

Sports Editor:
Peter Hockaday
peterhockaday@dailymerald.com

SPORTS

Best bet
NCAA men's basketball:
Florida at Georgia
6 p.m., ESPN

Tuesday, March 4, 2003

Wrestlers take fifth in Pac-10 tourney

Shane Webster leads the way with a second-place finish, while Oregon has five other wrestlers finish 3-5 in their weight class

Wrestling

Mindi Rice

Freelance Sports Reporter

The Oregon wrestlers wrapped up the Pacific-10 Conference tournament Monday with six wrestlers placing in the top six in their respective weight class.

Shane Webster led the Ducks with a second-place finish at 174. Webster lost a 3-1 decision to Arizona State's Curtis Owen. Owen took a 10-4 decision from Webster when the Ducks and Sun Devils met in a January dual meet.

Webster earned a second-straight trip to the NCAA Championships with his second-place finish. He won two major decisions on Sunday on his way to the title match. The sophomore improved on a third-place conference finish during his freshman season.

As a team, the Ducks finished fifth in the conference with 68 points. Arizona State won the team title with 134 points and six individual champions.

Senior Casey Hunt won his first match over Oregon State's Mike Unger at 141. The 5-3 decision marked the third time in three matchups that Hunt beat Unger this season.

In the match to decide third and fourth place, Hunt faced Cal State-Fullerton's Juan Mora. Hunt was seeded No. 3 in the tournament, while Mora was the No. 4 seed. The high-scoring match followed the seeding order, giving Hunt the third-place victory with a 13-10 decision.

Hunt earned a trip to the national tournament with his finish and improved over his fourth-place Pac-10 finish last season.

Redshirt sophomore Luke Larwin, at 165, faced Cal Davis' Michael Font for the right to wrestle for third place. Larwin won a decision, 5-3, setting up a fourth match this season against Oregon State's Matt Ellis.

Ellis knocked Larwin out of the championship bracket Sunday with a 3-2 decision, and took the third-place match with a 3-1 decision. Larwin received fourth place with the loss, earning a trip to the NCAA Championships.

At 125, sophomore Martin Mitchell battled another Beaver, Michael Delaney, to a 5-3 decision in Delaney's favor. Mitchell then faced Stanford's Nathan Peterson in the match to decide fifth and sixth place. Mitchell pinned his opponent at the 1:03 mark for fifth place and his ninth pin of the season.

Facing Cal Poly's Nate Ybarra, redshirt junior Jason Harless lost a 8-3 decision in his first match Monday, sending him to the battle for fifth place at 133.

Against Cardinal wrestler Brad Metzler, Harless won a close battle by tiebreaker after the two wrestlers finished the regulation tied at one. Harless earned fifth place for the second consecutive year.

Junior Branson Phillips also started Monday with a loss. Boise State's Ben Cherington won a 9-3 decision over Phillips to bounce him to fifth place match.

Phillips then faced No. 1-seeded Matt Gentry of Stanford. Phillips ran up the match with an 11-4 decision over Gentry.

Turn to **Wrestling**, page 12

Cradle 'till the grave

The lacrosse men were not threatened by the promotion of women's lacrosse to varsity — the guys love the sport too much

Jon Roetman

Sports Freelancer

The Feb. 3 announcement that women's lacrosse would become a varsity sport at Oregon in 2004 could easily have led to bitterness from the men's club lacrosse team.

Instead, the Ducks saw the move as a plus for lacrosse in general at Oregon and hope that one day it leads to a men's varsity program.

"I think it's great," said student coordinator Jim O'Neill of the addition of women's lacrosse to the varsity roster. "I just hope it paves the way for a future varsity program for the men."

Men's lacrosse would bring an entirely different game to the table. Contact is allowed and sticks feature a pocket to help cradle the ball during contact. With contact, players patrolling different zones and on-the-fly substitutions, men's lacrosse is similar, in ways, to ice hockey.

The Oregon men play in the Pacific Northwest Collegiate Lacrosse League, which is a member of the United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association. With more than 170 teams, varsity and club, the USILA provides a high level of competition.

"(The USILA) is really well organized," junior attack Jon Opet said. "Kids can play and still focus on academics."

With lacrosse being a mysterious sport to many on the West Coast, Opet said college coaches from the East Coast — where lacrosse is a monster sport — choose not to recruit out west. He said the USILA gives those players a chance to show their skills.

"(The USILA) is great athletes and great



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Goalkeeper Nate Cordova (right) tries to stop Jon Opet's behind-the-head shot at the turf field Monday.

Club Sports Tuesday

lacrosse players," Opet said. "It's taken pretty seriously."

The Ducks are off to a 5-2 start this season, including a win over No. 19 Cal Poly on Friday. Oregon's 3-1 conference record is good

for third place, a game behind Simon Fraser and Pacific Lutheran.

