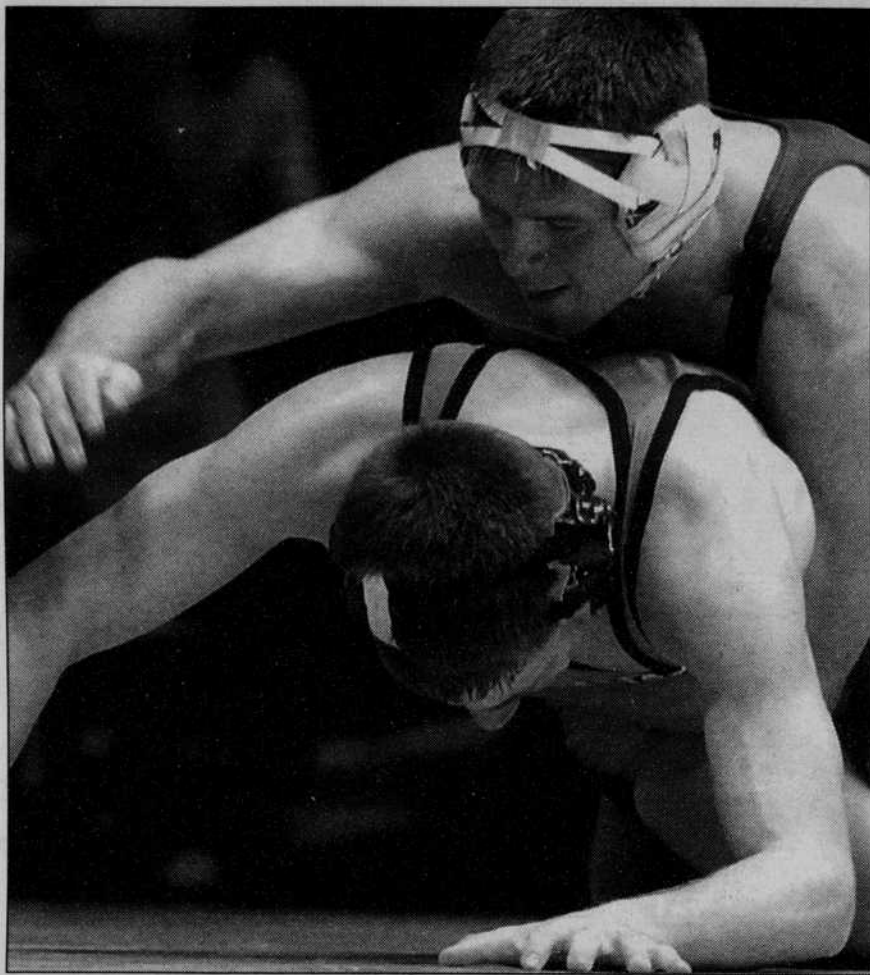


Duck wrestlers head to NCAA Tournament



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Casey Hunt (top) is one of three Ducks who will head to the NCAA Championships next week.

Oregon sends three wrestlers to the NCAA Tournament after finishing fifth in the Pac-10

Wrestling

Mindi Rice

Freelance Sports Reporter

Three Ducks will represent Oregon wrestling in Kansas City, Mo., this week as a senior, a redshirt junior and a sophomore each compete in the NCAA Championships for the second time in their careers.

"All three of our guys are capable of placing," head coach Chuck Kearney said. "They've met the competition and beaten some of the guys they will need to beat."

Senior Casey Hunt will compete in his second-consecutive national tournament after finishing third in the 141 weight class at the Pacific-10 Conference Tournament.

"Casey's coming in with an 'everything to gain' attitude," Kearney said. "He's the kind of guy that can be real dangerous in a national tournament."

Hunt finished the season with a 14-9 overall record, including three wins by major decision and three victories by pinning his opponent.

Hunt won his first match in the Pac-10 tournament but lost a 3-1 decision to the eventual conference champion.

Hunt also won his first match of the consolation bracket to send him into the match for third place. Battling Cal State-Fullerton's Juan Mora, Hunt won a 13-10 decision to take third place and earn an uncontested berth in the national tournament.

Jason Harless, a redshirt junior, also makes his second appearance in the NCAA Championships after finishing fifth in the Pac-10 at 133. Harless earned one of two wild-card berths into the na-

tional tournament.

Harless is still battling back from a knee injury he suffered during the dual meet season. During the regular season, Harless finished with a 15-11 record, earning the No. 1 seed coming into the Pac-10 Tournament.

