

Wrestlers battle sunny California teams

Oregon finishes its California trip with dual meets against Menlo and Fresno State

Wrestling

Mindi Rice

Freelance Sports Reporter

Sunny California days are ending soon for the Oregon wrestling squad.

The Ducks wrap up their three-day, four-meet trip with two dual meets against non-conference opponents Menlo College and Fresno State.

Menlo College is an NAIA school in Atherton, Calif., with a wrestling program consistently ranking in the NAIA top 10.

Currently, Menlo sits at No. 4 in the NAIA Coaches Poll. Six of the 10 weight classes have Menlo wrestlers

ranked in the top 10.

Senior Saul Lucatero is ranked No. 1 by the NAIA Coaches at the 149 weight class. Fellow senior Joey Martinez sits at No. 2 at 157, while senior Jose Sanchez is No. 5 at 133.

Three Menlo wrestlers sit at No. 7 in their weight classes — senior Isaac Pumarejo at 125 and juniors Eddie Lucatero at 165 and Junior Liberal at 174.

Menlo is 5-8 this season in dual meets, including losses to Cal-State Bakersfield and Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo.

Fresno State, Oregon's second opponent on Friday, is in the "other teams" section of the Intermat rankings. "Other teams" is the next 11 teams after the top 25. Oregon is also featured in the "other teams" list.

The Bulldogs feature only one wrestler ranked by The Wrestling

Mall — No. 14 Eddie Gifford at 174 — but they beat No. 19 Nebraska earlier this season, 19-16. Oregon lost 30-3 to Nebraska in December.

The Ducks battle Menlo at 3 p.m., then rest while Menlo and Fresno State wrestle at 5 p.m. The Bulldogs and Ducks then wrestle at 7 p.m. Fresno State is hosting all three matches in its gym.

Wednesday, Oregon split two duals against Pacific-10 Conference rivals Cal-State Bakersfield and Cal Poly.

"We wrestled tough," head coach Chuck Kearney said after the loss to Cal-Poly. "The guys that competed tonight did a good job of competing."

Seniors Casey Hunt and Tony Overstake were joined by sophomore Shane Webster as the only Oregon wrestlers to win both their matches Wednesday.

Hunt pinned his Cal-State Bakers-

field opponent midway through the first period. He later earned his first four-point major decision against Cal Poly, taking the 141 weight class 17-6.

Overstake improved his record at 149 to 16-7 after his two wins. He controlled his first match of the day, earning a 16-7 major decision. His second match was closer, ending in a 6-4 decision in Overstake's favor.

Webster, with a team-leading 22-4 record, won his fourth dual-meet major decision against Cal-State Bakersfield's Matt Montiero with a 19-7 win. Webster earned his fourth technical fall with near fall victory against Cal Poly, 24-6. The near fall came at the 5:50 mark in the 174 matchup.

Junior Branson Phillips, redshirt freshman Neil Phillips and redshirt sophomore Luke Larwin each went

1-1 on the day. Both Phillips brothers won their match against Cal-State Bakersfield, while Larwin won his Cal Poly match.

Sophomore Elias Soto won his only match of the day, at Cal-State Bakersfield.

Redshirt freshman Jacob Boyles wrestled at 133, filling in for redshirt junior Jason Harless. Harless, who is 5-1 in Pac-10 matches, was unable to travel with the team due to a knee injury. Harless had won both his matches the past weekend. Boyles lost both the 133 matchups on Wednesday.

The Ducks will return home for a week of practice and school before heading north to Corvallis on Feb. 16 to battle Pac-10 rival Oregon State.

Mindi Rice is a freelance writer for the Emerald.

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