

# UO men's tennis prepared for outdoor conditions

■ With a trip to New Mexico to play NMSU, the Ducks men's tennis team will play outside for the first time this season

By Peter Martini  
for the Emerald

The No. 72 Oregon men's tennis team is ready to face the elements.

For the first time this season, the Ducks will play outdoors when they travel to New Mexico, beginning with a match today against New Mexico State.

"We've been working this week on preparing for the elements," head coach Chris Russell said. "They need to practice battling the

wind, the sun and other things you don't get indoors."

New Mexico State, which leads the Sun Belt Conference with a 2-0 conference record, is 7-2 overall this season, including victories over No. 59 Yale and No. 71 Arkansas.

Oregon will play No. 65 Texas-Arlington on Saturday and No. 73 New Mexico on Sunday. Texas-Arlington is 4-4 this season, but winless against ranked teams. New Mexico is 5-4 with wins over No. 69 Boise State and Arkansas.

"All three teams are about at our level," Russell said. "We need to play very well to beat any one of those teams."

The Ducks are 6-2 this season, and are 1-2 against ranked opponents, beating No. 63 Brigham Young. Oregon's matches on the road have been tight, beating Portland 4-3, and losing to No. 69 Boise State 4-3.

Sophomore Chris King is undefeated (5-0) in singles this season at the fifth and sixth spots in the lineup. Freshman Manuel Kost is 6-2 at the No. 1 and No. 2 spots.

The next home match for the Ducks is on March 8 against Sacramento State. After that match, Oregon will travel to California to play UC-Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Pacific, Stanford and California.

The Ducks will return home on

April 5 for weekend matches against Arizona State and Arizona.

"Our schedule is now progressively getting tougher," Russell said. "And most of them will be on the road and outdoors. It will prepare us for what we'll face during the (Pacific-10 Conference) schedule."

## Women travel to No. 3 Stanford

The Oregon women's tennis team will continue its Pac-10 schedule as it travels to the Bay Area.

The No. 59 Ducks play No. 3 Stanford today in Palo Alto, Calif. The Cardinal are 8-1 overall (1-0 Pac-10). Stanford's only loss came

against Georgia, which is the top-ranked team in the country. In Pac-10 play, the Cardinal dominated No. 14 California, 7-0 last Saturday in Berkeley, Calif.

No. 9 Lauren Barnikow leads a Stanford lineup with eight players ranked in the top 132.

Oregon will play California on Sunday. The Golden Bears are 5-1, including victories over No. 67 Loyola Marymount and No. 30 Pepperdine.

The Ducks will try to rebound after losses last weekend to Washington and Washington State. Oregon's record is 7-5 (0-4 Pac-10).

Peter Martini is a freelance reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald.

## Wrestling

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"At tournament time, anything can happen," he said. "Different people respond differently to that sudden-death pressure, and I think that we have a lot of guys on our team that will rise to the occasion."

The seedings for the tournament will be decided on Friday afternoon during a meeting of the Pac-10 coaches, but it is likely that at least six of Oregon's starting 10 wrestlers will be ranked in the top four of the tournament brackets in their respective weight classes.

The Ducks best shot at a conference title comes with senior Eugene Harris in the 165-pound weight class. Harris placed fourth at last year's tournament at 157 pounds and compiled a 26-3 overall record (13-2 Pac-10) this season. He is currently ranked No. 4 in the country, while UC Davis' Burt Pierson is ranked No. 11.

No. 10 Shaun Williams is one of three ranked wrestlers in the 125-pound weight class and will probably be seeded second in the tournament. Jason Harless (133-pounds) and Tony Overstake (157) will also likely be seeded second in their classes, and 149-pounder Casey Hunt is expected to

receive a No. 3 seed, as is heavy-weight Eric Webb.

Redshirt freshman Shane Webster (174) has wrestled very well for Oregon this year and has a good shot at advancing in the tournament.

