

Ducks kick for first three-game winning streak

■ This weekend, the Oregon soccer team will need to avenge a big loss to San Diego to get its third-straight victory

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

With the help of a new batch of freshmen and transfers and some maturity from older players, the Oregon soccer team is suddenly looking like a winner, despite a sordid history.

This weekend, the Ducks will have a chance to prove they've turned things around. Oregon will go for its third straight win — a feat never before accomplished by the Ducks in five years of existence — against San Diego Friday.

ON TAP

Who: Oregon soccer vs. San Diego and Eastern Washington

When: San Diego at 3 p.m. today, Eastern Washington at 1 p.m. Sunday

Where: Oregon's Papé Field

But San Diego, the pre-season favorite in the West Coast Conference, won't make it easy for Oregon. The Toreros blew out the Ducks in San Diego last year, and Oregon head coach Bill Steffen said he expects a tough match again.

"It's good for us to compete at this level," Steffen said.

The coach said San Diego represents another "step up" toward the Ducks' Pacific-10 Conference schedule, which begins in two weeks. The Pac-10 is one of the toughest conferences in the coun-

try, with top-ranked teams like No. 2 UCLA, No. 6 California, No. 8 Stanford and No. 16 Washington cluttering the conference waters.

"Playing a top team like San Diego is good preparation for the Pac-10 schedule," Steffen said.

In order to beat San Diego this season, Oregon will have to put away the painful memories of a 6-1 pounding at the hands of the Toreros last season. Three of San Diego's four goalscorers from that match are back in action this season, including two Toreros who had a pair of goals each, junior Val Strocchio and senior Stephanie Barnier.

Chalise Baysa, Oregon's all-time leading scorer, was the only Duck to score in last year's contest.

The Ducks will have the home field advantage against San Diego. Oregon is in the middle of a seven-game home streak. The Ducks will take on Eastern Washington Sunday at Papé Field.

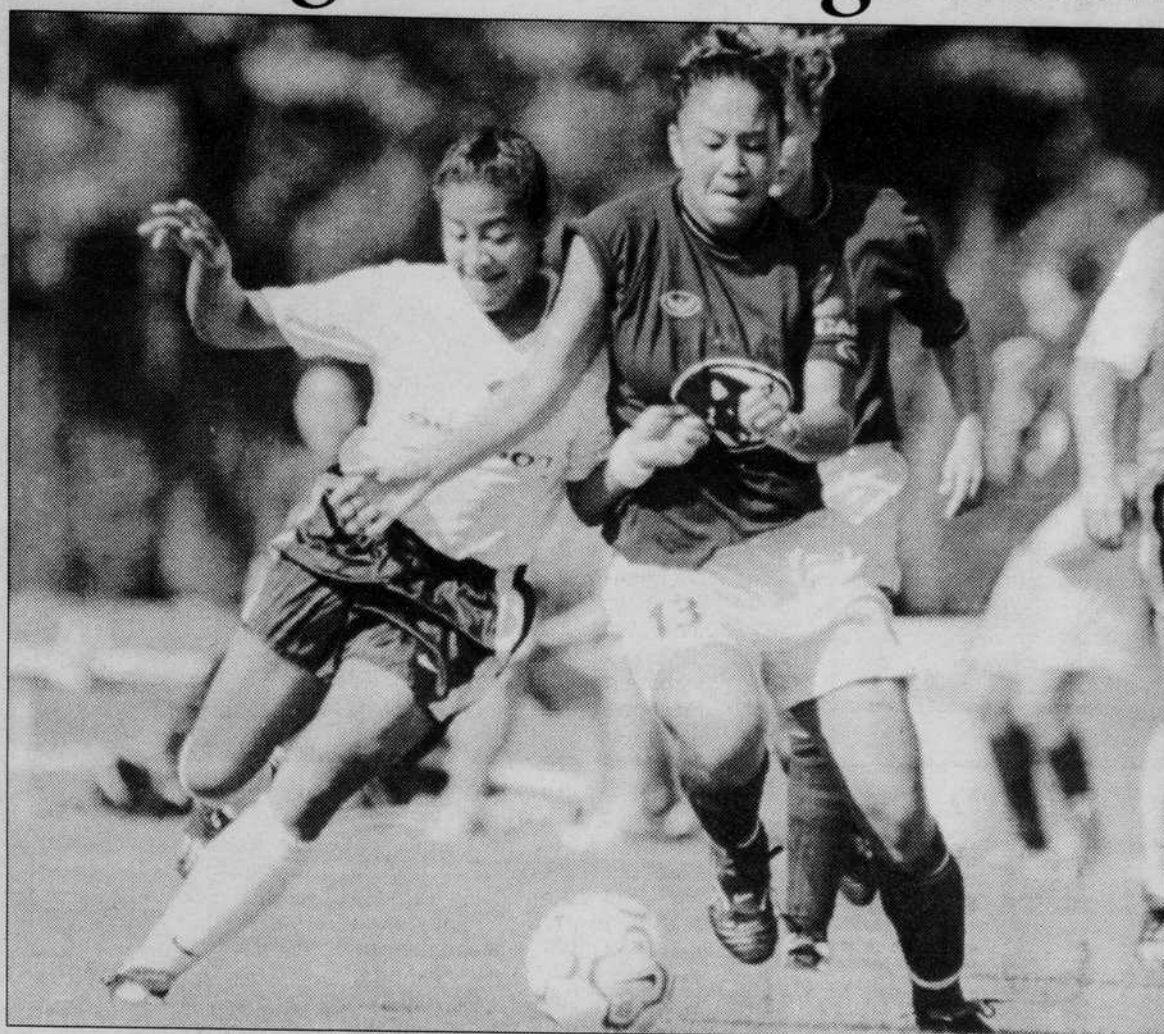
"Playing at home is a benefit to us," Steffen said. "We're more comfortable here."

Oregon will most likely take a newfound penchant for physical play into this weekend's games. The Ducks have been whistled for 10 yellow cards this season, four more than the closest Pac-10 team, and eight more than they received all last season.

Oregon is averaging two yellow cards per game this year.

The Ducks are making a positive impact on Pac-10 statistics in other ways. Oregon freshman forward Nicole Garbin is tied for the Pac-10 lead with three game-winning goals, and is tied for ninth in overall goals.

Oregon goalkeeper Sarah Peters



Adam Amato Emerald

Oregon's Chalise Baysa (2) scored the Ducks' lone goal in a 6-1 blowout at San Diego last season. Oregon faces the Toreros again today.

is off to a fast start this season. Peters ranks fifth in the conference in saves, sixth in saves per game and seventh in goals-against average.

Peters and the Ducks will have to continue their strong play through a string of tough games

coming up. After this weekend's contests, Oregon will face No. 5 Portland Wednesday and Portland State next Sunday before taking on California and Stanford the following week.

"We're trying to continually

improve," Steffen said. "[San Diego] presents another chance to improve."

Oregon faces San Diego at 3 p.m. today, and will take on Eastern Washington at 1 p.m. Sunday.

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