

Sports Editor:
Adam Jude
adamjude@dailyemerald.com

Best Bet
Soccer: Jamaica vs. U.S.
4:30 p.m., ESPN2



Thursday, May 16, 2002

UO softball's struggles may cost Rincon job

■ After again missing the postseason, the Ducks close the books on another year and perhaps on coach Brent Rincon

By Chris Cabot
Oregon Daily Emerald

For the second consecutive season, the Oregon softball team will be the only Pacific-10 Conference team not selected to make an appearance at the NCAA Tournament.

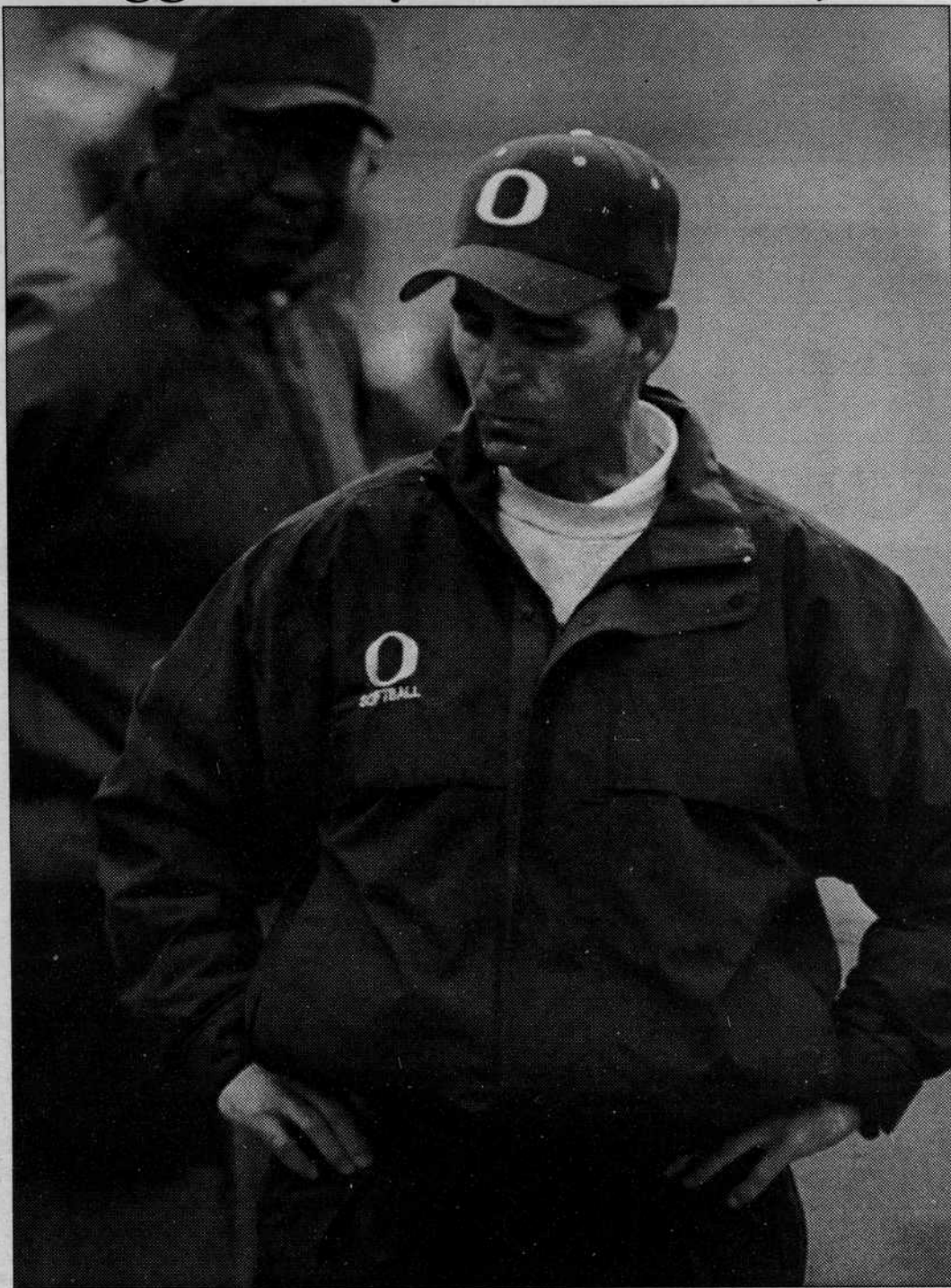
Although the team posted a 22-11 record outside of the Pac-10, the Ducks were 2-19 against the other seven teams in what is regarded as the best softball conference in the nation. Oregon State (38-23), the lowest ranked team in the conference, received a No. 2 seed in one of the eight first round regionals of the NCAA Tournament. Washington (43-16), Arizona (48-10) and UCLA (50-6) all were given No. 1 seeds, while Arizona State (40-18) and Stanford (43-18) earned No. 2 slots. California (48-19) received a No. 3 seed.

