



Duck wrestlers chase individual NCAA titles

Seven Ducks are gunning for titles at the NCAA Championship in America's wrestling capital: Iowa City

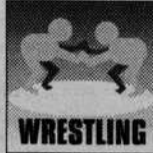
By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

Since early September, the Oregon wrestling team has been training for this weekend. For two seniors, the training began five years ago.

The 2000-2001 wrestling season comes to a finale this weekend in Iowa City, Iowa, for the NCAA Championships, which run Thursday through Saturday.

Seven Ducks will be vying for individual titles. Oregon hasn't sent so many entrants to the big meet since the 1980-81 season.

"We feel we've yet to prove ourselves on the mat," Oregon head coach Chuck Kearney said. "We have one goal left: Place in the top 10 at nationals."

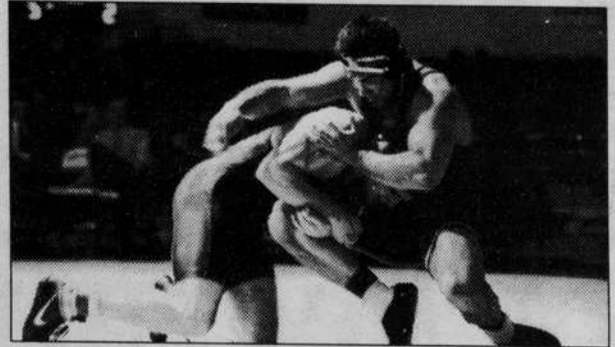


Senior All-Americans Doug Lee and Chael Sonnen enter the meet as Oregon's highest seeds. Both are seeded No. 6 in the 34-man brackets, and both are chasing their third top-eight finishes at the NCAA meet.

Lee, who is 184 pounds and 32-5 this season, makes his fourth consecutive NCAA appearance and faces unranked Jeffrey Moskyok of Duquesne in first round action.

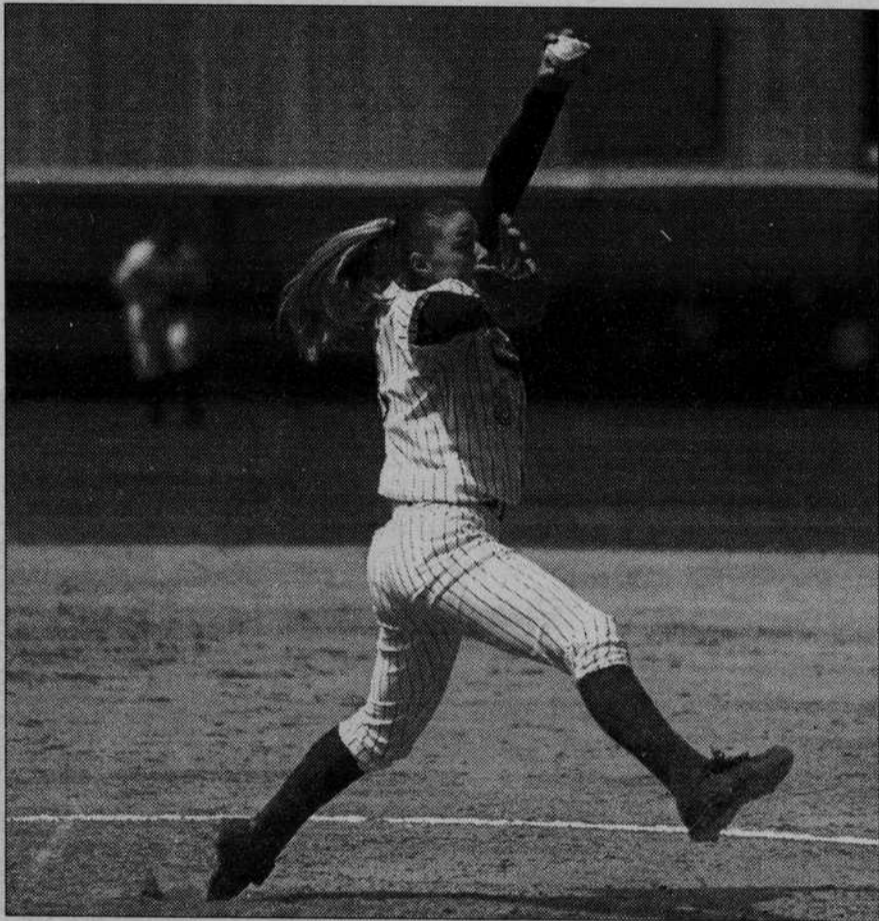
Lee's biggest obstacle at 184 pounds will be arguably the greatest wrestler in collegiate history: Iowa State's Cael Sanderson, who is undefeated in college with a 114-0 record.

"Doug's goal is to win a national championship," Kearney said. "And he wants to wrestle Turn to Wrestling, page 10



Senior Pac-10 champion Doug Lee (right) faces Duquesne's Jeffrey Moskyok in the first round of the NCAA Championships. Adam Amato Emerald

Spring Preview



Emerald

Sophomore pitcher Andrea Vidlund is aiming to help lead the Ducks to the College World Series.

