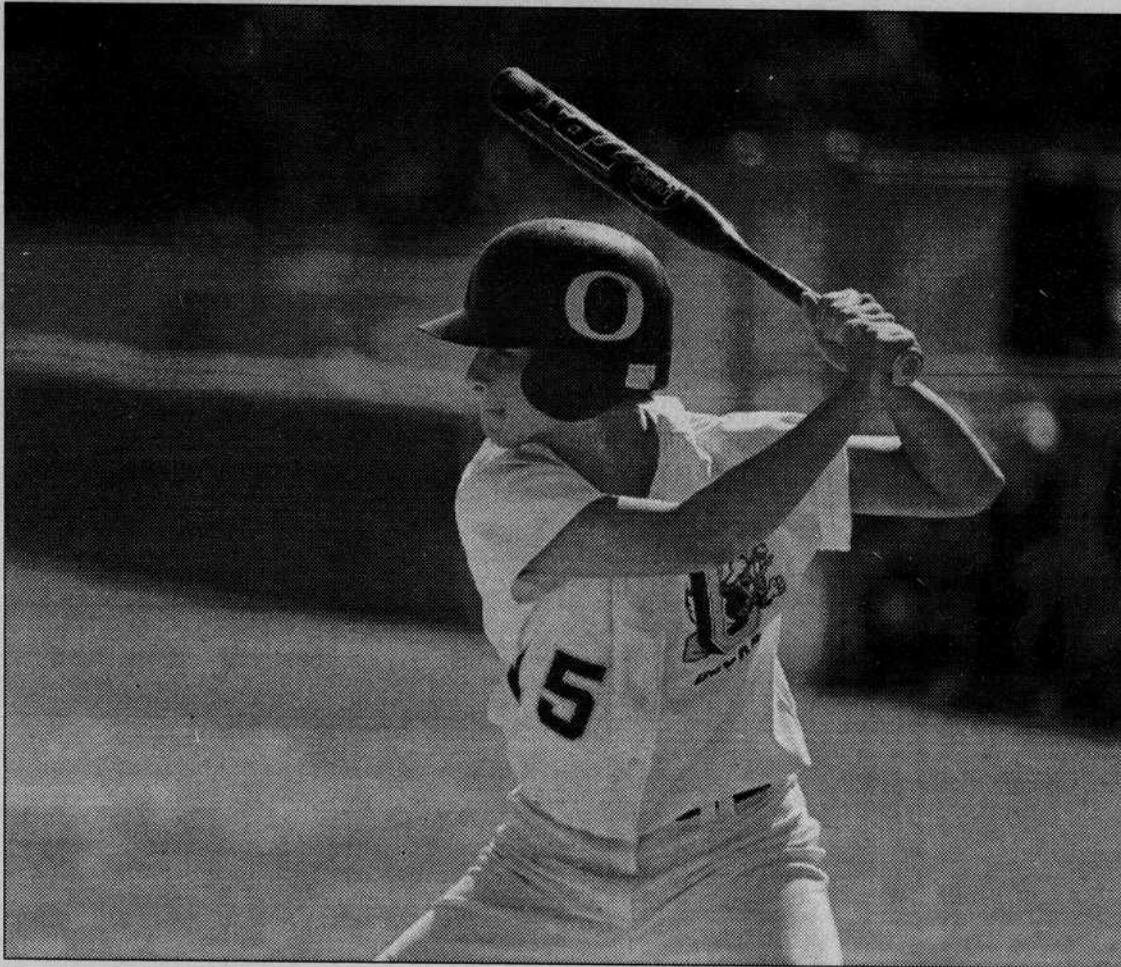


UO hopes to stay hot in Cali



Catharine Kendall Emerald

Missy Coe and the Ducks hope their bats remain hot in the Bay Area this weekend.

■ Ducks look to continue momentum and climb back into the Pacific-10 Conference this weekend in the Bay Area

By Matt O'Neill
Oregon Daily Emerald

With some momentum under its belt, the No. 22 Oregon softball team (26-17 overall, 1-6 Pacific-10 Conference) returns to Pac-10 play this weekend when it heads to the Bay Area to take on No. 9 Stanford (33-9, 2-6) and No. 7 California (39-11, 3-5).

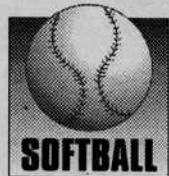
By taking two games in convincing fashion against Portland State, the Ducks broke out of their collective slump and gained some much-needed momentum.

"Those games give us the spark we needed," head coach Rick Gamez said. "Now we're looking forward to getting back into the Pac-10 with the same drive and commitment."

Oregon has had little success against conference foes recently, managing only 11 hits in four contests against No. 1 Washington, No. 3 UCLA, and No. 12 Oregon State. However, the Ducks' bats came alive against Portland State, as Oregon belted four home runs in two games.

Sophomore Missy Coe broke out of her recent slump crushing two home runs in Portland. Jill Robinson and Triawn Custer also got their bats healthy by going a combined 6 for 13 with two round trippers, four runs batted in and six runs scored.

Oregon's resurgent power could not come at a better time as both Cal and Stanford have outstanding pitching. Cal junior Nicole DiSalvo held Arizona State scoreless last weekend, while Cardinal starter Dana Sorenson boasts a 16-4 record.



Again Oregon hurlers threw good games in Wednesday's twin-bill, a fact that bodes well for the team as the Ducks take on two powerful lineups this weekend.

Cardinal sophomore Jessica Mendoza, this week's Pac-10 Player of the week, is coming off a five-game stretch where she batted .647 with five doubles, a triple and a home run. Coupled with fellow sophomore Sarah Beeson, who hit a three-run job in the win over Arizona, the two will be a potent duo for the Oregon staff to contend with.

While California is a familiar face to the Ducks, the team will still have its hands full with lead-off hitter Kristin Morley, who is hitting at a .350 clip, third-best on the Bears.

In the previous two meetings with Cal, Oregon lost twice — the first was a 12-1 drubbing in the Troy Cox Classic in New Mexico and the second was a much closer 3-0 contest in the championship game of the Capital Classic in Sacramento, Calif.

"This weekend will definitely be a challenge, but now we have a little momentum with the comeback win [yesterday]," coach Gamez said. "Especially after five conference losses in a row."

Sophomore Connie McMurren, who recorded her 10th win overall in the 7-5 win Wednesday, is looking to turn fortunes in the conference around. She was a tough-luck loser in two of the last five conference contests.

Freshman Andrea Vidlund (13-4) was victorious in the first game of the double header and hopes for that momentum to carry over into the weekend. She is aware of the importance of the road trip.

"We have to work really, really hard to win some games," Vidlund said.

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