"Aside from wins and losses, I was pleased with the team's efforts this season," Oregon interim head coach Brent Rincon said. "In light of everything, it turned into a pretty good learning experience. We actually had a lot of growth not only in individuals, but also as a team — that includes not just playing growth but also personal growth and camaraderie growth."

Heading into its 2002 Pac-10 season, Oregon had won nine of 11 games but in their first Pac-10 game against Oregon State on March 29, the Ducks hit a brick wall. Although the games against many of the top teams in the nation were close, the Ducks couldn't manage a win in their conference until they faced Arizona State on April 27. The margin of victory in nine of Oregon's 19 Pac-10 losses was two runs.

"I think we demonstrated that we can play with pretty much anybody in the country, but we need to retool our intensity and our preparation to compete at this level," Rincon said.

Although the team was outmatched in many of its games, Oregon battled



Adam Amato Emerald

Oregon interim head coach Brent Rincon, who may not return next season, led the Ducks to a 23-30 overall record.

Turn to Softball, page 14

Oregon golfers shooting for NCAA

■ The Oregon men's golf team is 'thinking win' today as it begins regional play in New Mexico

By Jesse Thomas
for the Emerald

Vying for its first trip to the NCAA Championships since 1999, the Oregon men's golf team begins a shootout today against the best teams in the region.

The Ducks will start this afternoon on the back nine at the NCAA West Regional, played on the 7,368-yard, par 72 South Champions Course in Albuquerque, N.M.

The top 10 teams and two individuals will advance to the NCAA Championships May 29-June 1 in Columbus, Ohio.

"We're not going down there thinking about 10th place, we're thinking about winning," Oregon head coach Steve Nosler said. "If we're in first, we know we're going to nationals, but if we fall a bit short of that, then hopefully we're still somewhere in the top 10."

Oregon enters as the 11th seed and will be paired with No. 10 Nevada and No. 12 Ohio State for today's first round, beginning at 12:18 p.m., and Friday's second round. Final round pairings for Saturday will be based on team standings after the first two rounds.

"We haven't played at New Mexico in a few years, but I've seen it when the wind is really blowing and the course plays extremely long and I've also seen it when there is no wind, and if that's the case, it will be a shootout," Nosler said.

Turn to Golf, page 16

Bruins, Cardinal lead Pac in different ways

■ UCLA and Stanford should battle for the Pac-10 men's crown, but several teams could make a run and make the conference championship interesting

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Pacific-10 Conference Championships of track and field are never dull in any way. The conference's best athletes, all competing as individuals in the ultimate team competition, inherently put on a thrilling show.

But there is an element of predictability involved when previewing the meet. Some teams simply won't have the talent to hang around with the big guns, the UCLAs and Stanfords that are brimming with numerous scoring athletes.

With that said, the following is a breakdown of the conference meet, in the categories of favorites, contenders and pretenders, and in the order they would finish if the meet was scored on current season bests. Enjoy.

The favorites

UCLA — The Bruins have the best shot to win the
Turn to Men's, page 16

Kriz helps out in pinch at Oregon Twilight



Courtesy Oregon Media Services

Rachael Kriz, most recognized in the high jump, filled in with spot duty at the Oregon Twilight, garnering third place in the javelin.

■ Rachael Kriz is Oregon's savior in the clutch, especially when it comes to the javelin

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

It has been two seasons since Rachael Kriz, a sophomore from Toledo, Ore., has thrown the javelin spear.

Until now.

With Roslyn Lundeen and Elisa Crumley sitting out at the Oregon Twilight on Saturday in preparation of the upcoming Pacific-10 Conference Championships, Kriz — who has excelled in the high jump this season — was called upon to pull double duty.

And while Kriz didn't steal the show, she sure didn't disappoint, either.

Kriz finished with a top throw of 130-05, not good enough to finish ahead of teammates Sarah Malone and Charyl Weingarten, but better than George Fox's Gina Coolen. In fact, the throw gave her third place by more than 15 feet.

Not bad for someone who doesn't practice the event on a regular basis.

"I made a deal with Sally Harmon, our throws coach, that if I jumped 5-7 in a meet (high jump) she'd let me throw a javelin in practice since I used to do it in high school and I miss it so much," Kriz said. "In practice I threw it over the 40



Turn to Women's, page 16