



Ducks look to bounce back against Huskies

Oregon returns home from its two road losses to face its Northwest foe

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

Oregon freshman point guard Luke Ridnour has a dirty little secret.

He used to be a fan of the Washington Huskies while being raised in the small town of Blaine, Wash. "Growing up I was," said Ridnour, who was courted by the Seat-

tle school. "It's just another game though. It is. I mean I still like them, always have."

Ridnour won't find too many teammates on his same page when the Ducks (10-3 overall, 1-2 Pacific-10 Conference) host the Huskies (7-9, 1-3) tonight at 7 p.m. at McArthur Court.

Oregon is coming off of two

tough road losses to California and Stanford, and knows that it can't afford to fall to its Northwest rival.

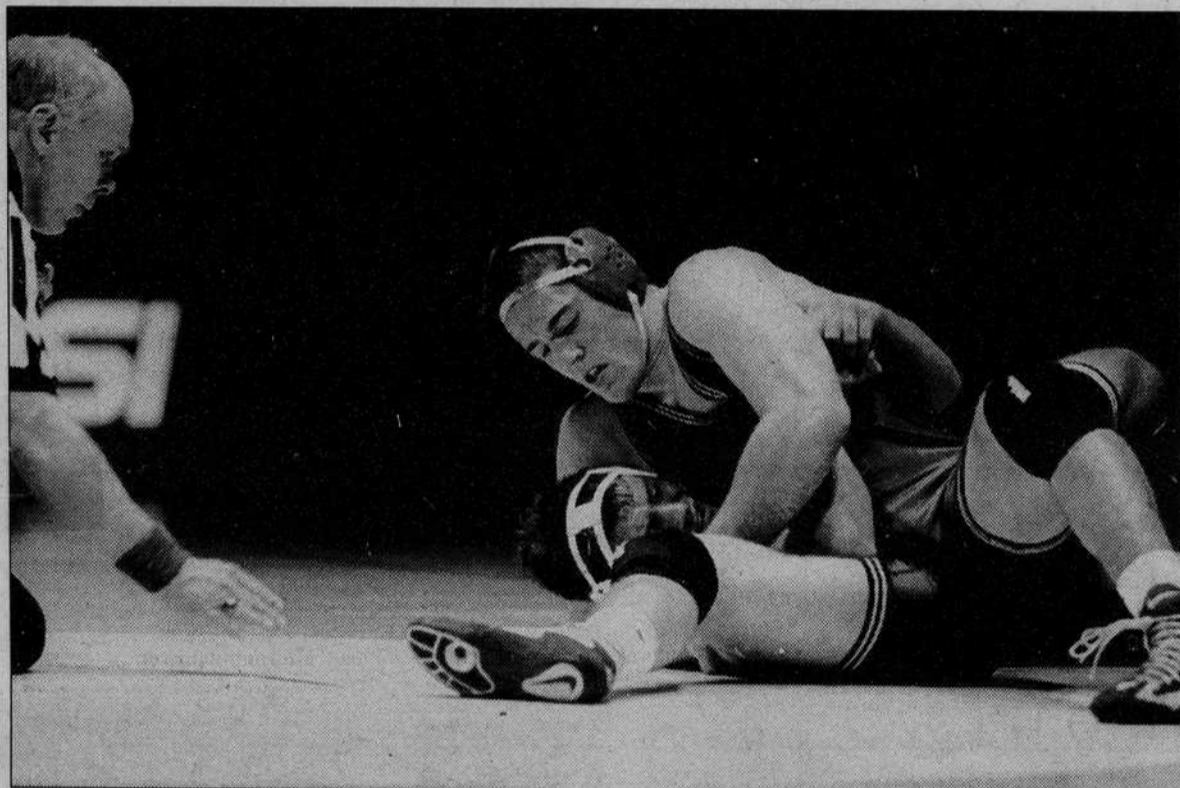
The Ducks also remember their sluggish 67-58 defeat to the Huskies last season at The Pit.

