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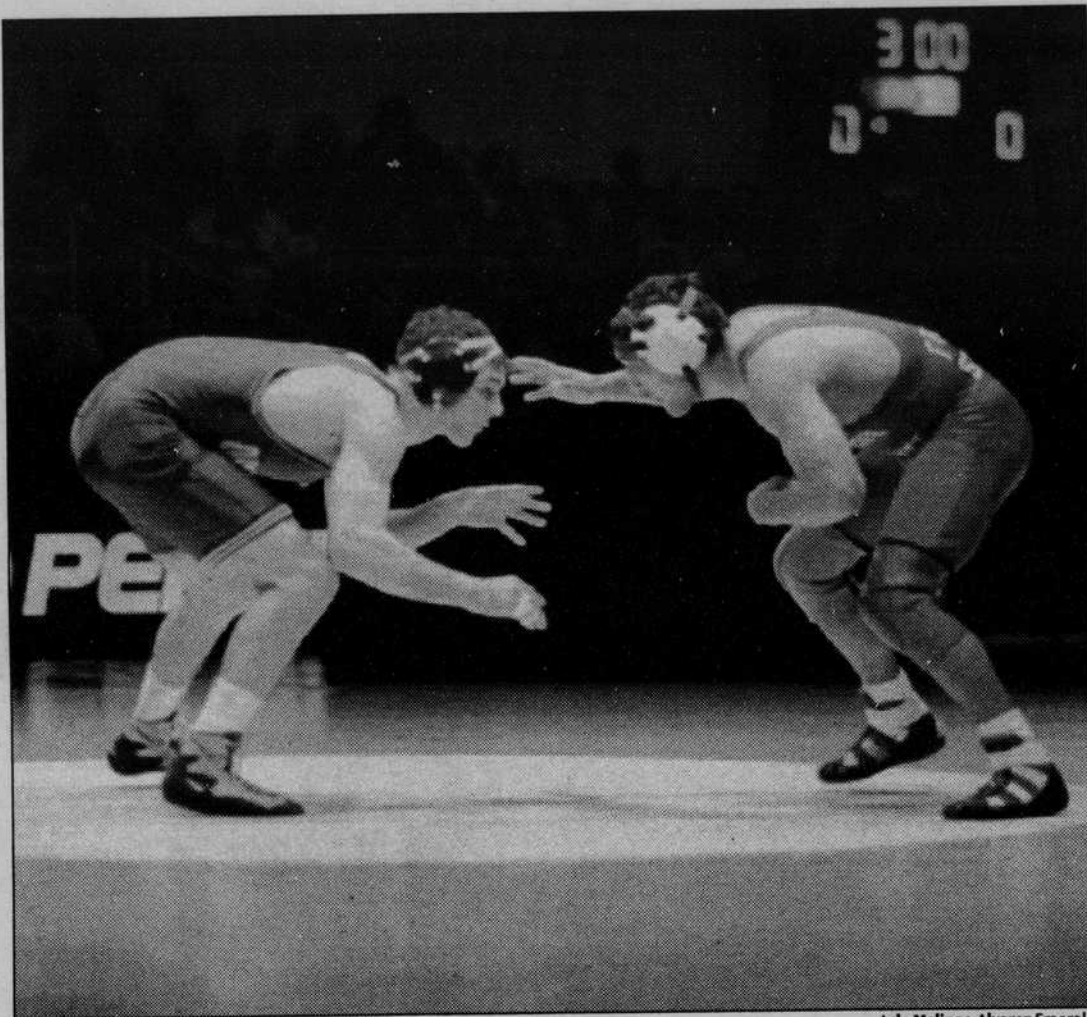
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Azle Malinao-Alvarez Emerald

Oregon grapplers hope to capitalize on having had a couple of weeks to prepare for three tough matches this weekend.

## Rejuvenated, UO ready for trip

■ Head coach Chuck Kearney said the Ducks' layoff won't affect their road trip to Utah, Idaho, Arizona

By Matt O'Neill  
Oregon Daily Emerald

After a week off, the Oregon wrestling team embarks on a three-match road trip to Brigham Young, Boise State and Arizona State.

The Duck grapplers (9-3) are coming off a weekend in which they swept five dual matches, including an upset win at home against then-No. 25 Fresno State.

Head coach Chuck Kearney said the week of lay-off will not hurt his team.

"Having a chance to have a weekend off is like having a bye week for the football team," Kearney said.

"It allows us to put seven or eight days of hard training together. Emotionally it gives us time to reflect and refocus on the end-of-the-season run."

The Ducks begin the trip today with their final nonconference match at unranked BYU, which is led by two nationally ranked wrestlers.

Sixteenth-ranked sophomore Aaron Holker (141 pounds) and No. 20 senior Rangi Smart (165 pounds) lead the Cougars' charge.

Kearney said that the match will be intriguing, despite the fact that the Cougars (4-6) are not

ranked, like the other two opponents on the trip. BYU still will provide matchup problems.

"The BYU match will be interesting, to say the least," Kearney said. "Good wrestlers against good wrestlers, and it could go either way."

One of those interesting matchups will likely be sophomore David Watson taking on

“The BYU match will be interesting, to say the least. Good wrestlers against good wrestlers, and it could go either way.”

Chuck Kearney  
head coach

Holker. According to Kearney, Watson has stepped up during the past couple weeks.

"David is definitely getting better," Kearney said. "He is one of the guys who is really improving for us."

Another good matchup will put another Duck sophomore, Leif Williams, against Smart. Kearney

said he is very pleased with the way Williams is wrestling at this point, and the match against Smart should be pivotal for the Ducks.

"Leif is wrestling the best since he's been at Oregon," Kearney said.

"His matches over the last week or so have been big for us."

Junior Adam Marino continues to fill in for injured freshman Brian Watson, who broke his hand at a practice prior to the Fresno State match. Kearney said he was pleased with the way Marino has wrestled in Watson's stead.

"Adam got better as the day went on [at the Oregon Wrestling Classic]," Kearney said. "He is wrestling up a weight class, which is a tough challenge for him."

The same ten wrestlers who competed in the Oregon Wrestling Classic will travel this weekend. They'll be joined by senior Mark Castle, sophomore Derek Smith, freshman Matt Lee and two other grapplers at the 149-weight class.

Oregon travels to Boise, Idaho on Friday to face the No. 22 Broncos (6-3) in the first of two Pacific-10 Conference matches of the trip. The other Pac-10 match will be in Tempe, Ariz., on Sunday when the Ducks will hit the mats against the No. 13 Sun Devils (8-7).



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