UO expects improved play as season opens in March

■ The quest for a fourth-straight postseason berth will rely on Oregon's ability to consistently score runs down the stretch

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

For any other sport, the season would probably be over already.

But 35 games is only the preseason for the No. 24 Oregon softball team.

After participating in four tournaments since the beginning of February, the Ducks are a mediocre 20-15, far below many expectations after last season's trip to the NCAA Tournament.

"We started off a little rocky and had a few more losses than we had hoped," sophomore pitcher Andrea Vidlund said. "But we've done better lately and have

come together as a team."

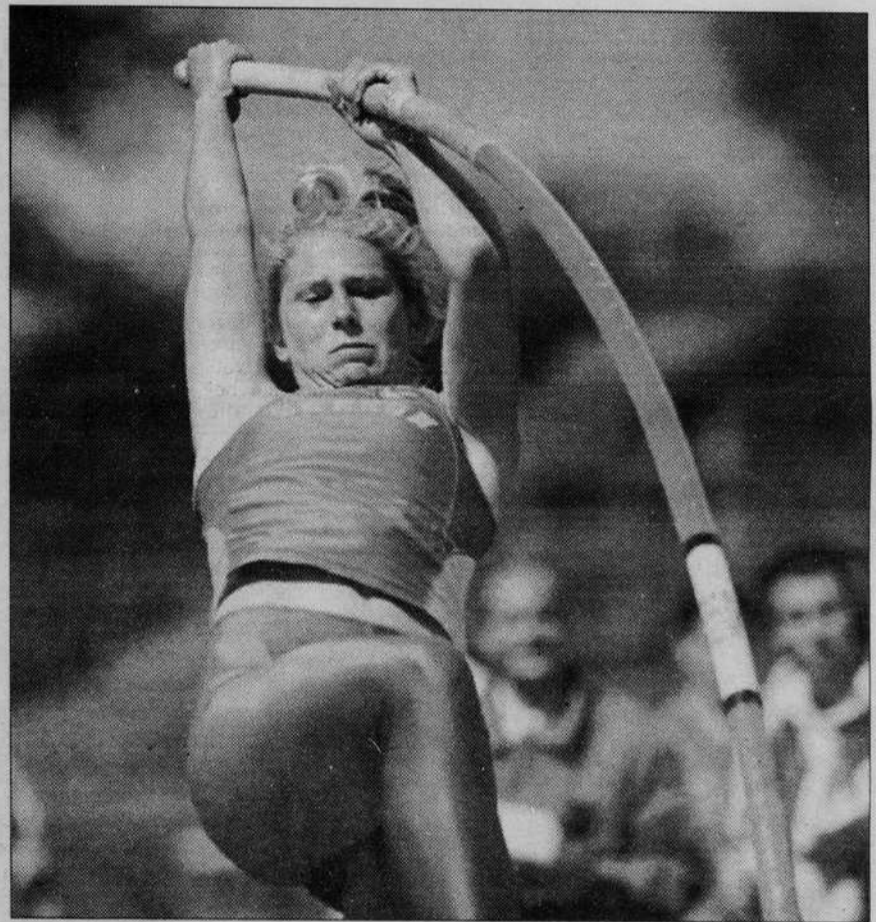
Oregon lacks a solid core of seniors, but that doesn't mean the Ducks are inexperienced. Nine Ducks return to the lineup this season, with seniors Kelly Planche and Triawn Custer leading the charge. Custer led the team in 2000 with a .331 average and was named to the Pacific-10 Conference second-team.

Junior Connie McMurren, the team's ace who posted a 1.79 ERA last season, and Vidlund are the team's top hurlers. McMurren is 8-5 so far, while Vidlund is 7-3.

Of the nine newcomers, sophomore Lisa Wangler has stood out as a key figure, leading the team in batting average, runs



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Emerald

Oregon junior pole vaulter Niki Reed hopes to qualify for this year's NCAA Championships meet.

Women's track is motivated by NCAAs being at Hayward

■ The Ducks will try harder than ever to qualify for this year's NCAA Championships as they're being held in right here in Tracktown

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

When you think of Oregon track and field, you think about Steve Prefontaine. You think about Hayward Field, one of the most beautiful and legendary track venues on the West Coast.

When you think of Oregon women's track and field, you think dominance and tradition.

This season, behind the strength of returning all-Americans, young talent and a few experienced additions from other schools, the Duck women will try to restore the fading glory of Tracktown, USA.

"We're a very young team," Oregon

head coach Tom Heinonen said.

The women will use strong field and distance units to improve on its ninth-place performance at the Pacific-10 Conference Championships last season.

A spark for the Ducks this year will be the NCAA Championships in late May and early June. The NCAA's would normally be motivation enough, but this season they will be held at Hayward Field, and the Oregon athletes say that will drive them to run, jump and throw even farther.

"We'd like to have as many people as possible qualify for the national championships," senior transfer Hanna Smedstad said. "Since it's here, that will be very exciting."



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