

Sports brief

UO women's basketball signs final recruit

Bev Smith completed her first recruiting class as head coach of the Oregon women's basketball team with her fifth signing of the spring Wednesday.

And Smith stayed in the country this time.

After signing two recruits from her native Canada, Smith received a national letter of intent from Hillsboro native Kayla Steen.

Last year at Clackamas Community College — one of 26 schools in the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges — the 5-foot-8 guard averaged 22.8 points, 7.2 rebounds and a league-best 7.1 assists while leading Clackamas to a 26-6 record. She garnered MVP honors of the NWAACC southern division for the second straight year.

Steen joins 6-foot-3 post Carolyn Ganes of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 6-foot-2 forward Yadi Okwumabua of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Saint Mary's transfer Corrie Mizusawa, a

5-foot-8 guard, and Hawaii transfer Chelsea Wagner, a guard from Springfield, on this year's recruiting class. Mizusawa and Wagner, however, are required to sit out a season by NCAA regulations.

Because Steen is transferring from a non-NCAA school, she is eligible to participate for the Ducks in the 2002-03 season. Steen will help fill the void of the departed Jamie Craighead, who finished her career second on Oregon's all-time three-point list.

"Kayla brings qualities that we

lose in our graduating players this year," Smith said. "She will be able to play a little bit of a combo guard for us. Her strength is the ability to do the right thing for the team, whether it's hitting a three-pointer, getting after a rebound or dishing off an assist."

Steen adds to the already guard-heavy lineup that features All-American senior Shaquana Williams, Alissa Edwards, Courtney Shreve as well as sophomores Brandi Davis and Amy Taylor.

"Kayla will be able to contribute

right away to our program, and she's got two years of being a strong leader at the JC level," Smith said. "Plus, she's a great student and has great character."

As a freshman at Clackamas, Steen averaged 17 points, six rebounds and six assists per game.

A four-year letterwinner from St. Mary's Academy in Portland, Steen was a first-team all-league selection as a junior and senior. She also holds a state prep record with 10 three-pointers in a game.

— Adam Jude

Men's

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conference because of an effective weapon come postseason time: balance. UCLA boasts an unprecedented five athletes that lead the conference in their events, including the Pac-10's best shot put, hammer thrower, discus thrower, long jumper and 400-meter hurdler.

Scott Moser is the star for the Bruins. The senior, who won the discus title last year, leads the conference in that event and the hammer, where his best throw is more than three feet longer than the best throw of Oregon's Adam Kriz, who is ranked second.

Stanford — The Cardinal aren't as balanced as the Bruins, but they are deeper. Much, much deeper. Stanford's distance crew,

which almost single-handedly won the Cardinal the conference title last year, will be back in action in Pullman.

Here's just an idea of how good Stanford's distance runners really are. In the 5,000-meter race, 11 of the 24 athletes with qualifying times are Cardinal. The top four runners are from Stanford, and five of the top eight — the scoring positions — hail from Palo Alto. If the 5,000 ends up like it should, Stanford would score 31 points, a huge number for one event.

The contenders

Arizona State — The Sun Devils should be the Sun Gnats of the Pac-10 Championships, picking up small amounts of points in loads of different events. Arizona State has only one conference leader, and it isn't even an athlete, it's the squad's

4x400 relay team.

But that doesn't mean the Sun Devils aren't a threat to the conference's major powers. Five ASU athletes are ranked second in their events, and at least one ASU athlete, senior shot putter David Wood, has a golden chance to win the crown in his event. Wood won last year's Pac-10 title in the shot put, and his best mark this season is only four inches short of the conference's best mark.

Oregon — The Ducks, who finished fifth at last year's conference championships, would win this year if the meet was judged on heart. Since stars John Stiegeler and Santiago Lorenzo went down earlier this year, the team has pulled together and posted several surprising marks.

