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