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Ducks gear up for postseason

■ The tennis teams enter their final matches of the season with the NCAA tournament on their minds

By Robbie McCallum
for the Emerald

There are no easy matches left. The Oregon men's tennis team enters its most crucial stretch of the season today. The Ducks close out their season against five Pacific-10 conference opponents.

The good news: all five matches are at home.

The bad news: all five opponents are ranked higher than the No. 70 Ducks.

"We'll need to win three of these five next matches to even be considered for the NAAs," head coach Chris Russell said. "This is a huge weekend for us. The win will come down to who fights harder that day."

Arizona comes into Eugene with an 8-7 record and a No. 55 ranking. The Wildcats are led by No. 89 Alex Taylor, a junior from the Dominican Republic. The Ducks counter with senior Guillermo Carter, who is current-

ly ranked 51st and sports a 15-5 season record.

Playing behind Carter at the No. 2 singles position is sophomore Thomas Schneider, who has dipped into the national rankings with a 12-5 record.

On Saturday, the Ducks play their fifth back-to-back game of the season against Arizona State. The Sun Devils are ranked lower than Arizona at 63rd, but have more individually ranked players.

Seniors Alex Osterrieth and Ed Carter, ranked 82nd and 98th respectively, lead Arizona State. The duo also teams up for the Sun Devils' top doubles team.

The Arizona match will be played at the 15th Avenue courts while the Arizona State match will be indoors at the Eugene Swim and Tennis Club, Russell said.

Women

The Oregon women are also in action this weekend. The No. 52 Ducks have completed the Pac-10

season, but are looking to finish strong with four non-conference matches on the road.

Oregon is in Texas for matches against Rice and No. 18 Baylor; today, the Ducks face Rice. Although their record does not show it at 8-9, the Owls are a dangerous team, with upsets over No. 60 Texas A&M and Cornell.

The team to watch out for on the road trip is Baylor. The Bears are a Big-12 conference powerhouse and hold a 15-2 record. Junior Jahnvi Parekh, sophomore Katja Kovac and freshman Vida Mulec lead the Bear attack. Kovac and Mulec are ranked No. 16 in doubles play.

The Ducks, losers in seven of their last eight matches, look to end a recent slump.

"Right now things are not going our way. The good thing is that they still believe in our team and they're still excited about playing," head coach Jack Griffin said in a released statement. "It's a chance for us to redeem ourselves and pick up some wins that will put us into the NCAA tournament."

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