



Lee leads wounded UO wrestling at Pac-10s



HAKUNA MATATA

JEFF SMITH

Early Monday morning, shortly after Doug Lee rose out of bed, he had a vision. The Oregon senior wrestler pictured himself standing atop the podium later that night at McArthur Court and accepting the award for the Pacific-10 Conference championship.

But he knew there was plenty of work to be done before any such celebration could occur.

Portland State junior Jeremy Wilson, ranked third in the league in the 184-pound class, stood in the way of Lee capturing his third consecutive conference title.

So Lee remained focused throughout the day and into the night. He eagerly awaited his match, and had a look of pure determination while he kept loose on the proverbial on-deck circle.

As Oregon State's Nathan Coy stirred up the decent-sized crowd with his pin against Cal Poly's Steve Strange in the 174-pound duel, Lee kept shaking out his legs and rolling his head around in circles.

And then, when it was finally Lee's turn, he did what any No. 1 ranked wrestler in the league is expected to do: He won.

But he didn't do so in the overpowering kind of match that garnered the repeated replays from the Fox Sports Net crew on hand. Instead, Lee won the title by using a methodical and somewhat conservative approach that seemed fitting given his modest and quiet demeanor.

In his previous victories at the Pac-10 Championships this weekend at Mac Court, Lee showed off his strength in slamming his opponents hard to the ground. This time, he simply scored an escape point and two two-point take-downs en route to an early 5-1 lead.

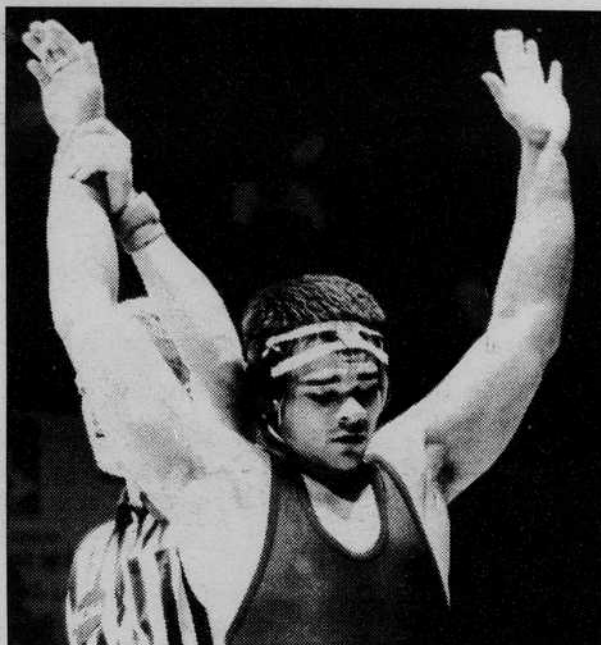
Wilson attempted to make it close, but Lee held on for the 6-4 victory and the ensuing adoration from his home crowd.

"Three is nice," said Lee, when asked about his third straight Pac-10 title. "I've worked all my career to do something like that, and I love it. I think the greatest thing is doing it at home."

Lee became only the fourth Oregon wrestler to ever accomplish the feat of winning three straight Pac-10 championships and provided a bright spot for the injury-riddled Ducks, who finished fourth overall at the tournament.

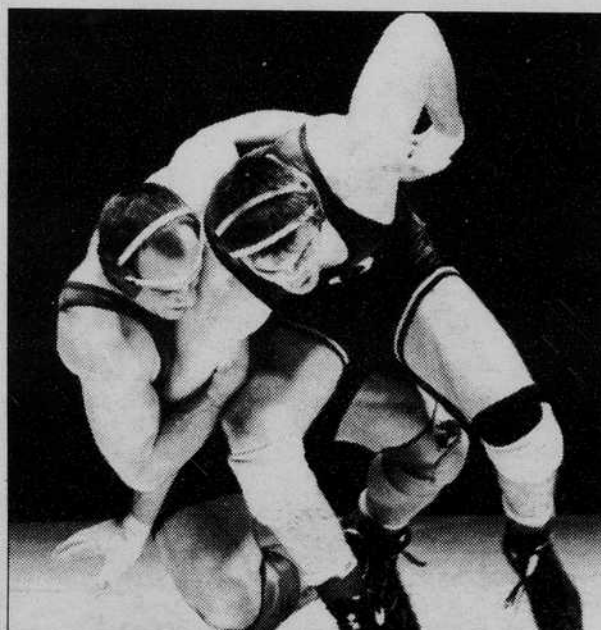
"Doug Lee ... I'm saddened by the thought that we're going to have a match here next year and he's not going to be here," Oregon head coach Chuck Kearney said. "He's been

