

Sports Editor:
Adam Jude
adamjude@dailymerald.com
Assistant Sports Editor:
Jeff Smith
jeffsmith@dailymerald.com

Best Bet
NBA: Washington at L.A. Lakers
7:30 p.m., TBS



Tuesday, February 12, 2002

Bellotti defends recruiting process

■ The Oregon coach and UCLA coach Bob Toledo dismiss allegations by Washington's Rick Neuheisel

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

The lines of war have been drawn, and it appears the bull's-eye lies in Rick Neuheisel's backyard.

Pacific-10 Conference athletic directors are in San Diego this week for an annual meeting, where they will discuss complaints by Neuheisel, Washington's head coach, about negative recruiting tactics. Meanwhile, Oregon coach Mike Bellotti and UCLA coach Bob Toledo defended their recruiting methods.

The defense comes after Neuheisel's criticism of the recruiting process — including references to Oregon and UCLA — last Wednesday, when recruits could first sign national letters of intent.

Neuheisel said many schools did not start their recruiting until they saw Washington's list.

"The University of Oregon football staff does not practice or condone unethical or negative recruiting," Bellotti said Monday. "We do not have to. We do not bend or break the rules."

Neuheisel's comments came after Chris Solomona, a top defensive line prospect, signed with Oregon. A day later, on Thursday, offensive lineman Albert Toeaina, a 6-foot-4, 345-pound native of Pittsburg, Calif., also signed with the Ducks. Solomona and Toeaina originally made verbal commitments to Washington.

"We recruit from our own recruiting list on many merits of our own program," Bellotti said. "We don't recruit against any one particular person or institution; we recruit the best student athletes."

He did not specifically mention Washington in his released statement Monday, but noted that he "was aware that the first opportunity for a prospective student athlete to officially commit to an institution is on the signing date. Some institutions who allegedly received non-binding verbal commitments seem to have overlooked the fact that athletes in question also visited four other schools and verbally committed to many of them."

Toledo was more direct. "We never had a problem in the conference until (Neuheisel) started talking about negative recruiting," Toledo told The Seattle Times. "Now I'm going to start talking."

Toledo said Neuheisel is also involved in "negative recruiting." "He's taking a lot of potshots at anybody," Toledo said. But Neuheisel has backed down from his comments. "I made a mistake," Neuheisel told the Associated Press. "The process in the Pac-10 is to go to the Pac-10 office first. I was wrong to speak publicly."

Washington has not made an official complaint with the Pac-10, but the conference will investigate recruiting practices.

E-mail sports editor Adam Jude at adamjude@dailymerald.com.

Road woes don't deter Ducks



Thomas Patterson Emerald
The Ducks' Luke Jackson, seen here dunking at Oregon State, scored a career-high 29 points in Saturday's loss to California but left frustrated with the close defeat on the road.

■ Oregon plays three overtimes in two difficult losses but is still in the race for the Pac-10 title

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

BERKELEY, Calif. — A 19-point first half lead had evaporated. A Haas Pavilion crowd of 12,000 had been recharged.

And the Oregon men's basketball team found itself once again in the midst of a tight game on the road.

This time, the opponent was California and this time, the Ducks were playing to hold onto their share of first place.

When the tension-filled double overtime contest finally ended, the Ducks had dropped an entertaining 107-103

loss Saturday night that also dropped them from the top spot in the standings.

Arizona (17-6, 10-3) swept the Washington schools to take over first place in the Pacific-10 Conference and Oregon (17-7, 9-4) now sits a game behind in second place. The Ducks also fell from No. 13 to No. 17 in Monday's Associated Press writers' poll and are ranked 18th in the coaches' poll.

Saturday's loss before the hostile Cal crowd came two nights after the Ducks' setback at Stanford, 90-87, in overtime. All seven of the Ducks' losses have come away from home, where they're 13-0, and all have been by seven points or less.

"That's life on the road in the Pac-10," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said.

After Saturday's latest setback, the Ducks admitted frustration with their road performances and especially the overtime defeats from the weekend. But they also insisted that when the tension mounts, the minutes dwindle and the roar of the crowd is against them, they don't tighten and play with less confidence.

