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UO wrestling drops close one

■ Overtime matches are key as Boise State beats the Ducks at their own game

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

When two squads are evenly matched in almost every aspect, the little things determine a winner. The Boise State wrestling team's poise in the final seconds proved to be the difference against a similar Oregon squad.

No. 11 Boise State and No. 12 Oregon were so evenly matched that each bout went down to a decision by less than four points. The outcome of every match was in doubt until the third period or overtime, which is where the Broncos edged the Ducks.

"They have a style that took us out of ours," Oregon head coach Chuck Kearney said. "But the bottom line is in the matches we lost we got out-toughed. At some point you've got to dig down and find a way to win."

Of the six matches won by Boise State, three were overtime battles, four more were tied going into the final period.

The heart of Oregon's lineup from 184 pounds to 133 pounds, which was a combined 104-29 coming into the match, was dealt a major blow by Boise State. After six matches, Boise State led 15-6 with

the Ducks' best wrestlers behind them.

"We got pushed around," Kearney said. "We didn't stand up and hold our ground. We let down a little bit and we can't allow that to happen."

No. 7 Senior Doug Lee earned his second straight win over No. 8 rival Cash Edwards this season, winning 10-6.

"I wasn't feeling too good coming into the match," Lee said. "But it's

They have a style that took us out of ours.

Chuck Kearney
Oregon head coach

a big confidence builder to not feel good and still pull out the win."

Sophomore Eric Webb continued his strong play this season, knocking off yet another ranked opponent in No. 19 Bart Johnson. Webb broke open a close match with two slamming takedowns and a two point nearfall to win 7-3.

"That's the first time I've beaten [Johnson]," Webb said. "I know he's not aggressive on his feet. It was just a matter of confidence."

The remainder of Oregon's ranked wrestlers all lost close matches. Senior Chael Sonnen, juniors Shaun Williams, Eugene Harris and sophomore Brian Watson all dropped close decisions by less than two points.

Boise State's aggressiveness was evident in the three sudden-death overtime matches, where the first wrestler to score points wins. The Broncos' Rusty Cook disposed of Sonnen in five seconds at 197 pounds. Charlie Griggs scored a winning takedown against Watson in 32 seconds at 133 pounds. Boise State's Gabe Vigil earned defeated sophomore Casey Hunt in 50 seconds with a takedown.

Sophomore Tony Overstake's escape with less than a minute left was just enough to edge the Broncos' Colin Robertson at 149 pounds for three of Oregon's 12 points.

Junior Leif Williams earned a victory after Boise State had already clinched the dual victory. Williams evened his season record at 165 pounds with an 8-5 decision over Casey Eager.

With the 18-12 loss, Oregon falls to 7-4, 3-1 in Pacific-10 Conference play. Boise State (2-2, 1-1 Pac-10) now moves into the Conference drivers seat.

"We're still a work in progress," Kearney said. "When you haven't quite arrived as a premiere team, part of the process is a little bit of a choke. I'm hoping this is the choke in our developmental process. Physically, we're in great shape. Mentally, we've got to get tougher."

Up next for the Ducks is a road trip to California for Pac-10 dual matches with Fresno State and Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo.

Women's track opens indoor strong

■ Freshman Ann Sullivan and junior Endia Abrante post strong marks for Oregon

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon women's track team opened up its 2001 indoor season in dramatic fashion Saturday, flying around the Lane County Fairgrounds to earn six wins in 12 events at the Eugene Indoor.

Among the most notable Duck marks Saturday were freshman Ann Sullivan's personal best long jump — at 18 feet, 5 1/2 inches —

and victory in the 60-meter hurdles. Oregon athletes took victories in the 50-meter dash, the weight throw, the shot put and the pole vault.

"A couple of our newcomers stepped right in at the top," Oregon coach Tom Heinonen said. "We got a good start from several of our returning athletes."

Heinonen was particularly impressed with returnees Endia Abrante, Maureen Morrison and Niki Reed, who won the 50 meters, the weight throw and the pole vault, respectively.

Abrante, a junior, added a second-place finish in the 300 meters to her previous victory in the 50 meters.

Heinonen said he was also impressed with newcomers Sullivan and Rachel Kriz. Sullivan was the only Duck to win two events, while Kriz came within two inches of winning the high jump.

Oregon piled up seven second-place finishes as a team in Saturday's meet. On top of Abrante and Kriz's second-place showings, Ducks were runners-up in the 600 meters, the pole vault, the triple jump, the shot put and the weight throw.

All told, Oregon had a first or second place finisher in every event in which it competed.

Oregon will compete next at the UNI Invitational in Cedar Falls, Iowa, Friday and Saturday.

Houston Texans hire first head coach

By Michael A. Lutz
The Associated Press

HOUSTON — It's not easy to get the kind of experience that Dom Capers has on his resume: successfully building an NFL franchise from the ground up. That was a big reason the expansion Houston Texans made him their first head coach.

Capers, who took the Carolina Panthers from nothing to the playoffs in two years, officially signed a six-year contract with the Texans on Sunday.

"We've visited with a number of qualified coaches that we think the world of and any one of those coaches could have coached this team and done a wonderful job," owner Bob McNair said. "But the only one that had the kind of background we were looking for was Dom and that made him stand out."

"He's been through the process before with Carolina and putting a staff together and starting an expansion team is different from stepping into an existing club.

There's no way you can know how much extra work goes into a start-up unless you've been there."

Capers, who has been defensive coordinator of the Jacksonville Jaguars the past two seasons, will have plenty of time to put his experience to work. The Texans don't begin play until 2002.

"When you have a second opportunity, the experience of the first one you take and use that to your advantage," Capers said. "Hopefully, you're much better prepared for the pitfalls you faced through your first experience."

Capers will earn \$300,000 this year, then begins a five-year contract worth \$9.5 million.

Capers, 50, led the Panthers to the NFL title game in their second year in 1996 and earned NFL Coach of the Year honors. In Carolina's first year, his team won seven games, the most ever for an expansion team.

He was fired after the 1998 season when the Panthers slipped to 4-12. Coach Tom Coughlin of Jacksonville, also an expansion team, then hired him.

"This has been a positive experience for me to be in Jacksonville and to study both franchises," Capers said. "Obviously, the first four years, Tom and I were compared almost every day. You come in and it becomes a competitive thing."

"I think a lot of people were surprised when I came here as the defensive coordinator but I had a tremendous amount of respect for Tom and the Jaguars. You know what you have to go through."

Capers agreed in principle to coach the Texans late Friday but final details of the contract delayed his signing until Sunday.

Capers began his coaching career in 1972 at Kent State, where he was a graduate assistant for three seasons. He then had assistant coaching jobs at Washington, Hawaii, San Jose State, California, Tennessee and Ohio State.

In 1984, he joined Jim Mora's staff with Philadelphia and Baltimore of the USFL. In 1986, he followed Mora to the NFL with New Orleans. In 1992, Capers went to the Steelers as defensive coordinator, then to Carolina in 1995.