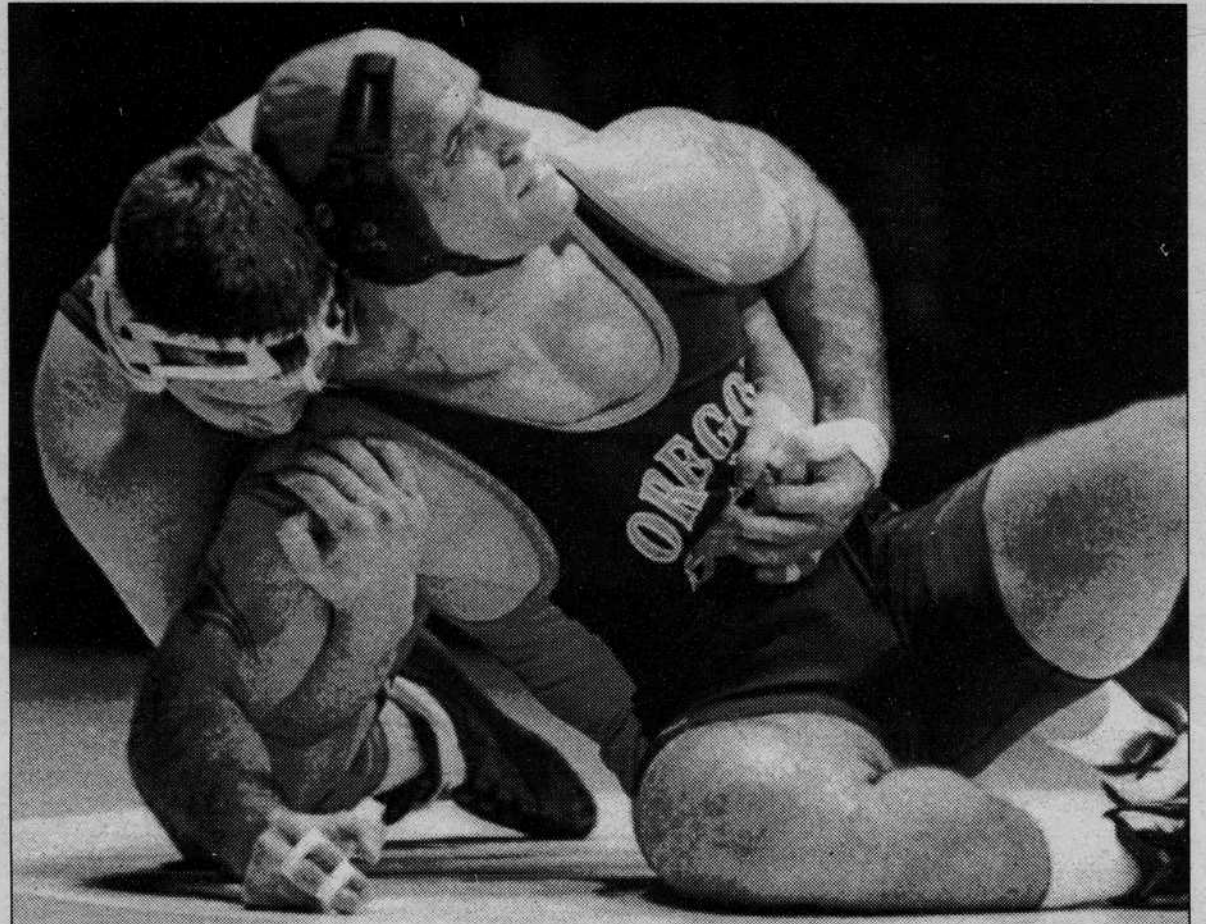
"Webster just keeps getting better and has lost close matches to the (probable) top two seeds in the tournament," Kearney said speaking of Oregon State's No. 13 Nathan Coy and Cal Poly's No. 14 Steve Strange. "I know for sure that those two guys don't want to meet him early in the tournament. He is the kind of guy who can pull off upsets."

If the Oregon wrestlers can compete well on an individual basis, the team may give Arizona State a run for the conference title.

"We are in a position that if the individuals can do their jobs, we can sneak up and be a player in it," Kearney said. "There are four or five teams that are fairly close, which makes it great for a team like ourselves who are a little bit of a dark horse to sneak in there and maybe win the whole thing."

The top four finishers in the conference tournament are invited to nationals, which will be held March 21-23.

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Adam Amato Emerald

Oregon's Eric Webb (right) and the wrestling team head to Corvallis for the Pac-10 Tournament. Webb is 17-8 overall (8-4 Pac-10) this season in the heavyweight class, despite battling a toe injury that has hindered him throughout the season.

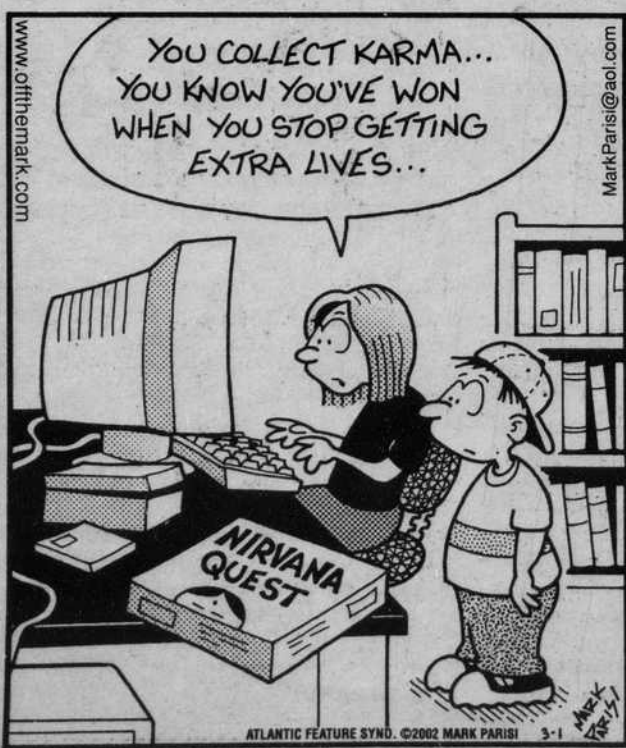
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