



Oregon forward Brianne Meharry (right) is one of five Duck seniors who begin play in their final NCAA Tournament this weekend.

Adam Amato Emerald

Oregon ready for round one

■ An upset over Iowa, a No. 4 seed, is not too much to ask from the No. 13 seed Ducks

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

It's not going to get any easier for the Oregon women's basketball team. Not to say that Saturday's 6 p.m. bout against No. 16 Iowa is by any means an assured 'W,' but it's just about as good as it gets for a 13th seed.

The Ducks (17-11 overall, 10-8 Pacific-10 Conference), winners of four straight, took the two-hour flight to Salt Lake City on Thursday to embark on the program's eighth straight NCAA Tournament appearance. The game will be broadcast on KEZI.

"This is the best seed we've had as far as not having to travel very far," head coach Jody Runge said. "It's as easy as it can be without having a home seed."

A year ago, home court advantage favored a fifth-seeded Oregon team that was fresh off its first outright Pac-10 title. But a 70-69 overtime loss to UAB dashed the Ducks' hopes of dancing to the Sweet 16.

Wiping the year-long frustrations aside, Runge said this team has the potential to go farther than any other Oregon team.

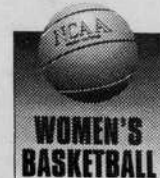
"This is the strongest team we've taken to the tournament," Runge said. "It's like a second life for this team. It's been a hard year, but now we're wiping the slate clean. This is a very refreshing opportunity."

In eight years, Runge is 3-7 during March Madness. The Ducks have never been past the second round.

Oregon's five seniors, the most successful class in club history, could be throwing their last hurrah against the Hawkeyes (20-9), the Big Ten Conference Tournament champs. If the Ducks advance to Monday, they'll face fifth-seed Utah (26-3), which beat the Ducks by 15 in Salt Lake City during the preseason.

"We've been there and didn't play well," senior center Jenny Mowe said of the Dec. 16 game at the Huntsman

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Jody Runge
Oregon head coach



Students should look past Runge



PEZ SEZ

SCOTT PESZNECKER

Oregon head coach Jody Runge has made quite a name for herself. Everywhere I go, people ask me: "Is Runge really getting fired?" "Do her players really not like her?" "What's wrong with tough love?" And the final question: "What do you

think?"

What do I think? Where to start? I think there's an unfortunate situation throughout the state of Oregon, but probably not for the reasons that you think.

It's hard for me to explain the problem surrounding Oregon women's basketball, but I'll try. Here it goes: The Ducks have four memorable seniors.

Most well known is center Jenny Mowe, who jumped to the Division I ranks from the tiny town of Powers. There's forward Brianne Meharry, the high school all-American powerhouse from Oregon City. Who doesn't know about Angelina Wolvert, the Ducks' leading scorer? And there's

forward Lindsey Dion, who never lets an injury get between her and a game.

If you are a student reader, then you probably knew all that before I told you. You may also know about Camber Ellingson, Oregon's fifth senior who usually sits on the bench. You also may know about Fred Litzenberger, the Duck assistant coach whose life purpose is to analyze all opponents to the slightest detail.

Heck, you probably know a lot about Runge. You know how many games she's won and lost, and that she's been to seven straight (now eight) NCAA Tournaments.

Of course, you know all about the recent coaching controversy. You

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CLUB SPORTS THIS WEEKEND

Men's rugby:
11:30 a.m.
Saturday on
Southbank Field
against Colorado

Women's lacrosse:
Hosting
tournament on
the turf field
Saturday. The
Ducks play
Linfield at 11:30
a.m. and Pacific
Lutheran at 1 p.m.

Duck wrestlers fall short of goals at NCAA meet

■ Oregon's top entrants fail in the first two rounds, and Watson fails to make weight to compete

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon wrestling team's hopes for a top-10 finish at the NCAA Tournament were dealt a major blow Thursday.

Luck was not on the Ducks' side in Iowa City, Iowa, as favorites fell victim to upset. No Oregon wrestlers remain alive in championship competition after every Duck entrant suffered at least one loss.

"We aren't where we had hoped to be when we came here," Oregon head coach Chuck Kearney said in a released statement. "But this is a tough tournament, and now we'll focus on what these individuals can do."

The Ducks were dealt a setback even before the competition began when

sophomore Brian Watson failed to make weight at 133 pounds. Watson, the No. 9 seed, had been unable to practice the past two weeks due to a severe knee injury.

Senior All-American Doug Lee was the only Duck to make it out of first-round action, routing Duquesne's Jeffrey Moskyok, 15-4. Lee's title run ended four hours later when he was pinned by Oklahoma's unseeded Josh Lambrecht. The loss was Lee's first since Jan. 6.

Lee, who placed fourth at last year's NCAA Tournament, still has a chance at second place in the wrestle-back bracket. Lee will face the winner of a match between Edinborough's Justin Millard and Northern Iowa's Kyle Hanson.

Senior Chael Sonnen, Oregon's other sixth seed in the tournament, suffered a major upset against Wyoming's Craig Rumsey in the first round. Sonnen led the match 7-5 going into the third period, when Rumsey escaped and scored a

takedown to pull ahead, 8-7.

Junior Eugene Harris bounced back in a big way after a first-round setback. After being edged by No. 7 seed Cole Sanderson of Iowa State, Harris pinned Michigan's Pat Owen and earned a major decision against Dennis Papaddos of Hofstra to advance to the consolation quarterfinals.

Junior Shaun Williams was knocked out of the first round by No. 5 seed Matt Ridlings of Ohio State, 11-4, but bounced back in wrestle-back action, defeating Hofstra's Tom Noto 11-8.

Oregon's remaining entrants saw their seasons come to an end after consecutive first-round losses. Sophomore Tony Overstake dropped two decisions at 149 pounds in his first NCAA appearance. Overstake finished the season 18-16.

Freshman Luke Larwin, one of Oregon's few freshman qualifiers ever, faced long odds at 165 pounds. No. 1 ranked Don Pritzlaff of Wisconsin soundly de-

feated Larwin 26-8 in the first round. However, Larwin bounced back from defeat and beat Tony Howard of George Mason in overtime, 16-14, in the consolation bracket.

"In something like this you go through a wide range of emotions," Kearney said. "We feel for Doug Lee and how he lost, but we're excited for Luke Larwin, who came back to win after being down. We feel for Chael losing his last match like that, but then we're excited for Eugene Harris, who battled through a sore knee to win two matches today."

Minnesota led the team competition after the first day, compiling 27 points with eight wrestlers still alive in championship action. The Ducks are currently tied for 24th with eight team points.

The NCAA Tournament continues today and tomorrow, with quarterfinal and semifinal action today, followed by finals on Saturday.