



Pac-10 teams face lightning, bowl possibilities

■ Arizona State's charter plane is hit by lightning, USC's Paul Hackett is on the hot seat and the Huskies still smell roses

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

Lightning usually doesn't strike, but tell that to the Arizona State Sun Devils.

The Sun Devils were flying homeward about 60 miles north of

Phoenix Saturday when two blasts of lightning rocked the charter plane carrying them. Minor damage was sustained to the fuselage, but the plane was able to land safely.



Arizona State was flying in from Pullman, Wash., where it edged Washington State in overtime, 23-20, just hours earlier.

Little did the Sun Devils know, their heroic performance in Pullman would soon be just a trivial afterthought as players, coaches, athletic director Gene Smith and members of the Arizona media prepared for the worst.

"We were praying," offensive coordinator John Pettas said.

A interesting anecdote about the incident was that the in-flight movie the team was watching when the strikes occurred was "Gone in 60 Seconds."

"I didn't know if that was an

omen or not," head coach Bruce Snyder told the Associated Press. "We had people white-knuckled, believe me. Some were praying, some were teary-eyed. When we landed, there was a huge applause within the cabin."

After landing, the pilot jumped out of the plane with a flashlight to look for damages. A hole was discovered in the plane's tail.

Turns out that the Sun Devils' most heartfelt touchdown celebration Saturday had nothing to do with a football game and everything

to do with their plane landing.

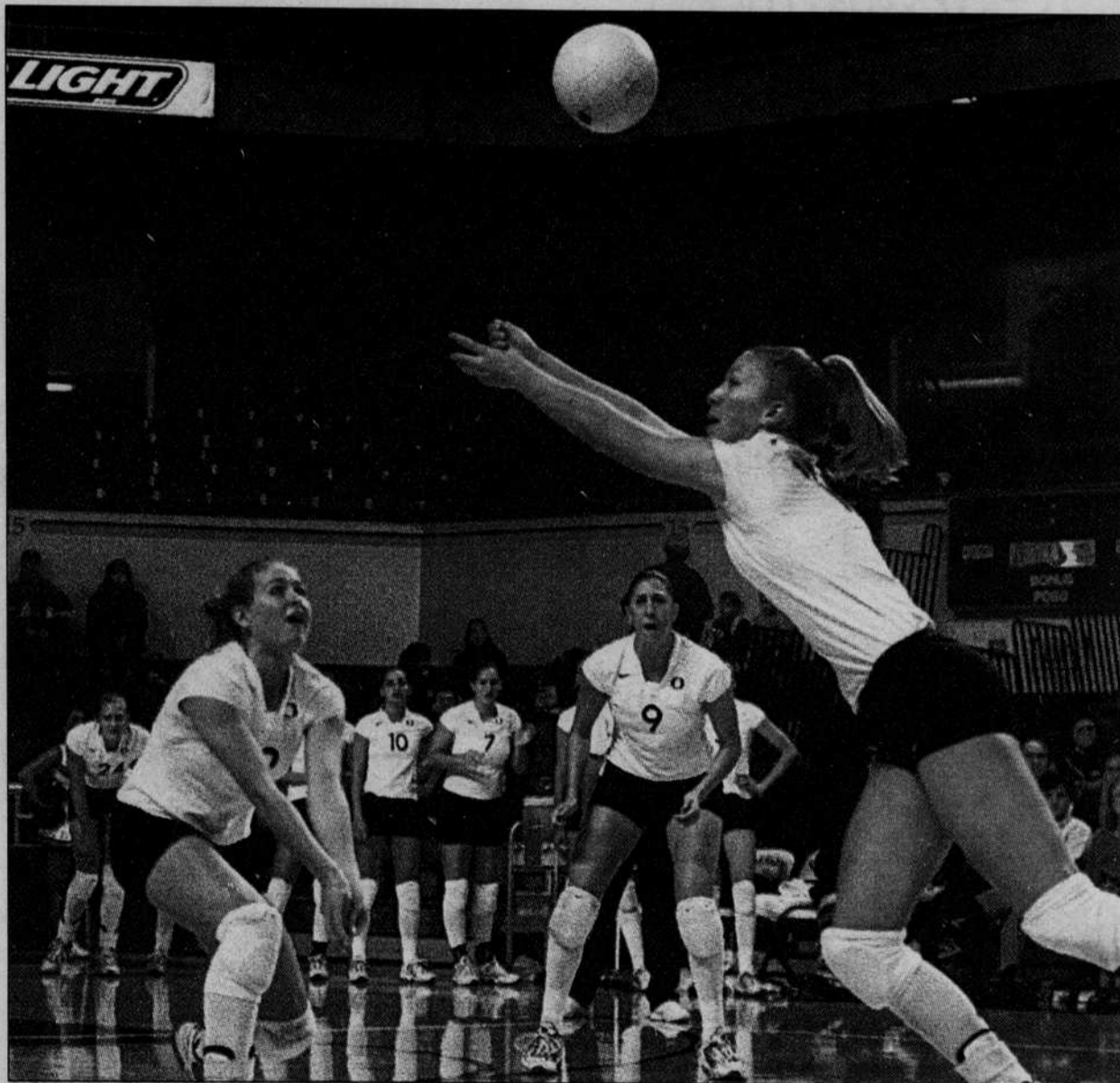
Oregon faces Arizona State Saturday in Tempe, Ariz. Snyder said that while his team has been preoccupied with its near-death experience, it should be ready for the No. 7 Ducks.