"Well the main thing is they beat us here last year," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said. "We were a really good ballclub last year and

let that game get away from us here at our place. So, that's a concern."

Washington head coach Bob Bender's team has lost five of its last six games, but did beat Arizona State, 70-68, in overtime on Jan. 11. In the Huskies' three Pac-10 defeats, however, they've lost by an average of 24 points.

Turn to **Basketball**, page 6A



Azle Malinao-Alvarez Emerald

Senior Chael Sonnen rules the mat this season at 197 pounds after taking a year away from Oregon to train for the 2000 Olympics.

Just win, baby

■ A year of training with the U.S. Olympic team has given Oregon wrestler Chael Sonnen a step up on his competition

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

The world becomes small for Oregon wrestler Chael Sonnen when he steps onto the wrestling mat. All he sees is his opponent in front of him and the crowd around him.

"I wrestle for two reasons: One, to excite the crowd, and two, to win," Sonnen said. "I don't come in with any other game plan — just to win."

Sonnen has been "just winning" for more than 15 years at the amateur, high school, junior national, college, national and international levels. Last year, Sonnen, then a junior All-American, left the Oregon wrestling team to train with the U.S. Olympic team.

"There really was no weighing the decision, it was time to go," Sonnen said. "The whole point of doing an amateur sport is to make the Olympic team and to win a gold medal."

Sonnen used up a redshirt season in order to fulfill his dream of reaching the 2000 Olympic games in Sydney.

"It's something I've always wanted to do," Sonnen said. "I want to make

my mark on the sport, be an Olympian, represent my country, bring honor to my family and pass the torch to younger generations."

When he left Oregon for the Olympic trials, he also left behind the freestyle technique used in college for the Greco-Roman style of wrestling.

"I consider myself a two-sport athlete," he said. "Freestyle and Greco-Roman are completely different. [Greco-Roman] goes at a much faster pace."

Sonnen spent 18 months with the team, honing his skills with the nation's best wrestlers.

Turn to **Sonnen**, page 6A

Women face UW in Dawgs' house

■ Beating the Washington schools would keep Oregon undefeated in the Pac-10

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

Never before has a current Oregon player lost to another Northwest school, and the Ducks would like to keep it that way through the weekend.

The Oregon women's basketball team (10-3 overall, 3-0 Pacific-10 Conference) faces Washington (10-4, 3-1) tonight at 7 p.m., followed by Washington State (7-7, 2-2) at 6 p.m. Saturday.

The No. 18 Ducks ride a six-game winning streak into Seattle, while the Huskies' three-game win streak was snapped by No. 19 Arizona last weekend.

Oregon head coach Jody Runge expects "a very intense challenge" from Washington, which the Ducks came from behind to beat last February.

"When you beat a team that many times and there are seniors on that team who have never beat Oregon, they have lots of desire to beat us," Runge said.

The Huskies are led by senior guard Megan Franza, who is scoring 13.4 points per game. Franza finished second in scoring in the Pac-10 last season with 17.2 points each outing.

Ducks shooting guard Jamie Craighead has had a hot hand lately, draining 10 of 13 shots in her team's first conference homestand against California and Stanford last weekend. Forward Angelina Wolvert leads Oregon in scoring with 13.5 points per game.

In the last meeting between the Northwest rivals, the Ducks trailed by eight with three minutes remaining. However, Craighead broke Franza's nose with her elbow while swinging the ball above her head, sending Washington's bloodied star to the locker room. Oregon proceeded to go on a 9-0 run to win the game, capped by Wolvert's low-post shot with 11 seconds to go.

The Ducks are braced for another hard-fought battle this time around.

"I hope I don't get an elbow or anything," Craighead said, jokingly. "The Washington schools for me, it's a lot of fun because I get to go home and I wanted to go there. I wanted to go there, but I ended up coming here, but I respect them as a program."

"To go up there and beat them is a good feeling. It's fun, because it's good competition. It's not dirty competition."