But the meet is not judged on heart, it's judged on cold, hard times and distances. The Ducks

have one conference leader in Simon Kimata and one champion locked up in decathlete Billy Pappas, who won his title on Sunday. But beyond those two, Oregon's athletes are lodged in the second-third-fourth range. The Ducks will need to have several athletes perform above their potential, but if that happens, Oregon could complete the 2001-02 trifecta of Pac-10 Championships started by football and men's basketball.

USC — The Trojans are balanced, but not as strong in their balance as their cross-town rivals, the Bruins. Still, a mixture of track and field semi-stars, along with a few upsets, could propel USC into the upper third of the final conference standings.

The Trojans' strength is in the field, but fast sprinters have led them to the conference's top 4x100 relay time. Still, conference leaders Julien Kapek in the triple jump and

Dawid Jaworski in the high jump will earn USC's bread at the conference finale.

The pretenders

Arizona, Washington State, California, Washington — These teams have an impressive number of conference leaders among them — five in all — but little to no depth. Arizona has the best shot to finish closer to the "contenders" group, but only because of two conference leaders and four athletes that rank either second or third in their event. Host Washington State has strong sprints, but little to impress in the field. Washington has two conference leaders, but only five other scoring athletes. For these teams, the conference meet should prove long and pointless.

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Women's

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line and she was like 'OK.' So I asked her if I could be in this meet and she said it was fine and (assistant coach Mark Stream) said it was fine. I was pumped."

Don't think Kriz' attempt at the javelin didn't go unnoticed. Malone, who took the meet with a throw of 166-10, had some kind words for her teammate.

"She was just out there having fun," Malone said.

Better yet, is there a future for Kriz in the javelin?

With all four javelin throwers returning next season, it may not be likely, but there's no reason not to dream, at least in Kriz' mind.

"It's looking like a possibility," Kriz said. "Sally says there could be a future there. We'll see what happens."

For the record, Kriz — who will be converging on Pullman, Wash., to compete in the Pac-10 Championships in the high jump — took fifth in her common event, but was at a height of 5-7.

Full steam ahead

The injury bug has stayed away

Golf

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The Ducks had a strong finish this spring with six straight top-six finishes since the beginning of March. Most recently, Oregon finished fifth at the Pacific-10 Conference Championships at the end of April.

Four of the Duck's five golfers have season stroke averages within two of par. Senior Aaron Byers, from Albany, leads the Ducks with

from the Ducks for most of the season, and the week before the Pac-10 Championships is no different.

Field stars such as Amanda Brown, Lundeen and Malone have all been sidelined with various injuries, but are now ready for the championships and are at full strength.

Alicia Snyder-Carlson and Janette Davis have also suffered through injury-plagued seasons, but are back in business in the running events.

Oregon will go into the championships with the full squad of 24 allowable by the conference.

Coach knows best

Head coach Tom Heinonen, Harmon, Stream and volunteer coach Mark Vanderville have all had successful collegiate and post-collegiate careers, so paying attention to what they say, at least in the athletes' minds, is vital.

There will be a full week after the Oregon Twilight to practice for the culmination of the season for most, and while rest and relaxation is in the books, listening to the coaches is also on the plate.

"Whatever Tom tells me to, but I

a 72.4 stroke average followed by junior John Ellis at 72.6 strokes per round.

Junior Chris Carnahan, another Albany native, is third for Oregon at 73.2 with Portland native Brandon Harnden, a senior captain, at 73.6. Sophomore Mike Sica, who averages 75.3 strokes per round, will play fifth for the Ducks.

Oregon will face tough competition to reach nationals including Pac-10 champion USC as the West's No. 1 seed, followed by Texas, Fres-

no State, Washington, San Diego State and Arizona.

It has been four years since the Ducks last played in Albuquerque, at the 1998 NCAA Championships. That Oregon team finished tied for 27th and did not make the second round cut.

But with their consistency this year, the Ducks said they plan to go much further.

Jesse Thomas is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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