"Oregon will take care of that for us," he said.

USC's Hackett in the dog house

Southern California head coach Paul Hackett fielded questions about his future with the Trojans af-

Turn to Pac-10, page 10A



Dan Brunell Emerald

Freshman Lindsay Murphy (13) records one of her eight digs against California-Riverside as sophomore Kristin Ferris looks on. The Ducks put their two-match winning streak on the line when they host USC and UCLA this weekend.

Wins lighten mood for volleyball

Dancing Ducks are more confident after sweeping last two opponents and look for more of the same against USC, UCLA

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

Winning is proving to be the best therapy for the Duck volleyball squad.

After consecutive sweeps last weekend — the first time Oregon won back-to-back matches since 1991 — head coach Carl Ferreira and his team are riding high this week as they prepare for their toughest test of the season: Southern California and UCLA.

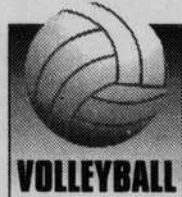
The win at Oregon State was the Ducks' (9-10 overall, 1-9 Pac-10) first in the conference under Ferreira. The team's nine wins are the most since 1997, when Oregon finished the season with nine victories.

"There's no doubt that winning lends itself to confidence," said Ferreira, Oregon's first-year head man. "We started the second half of the Pac-10 how we wanted to start the first half."

The players know they have finally revealed

their potential, and understand that they will have to step it up another notch against two top-10 teams this weekend at McArthur Court.

"We're playing together as a team and we're doing a great job," sophomore defensive specialist Kristin Ferris said. "Our chemistry is really strong right now, which just adds to our confidence."



A much more relaxed Oregon squad showed up for the California-Riverside match at Mac Court last Sunday, when Ferreira was seen dancing during a timeout. Most of the team could only laugh at the coach's attempt at the two-step.

It was no laughing matter for the Highlanders, though, as they went home with a 3-0 loss.

Turn to Volleyball, page 10A

Sprightly recruits energize Ducks

■ A recruiting class of eight freshmen gives the men's cross country team an added boost this season

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

The future was uncertain for the Oregon men's cross country team a year ago. The Ducks' top two runners, Steve Fein and Andrew Bliss, were seniors. Besides the two All-Americans, the Oregon roster was thin compared to the days of former coach Bill Dellinger.

Also last year, six high school seniors from around the state competed with each other in the prep cross country ranks, unaware that they would end up as teammates a year later.

Head coach Martin Smith filled the holes in the Ducks' lineup with one of the largest recruiting classes at Oregon ever.

Now, the future of the Oregon cross country team is bright. With eight of the 13 runners on Oregon's roster being freshmen, the Ducks have a young-but-solid lineup this season.

"We have a very young team this year," Smith said. "[The freshmen] are doing a nice job and continuing to make steady improvements."

Brett Holts, a freshman from Bend, has been impressive in his first year for the Ducks. Holts won the Bearcat Open in his season opener and has competed with fellow freshman John Lucas for Oregon's No. 4 spot.

Another freshman who has earned a varsity spot is Noel Paulson. The four-time class 3A state champion from Aumsville has been consistent at the No. 6 spot.

Chris Clancy, a newcomer from Portland, leads the rest of the pack. The Marshall HS graduate placed third at the Bearcat Open, but has yet to run since then.

Smith's lone out-of-state recruit is Aaron Emery, a Croghan, N.Y. native.

The freshmen have had a major impact on Oregon's

top seven and their No. 13 national ranking.

"With young athletes, you never know how they are going to respond in the championship meets," Smith said. "We'll answer a lot of questions in the next two weeks."

Runners expected to red-shirt this season are blue-chip recruits Eric Logsdon, Kyle Robinson and Mike Pluth.

MIA or MVP?

Senior Michael Kasahun has made his face known in the college running world and on the Eugene running trails. The Ethiopian native spent much of his off-season putting in miles on Eugene's famous running trails, preparing for his final college cross country season.

Kasahun's hard work has paid off this season, as he finds himself as one of Oregon's top two runners.

"Mike has obviously made substantial improvements this season," Smith said. "He made excellent progress last track season, followed by laying down a great base over the summer."

"A lot of his improvements have come from getting comfortable in a new home and gaining more confidence."

Kasahun, a transfer from Fresno City College two years ago, has recorded or equaled his personal best in both meets he's competed in this year. Kasahun was Oregon's top runner at the Roy Griak Invitational in St. Paul, Minn., placing 13th in a personal best 24 minutes, 48 seconds over the 8,000-meter course.

At the Pre-NCAA meet in Ames, Iowa, Kasahun equaled his 10,000-meter personal best while improving his placing from the 1999 NCAA meet by 71 places. Kasahun placed 36th in 31:41 behind sophomore Jason Hartmann.