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Men's XC

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Bolota Asmeron. Also expected to run this weekend is junior Adam Bergquist, who has settled into Oregon's No. 3 spot after sitting out last year. Senior Sam Hill, who has experience in championship races and placed 32nd at last year's conference meet, is also entered.

Stanford comes into the meet ranked third in the nation. No. 10 Arizona is also a contender.

The rest of Oregon's entrants are freshmen, making the Duck lineup one of the youngest in school history.

Brett Holts has been the biggest surprise so far. The Bend native won the Bearcat Open earlier this season and has competed with fellow freshman John Lucas for the No. 4 spot on the team. Lucas has also been a pleasant surprise, placing 66th at the Roy Griak Invitation-

al and 122nd at the Pre-NCAA meet.

Blue-chip recruit Noel Paulson rounds out the Oregon contingent.

"This team is very young," Smith said. "They're doing a nice job and

"This team is very young. They're doing a nice job and continuing to make steady improvements."

Martin Smith
Oregon head coach

continuing to make steady improvements."

The conference championships will take place at Lincoln Park in Seattle, close to the Washington campus. The men's 10,000-meter race begins at 12:15 p.m.

Women's XC

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greater chance in getting to nationals," Heinonen said.

The Ducks come into the meet ranked fifth among Pac-10 schools behind Stanford, Arizona State, Washington and Arizona.

Senior Hanna Smedstad, who has been the most successful in adjusting to the new distance, leads the Ducks into competition.

Other than Smedstad, the Oregon

team is mostly middle distance runners in track. Senior Katie Crabb and sophomores Eri MacDonald and Erinn Gulbrandsen are all 800-meter specialists. Senior Rhiannon Glenn is more versatile, but still favors the 1,500 meters. Freshmen Laura Harmon and Annette Mosey both ran the 1,500 and 3,000 meters in high school. Despite the jump in distances, Heinonen is pleased with the change.

"We think 6k is a good distance for us," Heinonen added. "We just have to show it in competition."

Volleyball

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blocks per game is the best in the conference.

"UCLA is really playing well right now," Ferreira said of the Bruins' four-match winning streak. "They've elevated their level of play tremendously."

USC (17-1, 10-1) hit a school record .556 against Oregon Sept. 30. Junior blocker Jennifer Pahl led the Women of Troy with a .769 clip (including 10 kills) in the

sweep. USC led Oregon in aces (6-1), digs (37-19) and blocks (5-0), and held the Ducks to a .193 hitting percentage.

In that meeting, though, the Trojans were forced to make a key defensive adjustment to stop the Ducks' 4-2 Flex offense.

"We're are going to continue to focus on all of the problems that that system causes," Tobbagi said.

With the momentum of last weekend's victories and home court advantage, Ferreira believes the Ducks should have a legitimate shot at pulling off a huge upset.

Soccer

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Ducks should carry onto the field this weekend, expressed by Baysa and her teammates in practice this week, is something the team has been lacking recently.

"We're trying to work on intense drills," Oregon head coach Bill Steffen said after practice Tuesday. "We want to develop the habit of playing that way all the time, whenever we

"We play with intensity for 10 minutes, then go down again. I think we have to maintain that intensity for a whole game."

Ann Westermark
freshman forward

step on the field."

Freshman forward Ann Westermark thinks the Ducks are ready for this weekend's matches, as long as they can win the mental game.

"We play with intensity for 10 minutes, then go down again," Westermark said. "I think we have to maintain that intensity for a whole game."

"If we just come out with intensity, and play for the whole 90 minutes, we'll be fine," Baysa said.

The Ducks shouldn't be hard-pressed to get up for either game this weekend. Washington comes into

Sunday's match ranked second in the country, for good reason. The Huskies lost one game, a 5-0 embarrassment to No. 1 Notre Dame in September. Since that game, Washington is 9-0, outscoring their opponents 22-5 over that stretch.

The Huskies have taken out their most important Pac-10 foes along the way, and could be on cruise control for the rest of the conference schedule. Washington beat No. 6 California, No. 8 UCLA, No. 15 Southern California and No. 18 Stanford by a combined 5-1 score. Now, the Huskies have only Oregon State, Oregon and Washington State left on their schedule.

"Both Washington schools are quality programs," Steffen said.

Washington State, the Ducks' opponent today, could win the Pac-10's "dark horse" award. The Cougars have dropped close games to California, Stanford and USC — all by one goal — and beaten both Arizona schools. Washington State's only Pac-10 blow-out came against UCLA, which beat the Cougars 4-0.

"These are quality teams, but that's what we've prepared against," Steffen said.

Sunday's match will be the Ducks' ninth against a current top-25 team. Oregon has taken on two top-10 teams, No. 5 North Carolina and No. 10 Portland. The Ducks have not beaten a top-25 team this year, but did upset then-No. 20 UCLA late last season.

The Ducks will play Washington State today, starting at 3 p.m. on Papé Field, while Sunday's game with Washington will kick off at 1 p.m.

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