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**Best Bet**  
Men's hoops: Oregon vs. USC  
7:30 p.m., KEZI



Thursday, February 28, 2002

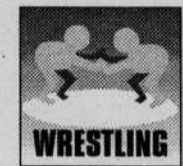
## Cutting weight not an issue for Oregon wrestlers

■ The members of the Oregon wrestling team have maintained their weight with relative ease this season

By Chris Cabot  
Oregon Daily Emerald

High school and collegiate wrestlers have struggled for years to control their weight down to the ounce. Stories of extreme measures to cut weight have surfaced, and at times tarnished, the image of the sport.

The Oregon wrestling team, however, has had little trouble meeting its weight requirements this season.



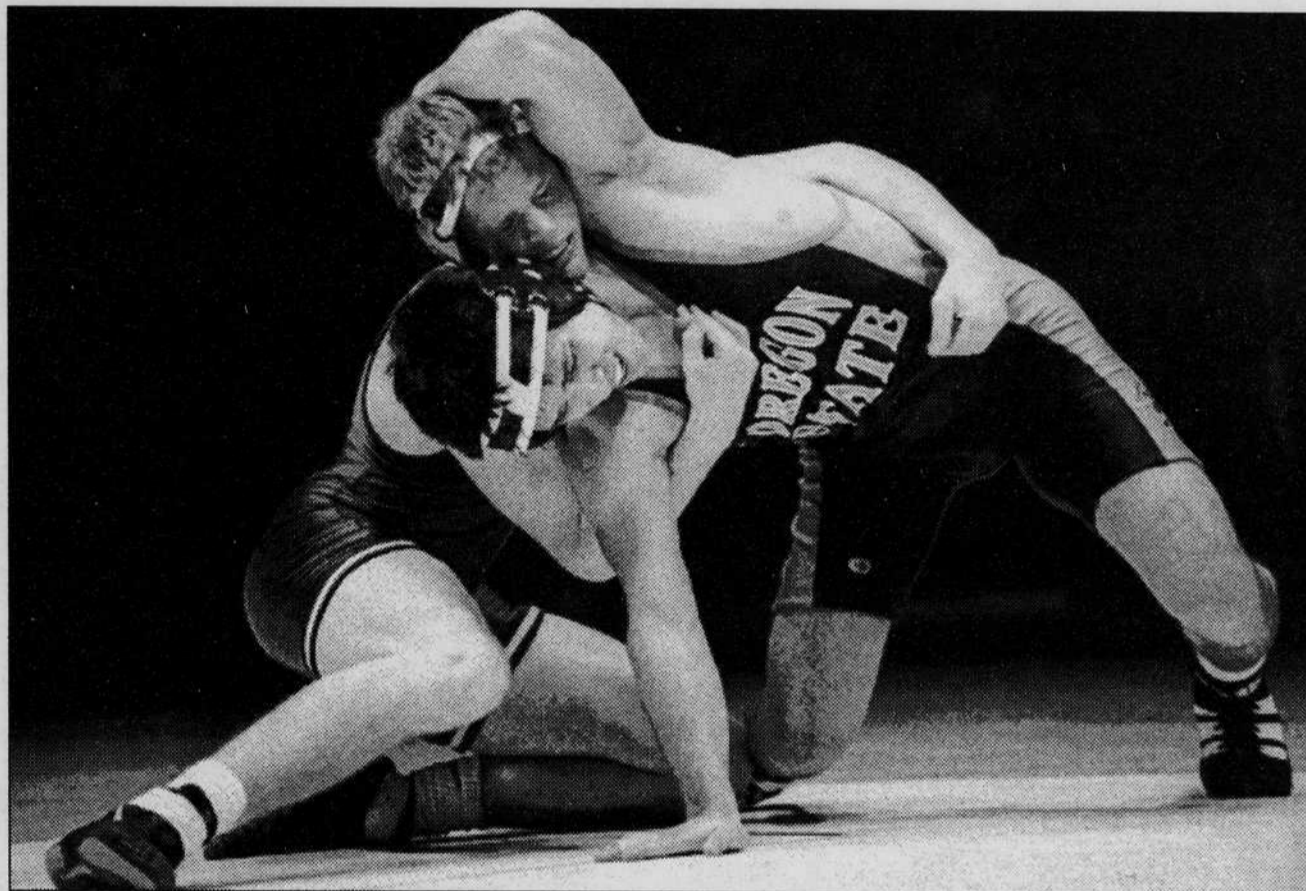
"For the most part, we have nobody that is really having to cut weight," head coach Chuck Kearney said. "They are managing their weight, but they are not having to cut weight. With this particular team, at the end of practice on a good hard day, everybody is within a pound or two of making weight."

New regulations were enacted during the 1999-2000 season, placing tighter guidelines on the weight class that athletes are eligible to compete in. Before the start of each season wrestlers must complete a "weight certification" process that involves measurements of body density, body fat and weight. The wrestler must also meet a certain level of hydration during these tests for the measurements to be acceptable.

