

Oregon ski teams have lofty goals

■ The alpine ski team heads to the Western Regionals with hopes to advance to nationals

By Jesse Thomas
for the Emerald

For the Oregon Club Sports alpine ski teams, it's time for the big race.

It's the race where the men's and women's teams will need to ski harder and tuck tighter than they've ever done: the Western Regional competition.

The contest will be held in Park City, Utah, from Thursday through Saturday. It is expected to be an intense race, as all of the teams will be racing on the same slope skiers in the 2002 Winter Olympics will use next year.

The Ducks feel prepared, after both men and women finished in third place at the conference championships two weekends ago. For the men, sophomore Colby Gail received first team All-Conference and senior Josh Kellerman made a strong comeback to finish 18th in the standings. The women's underclassmen stepped up, with freshmen Sonja Handy and Colleen Goodrich finishing in the top-20. There are two freshman, two sophomores and one senior.

"Our team feels really strong with the great competition we had at conference championships," Handy said. "We are going to do the best we can do and see how we come out. And nationals would be amazing."

Last year, both teams placed 12 out of 16 teams in regionals, and they want to prove themselves with a better showing this year.

Nationally-ranked Whitman, as well as Albertson College and the University of British Columbia are all strong in the Northwest Conference and will pose serious competition for the Ducks.

The Rocky Mountain and Grand Teton conferences are also in the competition as they bring in powerhouses Montana State, Rocky Mountain College and the University of Colorado.

"If we ski to our potential we could surprise many teams and finish in the top five," alpine coordinator Chuck Leavitt said, referring to the men's team.

The top five teams in the men's and women's competitions will move onto face the best of the best in the national competition. Rankings in regionals are determined by combined scores from giant slalom and slalom.

"Regionals should be good with the competition that will be present and we have a strong chance for nationals," Gail said.

According to Leavitt, the women are stronger in the slalom and have a chance to go to nationals if they present strong times in the giant slalom. The men know they also have a likely chance to qualify and aim to perform equally in both races.

"It will take two great days of skiing for these teams to make nationals," Leavitt said.

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looking to avenge its Jan. 27 road loss to the Sun Devils.

The Cardinal has improved with the growth of freshman point guard Nicole Powell, who played center in high school. Powell switched to the point guard position when starter Susan King was injured early in the season.

Powell's play has been so impressive as of late — she's averaging 13.5 points and 8.1 rebounds per game this season, and has 104 assists — that ESPN.com lists her as one of four favorites for freshman of the year.

On the NCAA bubble

Each year, 64 teams around the country get invitations to the Big Dance.

Win-loss records and conference standings help determine which teams dance and which teams stay home. There's no exact science to predicting who goes, but the Ratings Percentage Index does the job as good as anything.

And right now, the Ducks' RPI rating is No. 51 — on the bubble.

Oregon's chances of making the NCAA Tournament could nose-dive if it loses any of its remaining games. But the Ducks still face two higher-ranked teams in the RPI — No. 43 Arizona and No. 36 Arizona St. — next week at McArthur Court.

Southern California, whom the Ducks haven't beat in three tries, are ranked No. 117. Oregon rumbles with the Trojans Saturday at 1 p.m. on Fox Sports Net.

Sports briefs

Softball

The Oregon softball team traveled down to Las Vegas over the weekend and went 3-2 at the UNLV Softball Classic.

On Friday, the No. 20 Ducks defeated Wisconsin, 2-0, but lost to Nebraska, 2-1. Oregon bounced back on Saturday and knocked off Kansas, 8-6, but fell to Loyola Marymount by a score of 7-4.

The Ducks finished the tournament with a solid 1-0 victory against Central Michigan to

raise their total season record to 10-7.

Men's Track and Field

Led by the sophomore combination of Terry Ellis and Adam Kriz, the Oregon men's track and field team finished second behind Stanford Saturday at the Holiday Inn Invitational in Reno, Nevada.

Kriz set a personal record in the weight throw with a launch of 60 feet, four inches, good enough for third place. Ellis captured first place in the 55-meter hurdles with a season-high time of 7.53 seconds.

The Ducks also won the 4 x 400 relays (3:16.39) and Fouso Akinradewo took first

in the triple jump (49-5).

Women's Golf

The Oregon women's golf team finished the first day of the Wildcat Invitational in last place with a score of 325. Host Arizona leads the three-day, 16 team tournament with a score of 293.

Football

Freshman outside linebacker Ryan Jackson was dismissed from the Oregon football team due to a "failure to meet team rules and regulations," according to head coach Mike Bellotti.

All right, sport fans... it's poll time again!

Last week, Peter Hockaday's online sports poll asked which of Oregon's basketball teams would have the best chance to turn their season around and make it back to the NCAA Tournament.

The final results showed that 39.5 percent of you thought the women would turn their season around, 23.7 percent said the men would, while 36.8 percent said neither team would. After both teams took out Washington on Saturday... well, we're still not sure.

This week, we ask you to take a broader look at college hoops. We ask you to decide which

college team most dominates the hardwood: Is it Stanford's men's team, the men of North Carolina, Duke's men's team, the Lady Volunteers of Tennessee, Notre Dame's women's team or Connecticut's women's team?

You make the call. Go online to www.dailyemerald.com and click on the sports page to vote in the poll. Happy clicking!

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Horoscope by Linda C. Black

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 20). You've always been a dreamer, but this year your dreams have a message. Figure out what you're trying to tell yourself and win both love and success. Visualize the home you've always wanted by March. Another speaks well of you, to help you get a raise or a better job around April. If renovations are required, do the job in May. Big changes for the better come in June. Settle in with loved ones in July. Do your best all year, and another promotion's possible around December. Take time for contemplation and renewal in February.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — Today is a 7 — You and your friends have lots of wonderful plans, but hold on. Are you talking this project to death? Don't get overly rational. A kump might lead you in the right direction or keep you from making a silly mistake.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — Today is a 5 — You don't have enough of a necessity to do what you'd like for somebody else. Why not offer to take care of a chore that has an older person stymied? For you, it'll be relatively easy.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) — Today is a 6 — You're practicing, studying and polishing your skills. It might feel like it's costing you, but the time you spend on your hobby is good for you. It helps you stay objective.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — Today is an 8 — You're creative now. You have the ideas, but not the money. This should be noticeable as you try to make changes to your home. But you lack for nothing. Your imagination is a valuable tool, so use it wisely.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) — Today is a 6 — You're struggling with something. Is there a lot of noise and confusion at home? You may have to go somewhere else if you can't find any peace and quiet there. Or maybe you can just put your foot down.

brain into neutral. You're still responsible for the outcome.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Today is a 5 — Service is the key to your success, your mental and physical well-being, everything. But you're not getting paid anywhere near enough. It's OK to do a few benefits if it gets you closer to the big money, or some other reward.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) — Today is a 7 — You can express yourself well, but don't get glib; somebody could take offense. You can make sure the other person's OK, and that's a good idea. Don't let a careless remark turn into a festering wound.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) — Today is a 6 — You want to fix up your place, but you and your sweetheart can't agree on how it should be done. Better work on the relationship before you worry about your house's foundation.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Today is a 6 — You need some time for contemplation. How about those books you've meant to read? Don't spend all day with a busy mind. Spend some time gazing out the window or listening to soothing music.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Today is a 5 — You're practicing, studying and polishing your skills. It might feel like it's costing you, but the time you spend on your hobby is good for you. It helps you stay objective.

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