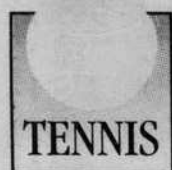


Tennis teams have troubles with doubles

■ The men's and women's tennis teams are focusing on improving doubles play before Pac-10 competition

By Peter Martini
for the Emerald

With less than two weeks until the start of the regular season, the Oregon men's tennis team is focusing on its doubles game.



The fall season exposed some problems with the doubles play, problems that could hurt the Ducks in the regular season.

"We have many players who don't have much experience playing doubles," head coach Chris Russell said. "Winning in doubles takes so much pressure off the singles game."

Russell said that more than half the practicing time is devoted to improving the doubles game.

"We're trying to work on techniques to bring us closer to the net," Russell said. "We need to control that area."

The team hasn't had much time to practice since the fall season, but the players found ways to stay ready.

"We've been working out and keeping up with our conditioning during the break," junior Jason Menke said. "We can't afford to lose our edge. If we don't stay in shape, we'll die in January."

Last season Oregon was winless in the Pacific-10 Conference, but lost only one player to graduation. This season, even with no seniors, the team does not feel it's in a rebuilding year.

"Last year we lacked leadership," Menke said. "But this year some of the guys, including me, stepped into that role, and we're ready to win now."

This season's Pac-10 schedule favors the Ducks because four out of their last five matches are in Eugene.

"Playing those matches here late in the season means we'll probably play outdoors," Russell said. "When it's sunny and track is going on, the fans come to watch us and create a great playing atmosphere."



Adam Amato Emerald

With no seniors, junior Jason Menke has taken a leadership role on the men's tennis team as it prepares for the start of Pac-10 play.

Women begin again this weekend

Like the men's tennis team, the women's tennis team is focusing on doubles as it prepares for the start of Pac-10 play.

"I'd say we're spending about 60 percent of our practice time on doubles," assistant coach Nils Schyllander said.

Senior Janice Nyland said the team is trying to mix the players to find better matchups.

"We're playing with many different players, trying to find where we have the best chemistry," Nyland said.

The team's season starts Thursday at Portland and then continues over the weekend with the Pac-10 Indoors at Seattle.

"The fall season is a good way to find our weaknesses," head coach Jack Griffin said. "The indoors give us a chance to see how we match up in the Pac-10."

The Ducks will play a difficult schedule this season as they

play all four California Pac-10 schools on the road. Oregon will also travel to Louisiana and Florida.

"In my opinion, we play the toughest schedule in the country," Schyllander said.

Injuries contributed to the team's winless Pac-10 record last season. The team enters this season with everybody healthy and ready to play.

"Last year losing Monica (Gieczys) for much of the year really hurt us," Nyland said.

Griffin said that although she feels some pain during practice, Gieczys will be ready to go.

"We will watch her closely during the first few matches and I'll take her out if I need to," Griffin said. "We are going to need her for the Pac-10 matches."

Peter Martini is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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