Harless won his first match by major decision, but lost to Arizona State's Mike Simpson in a 4-0 decision. Simpson went on to win the Pac-10 title at 133.

In the consolation bracket, Harless lost his first match and faced Stanford's Brad Metzler for fifth place. Harless won the match by tiebreaker, and then was voted to one of two NCAA wild-card berths by the coaches. He also earned a wild-card last year and finished the NCAA Tournament with a 1-2 record.

Sophomore Shane Webster, No. 11 in the nation at 174, will make the NCAAs as the No. 2 wrestler from the Pac-10.

Webster finished the regular season with a 26-4 record, his only losses during the season and in the Pac-10 Tournament coming at the hands of ranked opponents.

During the Pac-10 Tournament, Webster dominated two opponents with major decisions before losing a 3-1 decision to Arizona State's Curtis Owen in the 174 title match.

Last season, Webster finished third in the Pac-10 then went 1-2 at the NCAA Tournament.

During the dual season, Oregon competed against No. 1 Oklahoma State, Oklahoma and Nebraska, three national powerhouses who all feature top wrestlers in the NCAA Tournament.

The three wrestlers begin competition on Thursday in the first rounds of the national tournament. This is the second time in 16 seasons that the Ducks have had as few as three NCAA qualifiers.

Mindi Rice is a freelance writer for the Emerald.

No break for some UO Club athletes

Several Duck teams will be in action during spring break

Jon Roetman

Freelance Sports Reporter

Spring break will not be full of relaxation for several club sports teams.

Crew, cycling and women's water polo will all be keeping busy while most of the student body is taking a breather.

Crew will depart for San Diego on Friday for spring training. The Ducks will take part in two-a-day practices from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Mission Bay.

"I can't wait," student coordinator Sarah Higginbotham said. "We get to go down where the sun is shining. It's absolutely beautiful."

The Ducks will travel by van, towing their eight and four-person shells. After a one-night-stop in the Bay Area, the Ducks will

"I can't wait. We get to go down where the sun is shining. It's absolutely beautiful."

Sarah Higginbotham
student coordinator

head to the Marine Corps Recruitment Depot, where they will stay for the remainder of the trip. There is a possibility the Ducks will scrimmage against California-San Diego.

Right after crew heads for the Golden State, club cycling will start the Northwest Collegiate Cycling Conference season Saturday in Corvallis with the Oregon State Omnium.

"(An omnium) is kind of like NASCAR for bikes," student coordinator Brad Ritter said.

The following weekend, the Ducks will host the Oregon Omnium.

Club Sports

The same weekend, the women's club water polo team will participate in a tournament at Cal Poly.

"It's going to be a good experience," head coach Jeff Lee said. "We'll go against some good teams."

The tournament will be for experience only as the Ducks work toward the national tournament. They finished first in Northwest Regional Seeding Tournament last weekend. The Ducks defeated rival Washington 11-2 and had only seven goals scored on them during the entire tournament.

"Our defense was key," Lee said.

The men's club volleyball team won't be doing anything over the break, but put on an impressive show last weekend by winning the first tournament it ever hosted.

The Ducks won the Northwest Collegiate Classic, which featured Washington, Washington State, Western Washington, Oregon State, Lane Community College and Oregon. The Ducks defeated the LCC Titans in the championship game 25-17 and 25-19.

"It was definitely a learning experience," student coordinator Levi McClain said. "We were pretty impressed with how it went."

The Ducks have a goal of hosting next year's regional tournament at McArthur Court. They also placed third in a tournament at Washington State and second in a tournament in Walla Walla, Wash.

Jon Roetman is a freelance writer for the Emerald.

Men's

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play in the NCAA Tournament."

The Ducks, who beat Arizona State and UCLA by one point each to get to the title game, opened Saturday's contest with eight straight points and led 14-4 at the 15:46 mark. But USC responded with a 15-0 run to make the game close.

"All of (the tournament games) were battles, this one was no different," Johnson said. "We wanted to leave everything on the court, and that's what we did."

