

UO keeps focus in off-week with Oregon State looming

■ The Oregon wrestling team maintains its focus despite breaks in action

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

While other Pacific-10 Conference teams finish off the regular season with up to three wrestling matches, Oregon has only one. The Ducks wrap up the conference schedule with their second Civil War, this time at Oregon State on Feb. 14.

Oregon is at somewhat of a disadvantage considering the Pac-10 Championships are more than three weeks away, leaving the Ducks time to get "rusty" after wrestling the Beavers.

"In the next two weeks we'll improve on our conditioning and then lighten up a bit," Oregon head coach Chuck Kearney said. "We haven't peaked yet and that's a good thing. We'll want to do that for the Pac-10's and nationals."

"The Civil War is Civil War, any way you look at it. It's the most like tournament intensity of any match we wrestle."

Oregon State takes on Fresno State Friday, followed by two more Pac-10 matches.

“We haven't peaked yet and that's a good thing. We'll want to do that for the Pac-10's and nationals.”

Chuck Kearney
Oregon head coach

Seeding

The Pac-10 Championships are more than three weeks and seeding controversies are already coming up.

In last Friday's match between Oregon and Arizona State, the seeding for the heavyweight class was expected to be resolved when Oregon's No. 7 Eric Webb faced Arizona State's No. 13 Kellan Fluckinger.

Sun Devils coach Lee Roy Smith mixed up the situation by pulling Fluckinger from the match and starting second-stringer Hector Torres.

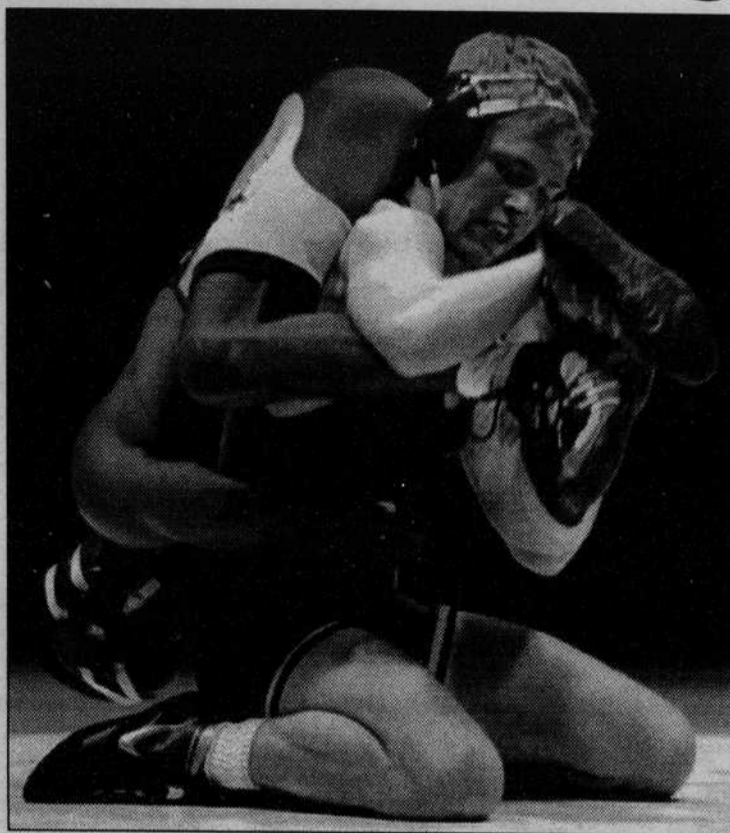
When the Pac-10 seeding committee convenes prior to the conference championships, it will have a difficult time picking a favorite at heavyweight. Fluckinger defeated Webb earlier this season, but Webb has since defeated ranked opponents who have defeated Fluckinger.

Rankings update

Following his ninth straight victory, Webb leaped to fourth in the Amateur Wrestling News weekly polls. The heavyweight is 24-4 on the season and has scored upsets over Fresno State's Billy Blunt, Oregon State's Jason Cooley and Oklahoma's Leonce Crump.

Senior All-Americans Doug Lee, Chael Sonnen and junior Shaun Williams are all ranked No. 7 this week following victories against Arizona State.

Junior Eugene Harris is ranked



Sophomore Brian Watson (bottom) and the Ducks hope to win the second Civil War.

No. 20 at 157 pounds.

Add rankings

After four straight dual match losses, Oregon fell to No. 20 in the Intermat.com team poll. The National Wrestling Coaches Association rated the Ducks No. 17 while Amateur Wrestling News left Oregon completely off its top-25 list.

The rankings are the lowest for the Ducks this season after they began the 2000-'01 campaign ranked No. 17.

Alumni report

Former Oregon wrestler and Olympic silver medalist Greg Gibson made a return to Eugene Wednesday. The two-time All-American and three-time world champion coaches the All-Marine wrestling team, which held an all-ages clinic at South Eugene High School.

Gibson was a Pacific-8 Conference champion and two-time NCAA runner-up at the heavyweight position from 1974-'76.

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