"Our team does a really good job with zoning the crowd out," said Luke Jackson, who scored a career-high 29 points against the Bears. "We took both these teams into overtime. That proves we

Turn to **Basketball**, page 6

Men's tennis hits perfect weekend

■ The Ducks improve their record to 5-1 with a pair of wins over St. Mary's and Portland

By Peter Martini
for the Emerald

There were some new faces, but the results were the same for the Oregon men's tennis team.

Head coach Chris Russell changed the lineup during the weekend as the Ducks defeated St. Mary's, 7-0, and Portland 4-3 to raise their record to 5-1.

"We needed to rest a few guys and keep them healthy," Russell said. "And the other guys stepped up and played very well for us."

Against St. Mary's, freshman Johan Paalberg played in his first singles match and sophomore Chris King played his second of the season.

Paalberg beat Josh Farley of St. Mary's in straight sets, 6-1, 6-1.

"I played OK," Paalberg said. "I missed quite a few shots, but it felt really good to be out there playing singles and helping the team win."

King beat J.J. Witlinger 6-2, 6-2 and played his

first doubles match of the season, teaming with senior Jason Menke. They won their doubles match 8-2.



first time. He defeated St. Mary's Frank Schmitt 6-2, 7-6 (7-2).

"The guy he played today was very tough, but Kost played very well and didn't let him force a third set," Russell said.

Against Portland, Kost lost his match 6-3, 6-1 against No. 26 Travis Parrott, the highest ranked singles player Oregon has faced this year.

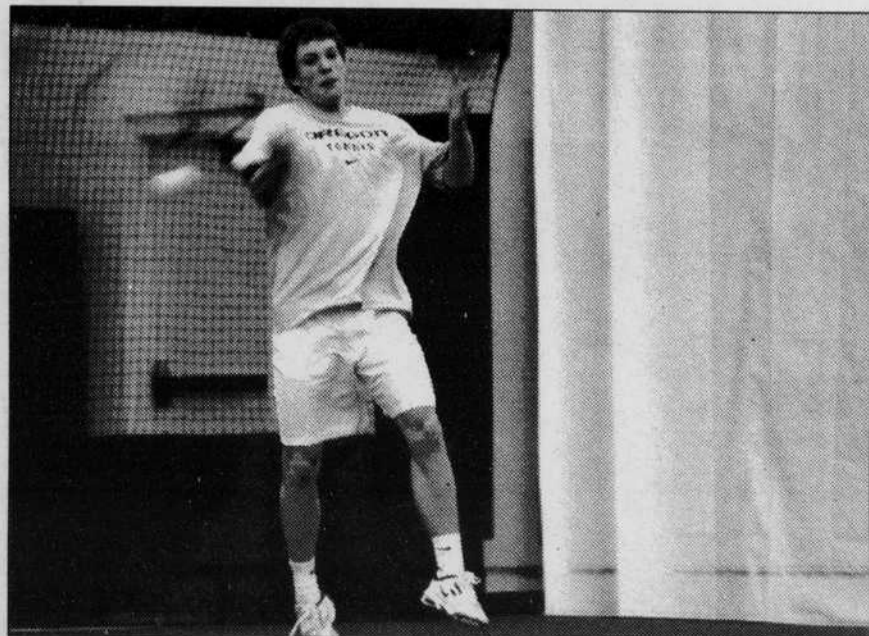
The Ducks won the doubles point and sophomore Martin Pawlowski, freshman Sven Swinnen

Turn to **Tennis**, page 6

"It was great out there today," King said. "This is a real confidence booster for me."

"Everyone needs to be able to play, and we got that chance this weekend," Russell said.

During the weekend, Russell used freshman Manuel Kost as the No. 1 singles player for the



Jonathan House Emerald
Freshman Manuel Kost made his debut as the No. 1 singles player for the Ducks on Friday with a 6-2, 7-6 (7-2) victory over Frank Schmitt of St. Mary's. Oregon won the match 7-0.