



Scott Barnett Emerald

With Monique Tobbagi beset by injuries, Gilmore has had extended action.

## Gilmore

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or get a side out."

Before she could enjoy her possibly brief role as a starter, Gilmore's presence on the court suddenly became a necessity.

Tobbagi, the Ducks' undisputed offensive leader, was sidelined with a stress fracture after the California match. Now, Gilmore had a huge responsibility to her team.

"You've got to fill some big shoes," Gilmore said. "[Tobbagi] was doing pretty well last year, and she was doing good this year. You've got to go in and somewhat make up for what you lost. There is a little pressure."

Gilmore started every match except one during Tobbagi's absence.

Her progress can be seen in the box scores. Against UCLA on Oct. 15, Gilmore had an all-around match with six kills and six digs — a big improvement from her first start against the Golden Bears.

Nelson saw a Pac-10-quality player from the moment she began recruiting Gilmore last February.

Gilmore had played in a recreational league as a high school freshman, along with joining the Bingham High School squad. She played volleyball in high school all four years and basketball until she was a junior. As a senior, Gilmore put herself in the recruiting spotlight by joining the High

Country volleyball club in Salt Lake City.

Nelson was so eager to have Gilmore that the recruitment process was finished in about two weeks.

"I saw great potential in her, and I still see great potential," Nelson said. "She hasn't even played a lot, and she still knows a lot about the game. I think Heather Gilmore will be a great Pac-10 player."

"She's a good instinctive player. She's got a good court presence. She brings a lot to us that we need to have out there on the floor."

Gilmore is battling a shoulder injury that could hold her out of the Ducks' home match against Oregon State on Friday. But with Tobbagi now experiencing stress-fracture symptoms in her other leg, Gilmore may again be called

upon to be an offensive threat.

That shouldn't surprise Gilmore.

From that day back in Salt Lake City when her friends challenged her to that first volleyball game to her first season match against Stanford when she squared up against state-rival Logan Tom, Gilmore has been all about rising to the challenge.

"I've been playing right side, left side, I played for Mo while she's been injured, so it's been switched around," Gilmore said. "I've had more responsibilities sometimes, but not as many other times."

"You always think you can do a little better, but I don't have a lot of experience. I just want to try to improve and stay confident, and perform my role on the team."



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## Cross country

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ity to be able to secure a top-four or top-five spot," Smith said. "If we're able to get appropriate placing at this district meet, then we'll be fine."

If the Ducks were to finish fourth in a region, they may not be selected for an at-large berth before a third-place team from the same region, but they can be selected before a third-place team from a different region.

Got all that?

There's more. Also coming into play is the number of wins the Oregon teams have against the 18 automatic qualifiers from the final weekend of September to the regional meet. Another important factor is the amount of wins the Ducks have against teams that are also being considered for at-large berths.

The NCAA committee compares each at-large contending team's record against common opponents of other "bubble" teams from the end of September

through the regional meet.

An imperfect system indeed, but it does seem to keep most of the coaches happy.

"I have no problems with the system," Smith said. "There seems to be less controversy in the process, and it makes good sense. It does make a point of getting the best of the teams in the nation, and that's where we hope to be."

Women's head coach Tom Heinonen summarized the process best.

"The procedure is kind of screwed up, but that's just the way the sport is," Heinonen said. "We just don't want to be on the outside looking in."

### In the polls...

Following their performances at the Pac-10 Championships last Saturday, both the men's and women's teams remained ranked in the top 25 in the nation. The men, sparked by a third-place overall finish, moved up one spot to No. 11. As for the women, a sixth-place finish dropped them two places and has them clinging onto the final spot at No. 25.

## Sports brief

### Rangers vie for championship

Ten cadets from the Oregon Club Sports ROTC ranger challenge team head for the regional championships at Western Oregon on Nov. 6.

"We have a legitimate chance to place first in each event," team

captain Shawn Dodger said. "I know we've improved from last year."

Teams compete in 10 military events — all in full uniform — ranging from suspension bridge construction to weapon assembly and disassembly to 10K running.

Every team member's performance counts in each team's total. "You push yourself harder be-

cause you don't want to let your team down," said Oregon cadet Don Bryant from Anchorage, Alaska.

A group of 20 cadets has practiced at 6:45 a.m. all term, duking it out to decide the 10 best most qualified for the team, Dodger said.

Inge McMillen

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