

SPORTS

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Olympic hopefuls

Eugene and the University will be represented at the Sydney Olympics, with hammer thrower Lance Deal leading the way. **PAGE 16**

Wednesday

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Emerald

Starting wide receiver Keenan Howry (left) and the entire Oregon offense strive to post winning scores such as last year's 44-41, 72-10, 47-28 and 52-10. The Ducks ended the 1999 season with six consecutive wins.

GRIDIRON GLADIATORS

■ The 2000 Ducks won't be heading south this winter, instead opting to heat things up in the Pac-10

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

Head coach Mike Bellotti looked into the herd of media and opened his annual preseason press conference with these words:

"Welcome to the new millennium of Oregon football."

While those words give the impression of a new beginning, you can be sure Bellotti wants to carry on with the progress of the past decade.

Since the 1994 season — the year the Ducks went to the Rose Bowl — Oregon has had the best combined win-loss record among Pacific-10 Conference schools.

So naturally, Bellotti is optimistic about seeing his troops do much more than simply achieve another winning record.

"We're very excited as a staff and a team to get this thing rolling," Bellotti said. "We felt that we had a very good season last year and that we finished strong. I think it gave us a real positive momentum into the off-season."

The Ducks ended their 1999 season on a gut-wrenching six-game winning streak that included scores such as 44-41, 20-17, 24-19 and 24-20.

And most of those wins were of the comeback variety.

With that in mind, the Oregon athletic department came up with the motto, "This Team Doesn't Quack Under Pressure."

And indeed, the team has been known to be a resilient bunch that fights all the way down to the final seconds — proven by last season's Joey Harrington to Marshaun Tucker 29-yard touch-

Turn to **Gladiators**, page 14A

Restoring reputation Pac-10's motivation

■ With a sullied rep trailing them from last year, the teams of the Pac-10 hope to fire back with white hot play

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

Typically, non-conference games are just a test for an individual team to gauge where it is in preparation for the upcoming conference season.

For the Pacific-10 Conference football teams, however, the non-conference games taking place within the next month or so are all going to be important games to redeem the reputation of their conference.



A conference, which after last season's opening round of games was termed as the "Pathetic-10 Conference" by many scribes across the nation.

First there was highly acclaimed Arizona falling on its face to Penn State 41-7 in a nationally televised affair, and then there was Arizona State getting pounced at home by New Mexico State 35-7. The Sun Devils then decided to go to South Bend, Ind., where they got hammered 48-17 by the Fighting Irish. California joined the sad-sack party when it was embarrassed 45-0 by Nebraska, and Washington lost its first two games of the season to BYU and Air Force.

And just for good measure, the Pac-10's Rose Bowl representative, Stanford, opened its season by getting crushed by Texas 69-17 and then couldn't even beat San Jose State at home a few weeks later.

Making matters worse, four of the five Pac-10 teams that played in a bowl game lost — with the Oregon Ducks' 24-20 victory over Minnesota in the Sun Bowl being the only consolation.

But this is a whole new year and the always unpredictable Pac-10 has heard its fair share of criticism and is ready to surprise folks with solid play.

"There is no doubt as to the talent level of the teams in this conference," said Oregon quarterback Joey Harrington, whose Ducks will be in Madison, Wisc., Sept. 9 to take on the Wisconsin Badgers. "I think people will see the real deal this fall from all of the teams."

And aside from the national scope, the competition between the teams in the conference itself will be just as wild as it ever was. Predicting the Pac-10 race is like guessing the weather in a city where it snows, rains, hails and then shines with sun all in the same day.

After all, who could have forecast last season that Arizona, which entered the season ranked No. 4 in the nation, would finish at a measly 6-6 and not earn a bowl bid?

Or that Stanford would actually be playing on Jan. 1, let alone against Wisconsin in the Rose Bowl.

Hyping up a team never seems to bode well in the Pac-10, but that hasn't stopped the Washington Huskies and the USC Trojans from receiving most of the early accolades.

The Huskies return 16 starters while the Trojans bring back 15 of their starting corps. Husky head coach Rick Neuheisel is flattered by the attention his team is receiving, but is quick to add that talk is cheap.