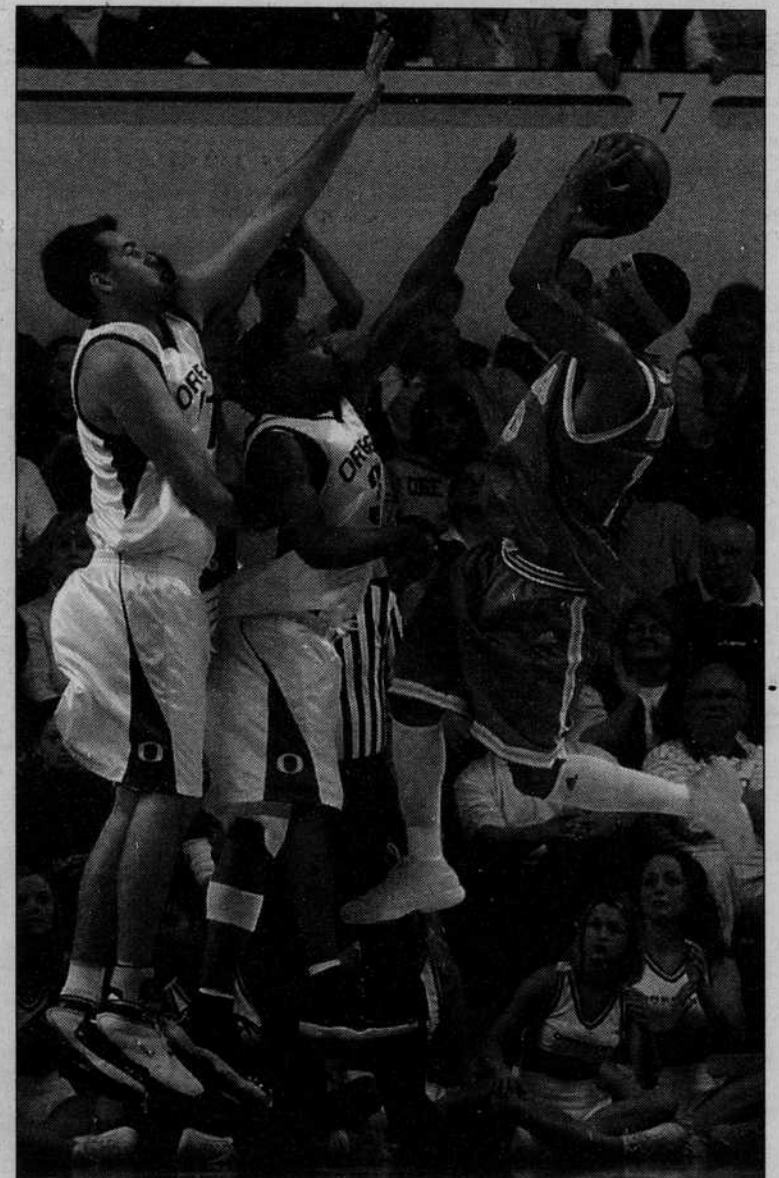
The teams remained deadlocked until Oregon opened the second half with a 10-2 run to take a 47-37 lead with 17:01 left in the game. The Ducks pushed the lead to as many as 15 points with 8:37 left, but USC employed a full-court press that flustered Oregon's normally sure-handed guards. The tactic was reminiscent of what Oregon did to UCLA on Friday, as the Trojans forced the Ducks into turnovers and bad shots. USC capitalized, and fought its way to within four points, at 70-66. But the Ducks dominated the final two and a half minutes, the Trojans missed several shots, and Oregon came out with the win.

"We knew we were going to get it done," Ridnour said. "They did make a run at us and we got tired, but we were able to get some key stops."

After three games in three nights, the Ducks were all tired for Saturday's game.

"My legs felt like weights at the beginning of the second half," Johnson said. "I was like, 'Legs, don't do this to me now. We got 20 minutes to go.'"

Oregon got to the title game with late-game heroics Thursday and Friday. Against eighth-seeded



Adam Amato Emerald

Ian Crosswhite (left) and Andre Joseph (middle) block UCLA's Ryan Walcott.

UCLA on Friday, Jackson hit a three-pointer with 17 seconds left to propel the Ducks to a 75-74 win. In Thursday's game against Arizona State, Ridnour hit a running lay-up with 3.3 seconds left

to lift Oregon to the 83-82 win.

The title was the first for the Ducks.

Contact the sports editor at peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com.

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throw, finishing 15th. Kriz matched his pre-meet seeding of

15th with a toss of 64-9 1/4, which was his third-best mark ever.

Kriz couldn't be disappointed after having another breakthrough season. He outdistanced his pre-season best of 61-7 1/2. The fifth-

year senior, along with the other four competitors, now looks forward to the outdoor season.

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