Turn to Lee, page 8



Adam Amato Emerald

Oregon senior Doug Lee, who will make his fourth NCAA appearance, raises his arms in triumph after winning his third straight Pac-10 title.



Adam Amato Emerald

Boise State's Rusty Cook (left) came from behind to defeat Oregon's Chael Sonnen, 12-6, in the 197-pound Pac-10 final Monday.

■ The injury-plagued Oregon wrestling team survives two tough days at the Pac-10 Championships to place fourth

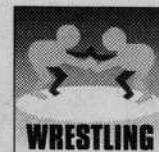
By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

Some days you can't go wrong, and others, nothing goes right.

The Oregon wrestling team was somewhere in between Monday as it survived horribly bad luck off the mat and responded with inspired wrestling on it, to finish in fourth place at the Pacific-10 Conference Championships at McArthur Court.

"Considering the adversity the guys went through from an hour before the match until tonight, we wrestled pretty well," Oregon head coach Chuck Kearney said.

"The guys stepped it up."



After losing their top wrestler before the match and suffering numerous injuries throughout the match, the Ducks kept themselves in the four-team battle for first place.

Sophomore Eric Webb withdrew from the tournament after sustaining his third concussion of the season. Junior Eugene Harris and sophomore Brian Watson both sat out their final matches of the tournament because of severe knee injuries. Sophomore Tony Overstake wrestled through the entire tournament despite yet another knee injury.

"When we lost Webb before the match, we all just figured 'We gotta step it up and wrestle even harder to pick up the slack,'" Overstake said. "Considering what we went through, we did pretty well. Webb would have picked up a couple more points and possibly even have won it for us."

After three rounds of play, Oregon found itself 11 points behind eventual winner Arizona State, five behind second-place Boise State and only one behind third-place Oregon State. With the Sun Devils running away with the competition, the Ducks knew they still had a legitimate shot at second coming into the championship finals.

Watson's injury default, coupled with four Boise State and Oregon State finals victories, put the Ducks out of the hunt. Oregon finished fourth in the end, 20 behind Arizona State.

There is a silver lining to the story. The Ducks qualified seven wrestlers to the NCAA Tournament, the most since the 1980-81 season. Their fourth-place finish in the conference is the highest since 1998.

Senior Doug Lee won his third straight Pac-10 title at 184 pounds and makes his fourth trip to the NCAA Tour-

Turn to Wrestling, page 8



Laura Smit Emerald

Sean Lampley (21) torched the Washington schools this past weekend en route to becoming Cal's all-time leading scorer.

March Madness awaits California basketball

■ Life is sweet in California as the state's four Pac-10 men's hoops teams roll their way toward the NCAA Tournament

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

It must feel good to live in California this week.

Sean Lampley lives in California, and he just became the California Golden Bears' all-time leading scorer this weekend. Oh, and his team is virtually a lock to play in the NCAA Tournament in a few weeks.

Mike Montgomery lives in California, and he has his Stanford Cardinal just four wins from a one-loss season. Barring a major mishap, the top-ranked Cardinal will be a No. 1 seed in March Madness for the second year in a row.

David Bluthenthal lives in California, and he scored 29 points to lead his Southern California team to a crucial road win over Oregon Saturday night. The victory moved the Trojans one step closer to being the Pacific-10 Conference's fifth representative in the NCAA Tournament.

Steve Lavin lives in California, and despite some recent controversy, he has coached his UCLA team from a poor pre-season record to the 12th spot in the latest Associated Press poll. The Bruins are the only team to beat Stanford this season and will get another crack at the Cardinal this week at Pauley Pavilion.

Oh, and it's probably 80 degrees in

Turn to Pac-10, page 8

