

Duck tennis teams ready for non-conference play

■ The Oregon tennis teams get a break in Pac-10 play and hope for wins against West Coast Conference schools

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

In the rough-and-tumble Pacific-10 Conference, tennis matches are always intense and wins are hard fought. Just ask the Oregon tennis teams, who are a combined 0-8 in conference play this season.

Outside of Pac-10 play, however, the Ducks are 8-3. This weekend, Oregon will get a chance to lick its wounds against non-conference opponents at home and on the road.

The No. 68-ranked men begin to wrap up their two-month-long homestand against West Coast Conference schools Portland and Santa Clara. The Ducks are winners in four of their last five matches, the lone loss coming to No. 6 Washington.

On Saturday, Portland makes its fourth visit to the Student Tennis Center this season, despite not yet having played the Ducks. The Pilots share a home schedule with the Ducks, facing most opponents that Oregon does on homestands.

Portland (2-2) is led by sophomore Peter Malacek and junior Nick Tostenrude. Last season, the Ducks swept the Pilots 7-0 in Portland for their first sweep of the season. The match begins at noon Saturday.

Santa Clara (5-2) should provide more of a challenge for the Ducks. The Broncos have won five straight matches and nearly pulled off upsets over Arizona and Arizona State. The Broncos swept Arizona in doubles play before succumbing, then pushed the No. 24 Sun Devils to the limit in four matches.

The Ducks counter with sophomore Oded Teig, who is 16-9 in singles play. Senior David Becker and freshman Martin Pawlowski com-

prise Oregon's top doubles team.

The No. 51 Duck women will face the toughest match of the weekend at Fresno State. After taking on Loyola Marymount at 1 p.m. Saturday, the Ducks entertain No. 30 Fresno State.

The Bulldogs are 3-1 on the season with upsets over Pac-10 schools UCLA and Washington. All-American Kim Niggenmeyer and No. 28 Leisl Fichtbauer lead the Fresno State attack. The Bulldogs' lone loss came to top-ranked Stanford earlier this season.

Loyola Marymount should be less of a challenge for the 3-5 Duck women. The Lions are 3-3 on the season in the West Coast Conference. The Lions are led by junior transfer Andrea Lord, who played on the Mississippi State team that eliminated Oregon from the NCAA Tournament last season.

Both matches will be played at the Spalden G. Wathen Tennis Center in Fresno.

Weir brings low scores to Florida

By Doug Ferguson
The Associated Press

MIAMI — Mike Weir's philosophy about going low on the PGA Tour is to remain patient. He didn't have to wait long to lead another assault on the Blue Monster, shooting a career-low 62 for a two-stroke lead in the Genuity Championship.

With two eagles on his first eight holes, Weir took advantage of nearly perfect conditions Thursday to post the lowest first-round score in the 40-year history at Doral.

"The course is definitely there for the taking," said Weir, whose 62 was the lowest ever shot by a left-handed player on the PGA Tour.

Not many would disagree.

Glen Day had eight birdies in a round of 64 and was kicking himself. He missed three putts inside 8 feet and made only two putts longer than 10 feet. He was tied with Stewart Cink, whose 64 was the best round of the afternoon when a breeze picked up.

Davis Love III brought his game from the West Coast Swing, and with three birdies on the last five holes finished with a 65, along with Steve Flesch, Harrison Frazier and K.J. Choi of Korea.

Ernie Els had a bogey-free 66 and was joined by Hal Sutton, three-time Doral champion Andy Bean and Nissan Open winner Robert Allenby, who proved he can play just as well in balmy sunshine as the rain in California.

Even 61-year-old Jack Nicklaus, playing on the PGA Tour for the first time this year, had few complaints with his 2-under 70 — except for three straight bogeys as he was making the turn.

"I fell asleep in the middle of the round," Nicklaus said. "But at my age, I need a nap."

The average score was 70.44, and 90 players broke par. Barring a blast of wind that often blows through south Florida in the spring, everyone is going to need to post low numbers to have a

chance on Sunday.

A year ago, Jim Furyk won at 23-under 265, and Love suggested that four rounds at 5- or 6-under par should be enough to win. Indeed, the Blue Monster at Doral has looked more like the Blue Marshmallow lately.

"It was a little more than I expected," Weir said. "I made a birdie on the first hole, a 15-footer that got me in a rhythm with my putter. That seemed to set the tone for the day."

What separated Weir from the rest of the pack was a little luck.

“I fell asleep in the middle of the round. But at my age, I need a nap.”

Jack Nicklaus
PGA player

From a difficult lie in the rough on No. 3, wanting only to hit the front part of the green and sneak off with a par, Weir hit a 9-iron from 140 yards. The ball landed about 10 feet on the green, then rolled like the purest putt for the final 50 feet and went in for eagle.

On the next hole, his 35-foot putt was streaking across the green when it hit the back of the cup, popped into the air and dropped in for birdie.

"I just got two great breaks out of the gate," the Canadian said. "I'm not known as a fast starter. I'll take it."

The course record at Doral is a 61, set in the second round last year by Stephen Ames. Still, the sight of a 10-under 62 posted on the board before half the field even stuck a peg in the ground was daunting — despite the low scoring on tour this year.

"I thought they left the pro-am scores up from yesterday," Love said.

Not everyone took advantage.

David Duval, who agreed to a new contract with Nike and

ditched his Sun Valley cap for the swoosh, was 2 over on his first five holes and had to scramble for a 69. Masters champion Vijay Singh had a 70, while Nick Price had a 71.

Greg Norman never got a chance to test his enthusiasm about playing. He woke up Thursday morning with a fever of 103 degrees and had to withdraw.

Weir tied the Doral record of 29 on the front side, last matched by Tom Kite in 1979, and started thinking about a 59.

"Any time you shoot sub-30 on nine holes, it kind of crosses your mind," Weir said.

Such thoughts were dashed when his drive on the par-5 10th got hung up in a shaggy strip of rough between the fairway and a bunker, leaving him no chance to get there in two. He took birdie out of the equation on No. 11 by hitting his drive into a bunker.

"If I was going to get anything from the back nine, I probably needed something there," he said.

He had to settle for a ho-hum 62, which any more seems old hat.

In Weir's case, it topped his previous best round of 63 last shot in Las Vegas last year, and it was good enough to give him the lead. That's something that never gets old.



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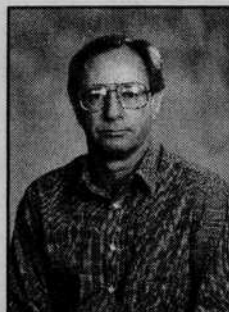
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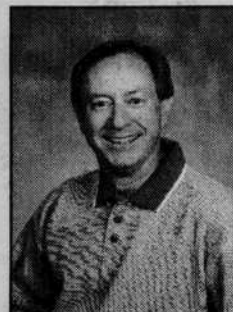
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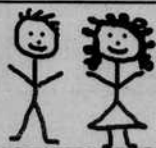
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