

# UO softball looks for new beginning

With a new coach, Oregon softball starts its season today in hopes of rebounding from a tumultuous 2001 season

By Chris Cabot  
Oregon Daily Emerald

After a dismal 2001, which featured a 1-20 Pacific-10 Conference record and the resignation of the head coach, the Oregon softball team will begin the 2002 season today in Texas.

First-year head coach Brent Rincon leads the Ducks to the B&G Properties Tournament hosted by Southwest Texas State in San Marcos, Texas. Oregon will face Houston and Texas Tech on Friday, Texas A&M Corpus Christi and No. 17 Southwest Texas State on Saturday and Texas Tech again on Sunday.

Rincon took over the job as interim head coach after Rick Gamez resigned in October after an audit revealed discrepancies of more than \$5,700 in the team's travel budget.

Last season's team (28-40 overall) was marked with poor team chemistry, and midway through the year, senior catcher Kelly Planché quit for personal reasons. This year, the team will be with-

out three starters who were expected to return.

Juniors Missy Coe and Lisa Wangler, last year's Most Valuable Player and Rookie of the Year, and sophomore Kate Peterson all have decided not to play this year for the Ducks.

Oregon is returning 11 letterwinners and five starters, including pitcher Connie McMurren,



who pitched 160.1 innings last year, and junior infielder Alyssa Laux, who hit .353 last season and was named to the all-region team. Laux's batting average was second only to Wangler's .367.

Rincon is beginning his first year of collegiate coaching after working as the athletic director at Tempe High in Arizona. He also coached Corona Del Sol and McClintock high schools. Rincon will have the aid of first-year assistants Jennifer Jaime, who won a Big 12 Championship as a player at Oklahoma, and Holly Smith, who played three years at Arizona State (1998-2000).

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## Wrestling

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Davis. Then on Dec. 12, Oregon traveled to Corvallis to face Oregon State and lost the match 16-16 by way of criteria "g," which awards the win to the team with the most near-fall points.

In the latest polls, Oregon is fighting to crack the top-25, listed as one of the teams receiving votes.

Arizona State is ranked No. 10 by both InterMat and the coaches' poll. The Ducks' other opponent this weekend, Boise State, did not make the coaches poll, but holds the No. 24 slot on InterMat's rankings.

Last season, Arizona State and Boise State topped the Pac-10 standings while Oregon placed fourth, and in the latest Pac-10 rankings, the Sun Devils sit on top of the conference above Oregon

State, Oregon and Boise State, respectively.

In tonight's meet, the Broncos of Boise State (6-3 overall, 3-1 Pac-10) will feature No. 4 Ben VomBaur (16-3) in the 125-pound weight class. Boise State's two other ranked wrestlers are No. 14 Gabe Vigil (18-9) at 141-pounds and No. 10 Collin Robertson, who has won 12 matches in a row and is 18-3 at 149 pounds.

VomBaur and Oregon's Shaun Williams, who is now ranked No. 12, met three times last season, with Williams winning twice.

Along with the Broncos' excellent 125-pounder, Williams will have to face Arizona State's No. 11 freshman Mike Simpson, who leads the team with 22 victories and five major decisions.

Oregon's 141-pounder, No. 19 Brian Watson, who has jumped into the national rankings this

week, will also have top competition. After taking on Vigil at Boise State, Watson will face the No. 1 wrestler in the country in his weight class, the Sun Devils' Eric Larkin (21-2).

Including Larkin and Simpson, Arizona State has seven ranked wrestlers in its starting lineup. Two of the other key matchups during Sunday's meet will be at 165-pound and heavyweight classes.

Oregon's senior captain, Eugene Harris, is now ranked No. 5 and will face No. 18 Nick Frost (13-2). No. 19 Eric Webb, who sat out of the Ducks' last two meets against Pacific and Central Washington due to his lingering toe injury, is paired against No. 9 Kellan Fluckiger (20-6). Webb's toe will probably still be a factor in the match.

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## Duo

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think there's anybody better in the country."

Christoffersen's effort came mostly on the glass, where he dominated UCLA big man Dan Gadzuric and other Bruins, and ended with a career-high 15 boards. He added 14 points for his second career double-double.

"When Chris is controlling the boards like that, it just adds another dimension to our offense," Jackson said. "He just rises to the challenge." Christoffersen continued to shoot

well Thursday night, as he went 7-for-9 from the floor. The "Great Dane" ranks first among the Ducks and ninth in the Pacific-10 Conference in field goal percentage, hitting 53 percent of his shots. Jones is right behind him, and is ranked 10th in the Pac-10 at 52 percent.

Jones and Christoffersen picked a good night to explode together. NBA "Superscout" Marty Blake was in attendance, and countless people around the country were watching on national Fox Sports Net television. Blake is the Director of Scouting for the NBA, and is a longtime pro scout. For the two Ore-

gon seniors, the step to the next level could have started Thursday night in Eugene.

Until that next level, there is still a lot of basketball to be played, including the real senior night, against Washington on Feb. 23. But if neither plays well on that night, they can reach back to a late January battle when both played like professionals.

Oregon will face Southern California in a battle for the conference's top spot on Saturday.

E-mail sports reporter Peter Hockaday at [peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com](mailto:peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com).

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## Horoscope by Linda C. Black

**TODAY'S BIRTHDAY** (Feb. 1). Have you thought about publishing a book? Traveling the world? Making wonderful scientific discoveries? All of this and more can be yours this year. Expand your horizons.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19) - Today is an 8 - Even with Mercury retrograde, you're clicking right along. You're pushing a big project through. Others benefit more than you do from this, except in terms of satisfaction. That's your reward, and it'll be generous.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20) - Today is a 6 - You could do well financially now, but it's not easy. Getting into work mode is your first challenge. You'd rather play, but that doesn't appear to be a viable option. You're supremely practical. Do what needs to be done.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21) - Today is a 10 - They say a journey of a thousand miles begins with just one step, but it actually begins before that. It begins with a fantasy that turns into a plan. After that comes the step. Get going.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22) - Today is a 5 - Cancer is the sign of the millionaire. You have a natural talent for doing business, but it also takes a lot of work. You'll have patience for details involving other people's money, so hide out somewhere and study.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22) - Today is an 8 - Hand over the reins to a smart person who can take care of you right now. Don't argue or try to maintain control. You'll become much stronger if you accept the coaching.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) - Today is a 5 - There's too much work, but luckily it could earn

you lots of money this time. Your full attention is required, but perfection is always your goal. Keep at it.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) - Today is a 9 - Are you in love? Are you and your special mate going somewhere special this weekend? Doesn't look like there's much in your way - except for your job. Do it fast, then get outta there!

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) - Today is a 5 - There's plenty to keep you busy at home the first part of this month. Are you moving or doing a major renovation? Setting up an office or laboratory in your basement? Any or all of the above would be perfect.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) - Today is an 8 - You're pretty smart, and you have some very intelligent friends. One of them seems to be trying to teach you something. It's complex, but you're learning. If this friend is also your partner, so much the better.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) - Today is a 5 - You can make a lot of money now. The paperwork is somewhat of a problem, but a creative idea could actually work. Provide what an older person wants.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) - Today is a 10 - Do you have plans to travel this weekend? How long would it take you to make plans? Grab your toothbrush, a credit card and a fascinating companion, and then get going right away!

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20) - Today is a 5 - You could borrow more to get what you want, but is that really wise? The better plan is to save up for it and pay cash. You can negotiate a discount instead of paying interest.

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Presented by Chinese Students & Scholars Association

**When:**  
Feb. 9, 2002  
5:30 PM Dinner starts  
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**Where:**  
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