"If they are picking you near the top, then that means there are some good things happening," said Neuheisel, who led the Huskies to the Holiday Bowl in his first season as head coach after moving west from Colorado. "You have to make the team understand that it does not mean they have accomplished anything yet."

"Predictions are just on paper."

Turn to **Pac-10**, page 13A

Volleyball coach's philosophy hits 'em where it counts

■ Under new tutelage, the Oregon squad looks forward to a winning season and away from last year's blunders

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

Don't stop thinking about tomorrow.

Don't stop, it'll soon be here.
It'll be better than before.

Yesterday's gone, yesterday's gone.

A fitting chorus from Fleetwood Mac's 1977 hit song "Don't Stop," one that could easily be dubbed as the theme song of the 2000 Oregon volleyball team.

Because there's a new sheriff in town who is making sure that the troops have their eyes focused on the future, in hopes that the memories — or lack thereof — of last year will whither away under the success of this squad.

Gone is head coach Cathy Nelson,

whose Ducks were 7-20 overall last year, but only 1-17 in Pacific-10 Conference play to finish in last place.

Enter new head coach Carl Ferreira, who is making sure people know early on what he expects of the Ducks.

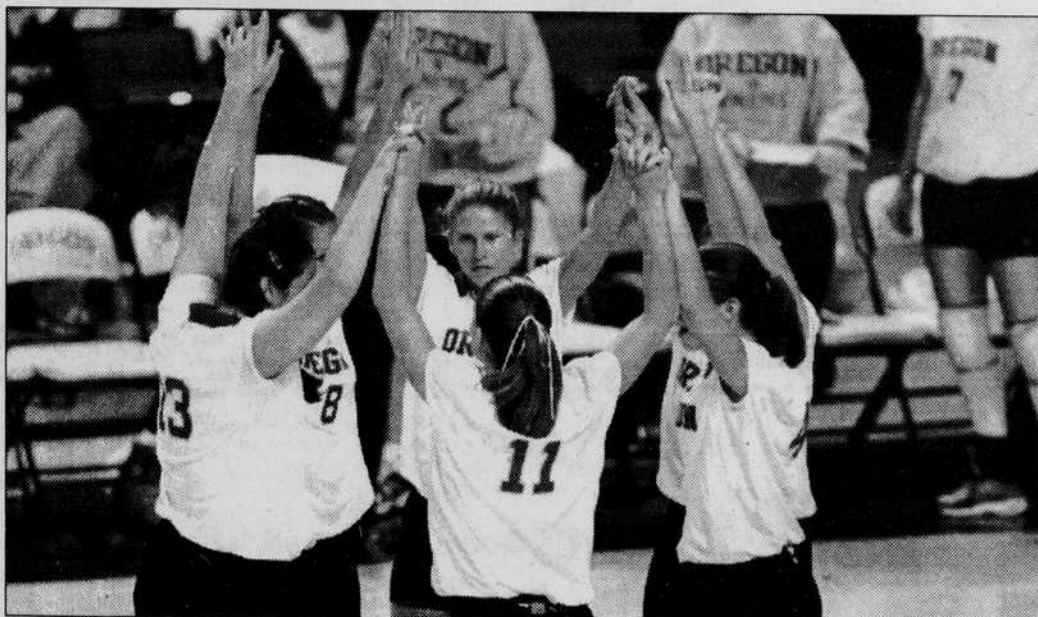
"Our primary expectation is to just win," said Ferreira, who has a six-year overall coaching record of 148-56 with Cal State Bakersfield and Idaho. "You have to have purpose in what you do. We're just trying to implement our new system right away and we're beginning to solidify roles."

"They've had pretty phenomenal attitudes so it's been great."

Indeed, Ferreira has breathed some new life into this team, whose optimism gives the impression that they are coming off a strong season.

No longer are the Ducks just "hoping" to win. Now, they are expecting

Turn to **Volleyball**, page 12A



Senior Amy Banducci (11) hopes to lead the Oregon volleyball team out of the Pac-10 cellar and into a top three finish.

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