The certification determines the minimum weight-class that the wrestler is eligible to compete in during the season. The athlete may move up to a heavier weight class if they desire.

Many of Oregon's wrestlers jumped up weight classes this year from where they wrestled last season, including Brian Watson (133 pounds to 141), Tony Overstake (149 to 157) and Eugene Harris (157 to 165). Kearney said that his wrestlers have made the adjustments to the new regulations.

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Adam Amato Emerald

Senior Brian Watson (left) is one of four Oregon starters who moved up a weight class this season in order to more easily make weight.



Adam Amato Emerald

Oregon knows it must come together on the road if it's going to win its first league title since the 1944-45 season.

## USC in Ducks' way of Pac-10 title

■ Oregon hits the road to end the regular season and attempt to win a league title

By Jeff Smith  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Win tonight, and the Ducks clinch at least a share of the conference championship for the first time in 57 years.

So pack the champagne bottles, right? Not exactly.

"We'll celebrate after Saturday," senior Freddie Jones said.

Pending, of course, wins by the No. 13 Oregon men's basketball team over No. 18 USC at 7:30 tonight and over unranked UCLA at 1 p.m. Saturday.

If the Ducks (20-7, 12-4) lose to the Trojans, they'd face the task of winning at Pauley Pavilion — a place they haven't won at since 1984 — on Saturday in order to capture a piece of the title.

But should the Ducks win both games this weekend, the Pacific-10 Conference championship would be theirs alone to cherish.

"Our whole goal is to be solo champions," senior Anthony Lever said. "It'll feel a lot better if we end up there by ourselves rather than splitting it."

Still, a victory tonight is reason for celebration as it not only clinches a co-title, but also guarantees the Ducks of a No. 1 seed in the upcoming Pac-10 Tournament.

"This is the biggest game in the history of the University of Oregon since maybe the Tall Firs considering what's at stake," head coach Ernie Kent said.

The Tall Firs were the legendary 1938-39 Oregon team that captured the first-ever NCAA



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## Seize this special day

**C**arpe this diem, friends.  
Carpe this diem.  
Pardon my poor Latin, but "carpe diem," as we all know thanks to "Dead Poet's Society," means "seize the day."

Seize this day.  
Because Thursday, February 28, 2002, could be the pinnacle for the Oregon athletics program. The point of no return. The top of the mountain where the Ducks place their Nike "O" flag and start down the other side.

But more than likely, the top of that athletics mountain is a little broader. More than likely, the Ducks reached the summit in 1995, when they went to the Rose Bowl in football. Or 1999-2000, when the Oregon men's basketball team lived through a stunning 20-win, NCAA Tournament season.

It was probably earlier, with the women's track dominance of the 1980s. Or the living legend of Steve Prefontaine in the early 1970s.

All of those athletic phenomena have served to raise the nation's eyebrows in the direction of the Beaver state.

The Duck state?  
Because we live in the Oregon athletics renaissance.

This renaissance is Oregon football eating buffalo for a Jan. 1 afternoon snack, furthering the argument that the Rose Bowl days later should have been red, white, green and yellow.

This renaissance is Oregon men's basketball playing USC tonight for Pacific-10 Conference dominance, an almost sure first-round win in the Pac-10 Tournament and a West Coast NCAA Tournament berth. If there was any remaining doubt about whether tonight's game is one of the most important games in the country, Fox Sports Net broke a strong policy by allowing the game to be televised in the Northwest.

This renaissance is CBS crawling

over McArthur Court on Wednesday because this Saturday's game at UCLA is nationally televised.

It's a Freddie Jones season-dunk highlight reel on SportsCenter. It's top recruits like Luke Ridnour choosing Oregon over nationally prominent programs such as Kentucky and UCLA. It's

a phenomenal 16-0 home record in a season that's turning into a true gem.

It's Joey Harrington on ESPN's SportsCentury. It's Mike Bellotti as an analyst for ABC's coverage of the Rose Bowl. It's a No. 2 final football ranking.

There are Duck fans who've lived in Eugene for years and never seen a hint of the renaissance. They've lived through 0-0 Toilet Bowls and six-win basketball seasons.

Now it's payback time. How about the most heart-stopping football team and the highest flying basketball team in the land to make up for those historically dull Ducks?

But the renaissance isn't confined to Autzen Stadium and Mac Court. It's slowly bleeding like a soccer injury out to Papé Field and the stands at Hayward Field. It's seeping out to the Eugene Country Club and Howe Field.

The renaissance is Oregon soccer landing recruits like Chalise Baysa and Nicole Garbin, big-game kickers who are laying a foundation for coach Bill Steffen.

It's Oregon volleyball hiring a top-drawer coach in Carl Ferreira, who in turn landed big-time recruits like Katie O'Neil and Stephanie Martin, who are

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Peter

**Hockaday**

Two minutes for crosschecking