"(Simon Fraser) has been kicking ass in our league for about six years," Opet said. "They are the standard of lacrosse in the Northwest."

Opet, who had two assists against Cal Poly, is considered a team leader.

"Jonny's a real good player," O'Neill said. "A lot of the time he's our go-to guy. He has a really good idea of how the game works."

Along with Opet, who is tied for third on the team in scoring, the Ducks feature

Turn to **Lacrosse**, page 12

WSU deals Washington blow to Pac-10 chances

Marcus Moore comes back from injury to bury the Huskies and complicate the Pac-10 picture before the conference tourney

Men's Pac-10 notes

Peter Hockaday

Sports Editor

Talk about drama. The bottom of the Pacific-10 Conference standings is a group of high schoolers.

They just keep stabbing each other in the back.

That's what happened this weekend, as Washington State destroyed Washington in a key game for the Huskies. Cougar star Marcus Moore, supposedly out for the season after ankle surgery Jan. 24, came back and scored a game-high 23 points in Washington State's 98-76 win in Pullman.

Washington State's coaches learned Moore was available to play on Friday night. Moore was listed as "injured" in the game's program, and his return caught everyone in the arena, especially the Huskies, by surprise.

"Give (Moore) credit," Washington head coach Lorenzo Romar told the Seattle Times after the game. "It shows what kind of player he is, to sit out and have a dynamic game like he had."

The win leaves the Cougars to wonder what could have been for this sea-

son. If Washington State wins both games against UCLA and USC this weekend, the Cougars will fall one game short of the Pac-10 Tournament, which takes the top eight teams from the conference.

Meanwhile, the loss sends the Huskies reeling as they head into the Los Angeles weekend. And whoa nellie, the scenarios are complicated. We'll put it in terms of cleaning the floor. If Washington sweeps this weekend, the Huskies are in the tournament. Get swept, and they're out. Split, and there are eight different scenarios, all conditional on Washington State's performance and even the result of the Stanford-California game (don't ask). Four of those scenarios put Washington in the tournament while four put UCLA in.

The same mantra applies to UCLA. Sweep and get in, get swept and stay home, or split and enter into a world of mind-boggling scenarios.

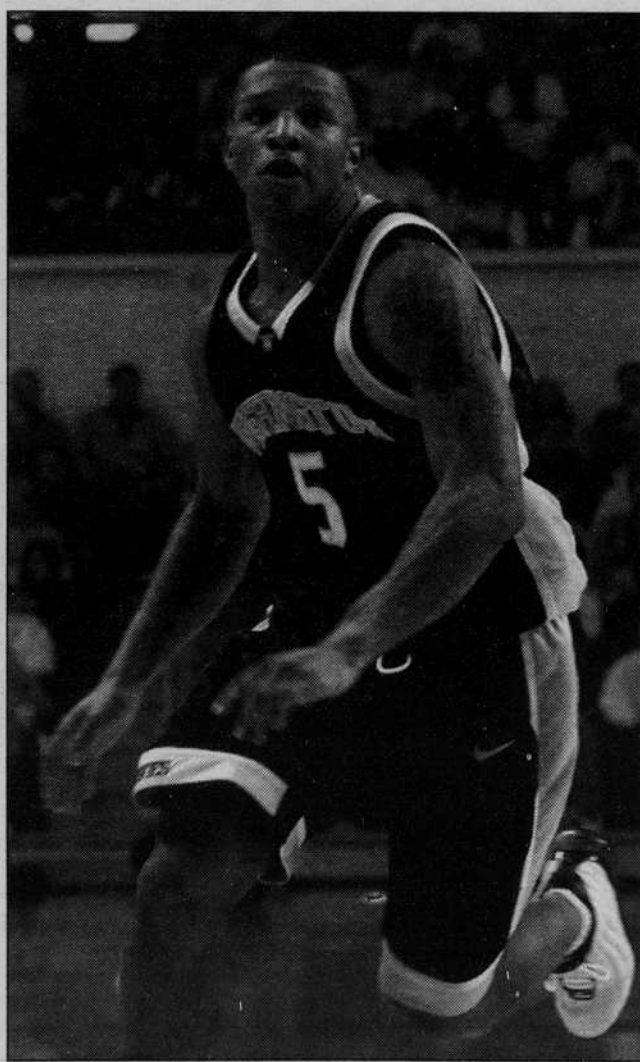
All of this, of course, makes for an exciting final weekend in the normally-dull Pac-10 basement.

Biggest game

They call the football version of the Stanford-Cal rivalry "The Big Game." But Saturday's basketball version is, well, bigger.

When the No. 17 Cardinal and No. 22 Golden Bears clash in Palo Alto's Maples Pavilion on Saturday, the winner

Turn to **Men's**, page 10



Danielle Hickey Emerald

Will Conroy and the Huskies need to sweep this weekend to assure a spot in the Pac-10 Tournament, but a split could get them in.