

Peering into the Ducks' crystal ball for 2003-04

As Becky Holliday, Niki McEwen and Santiago Lorenzo prepare for the upcoming NCAA Championships in Sacramento, Calif., you start to get a sense of the situation Oregon athletics is facing next year.

Maybe a little like this year, maybe not, most of the Ducks enter the 2003-04 year with a bit of uncertainty. Football, soccer and volleyball all had defections — to the draft, graduation and other schools — that could weigh heavily on their results next season.



Hank Hager
Behind the dish

Some names to keep an eye on: Kellen Clemens and Chris Vincent for football, Nicole Garbin (no surprise there) in soccer, and Lauren Westendorf in volleyball. However, that last name could be one of any five returning players to the volleyball team, showing that yes, volleyball may be in store for another type of year that has plagued them since the early 1990s.

Clemens is on the fast track to taking the starting quarterback spot, showing in the team's annual spring game what he's made of. Vincent did the same, although he is going to have to battle three others.

Garbin and Westendorf should show the same kind of play they exhibited this season. The former is a goal-scoring machine. The latter, Westendorf, inherits the captaincy from the Ducks next season — almost by default — but should run with it.

Time to shift to winter. OK, so Luke Ridnour has taken the high road to the NBA, but Luke Jackson, Ian Crosswhite and the rest of the team should still make their mark in the NCAA Tournament.

Chelsea Wagner and Corrie Mizusawa make their marks for the women's hoops program next season, getting on the court for the first time since transferring. Both are at guard spots, and with only Brandi

Davis and Kayla Steen having any kind of experience running the offense, both could see significant playing time.

For wrestling, Shane Webster brings back his smack downs to McArthur Court next year. The wrestling program is going strong, as usual, and should bring the same kind of excitement.

OK, here we go to sun and fun in the spring. Eric Mitchum and Jordan Kent have already shown they can fly by their opponents in their events, making next year's men's track and field program pretty formidable. So, Lorenzo won't be there. But Mike McGrath from Portland will be, and so could Tommy Skipper, the Sandy High School star who has yet to sign an NCAA letter of intent.

It'll be the time for Kirsten Riley to shine in the pole vault for the revamped women's program. The current junior will step out of Holliday and McEwen's shadows. She's not quite at their level yet, but the way she has been progressing, it wouldn't be surprising to see her get there quickly.

Side note: It will be interesting to see how the women's program does under head coach Martin Smith. It will be tough for the mentor to keep them on the up and up, especially if javelin throwers Elisa Crumley and Roslyn Lundeen take off.

Finally, we have the amazing softball team of 2003. First off, see what head coach Kathy Arendsen put in their water. Whatever it was, it sure as hell worked.

As for 2004, the only name you need to know (right now) is Amy Harris. The star pitcher moved the Ducks to new heights this year, and can I hear it, Pac-10 Pitcher of the Year next season?

Well, I'm done for the year. Hope you've liked reading what I've shared with you in 2002-03. But don't despair. I'll be back next year, bringing more cheer (and not) to the Oregon programs.

Contact the sports reporter at hankhager@dailyemerald.com. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

Sports briefs

Football players lift competition

In Saturday's 12th annual Oregon Weightlifting Classic, four members of the Oregon football team joined 21 members of the USA Weightlifting Federation.

The competition was divided into weight classes. Each competitor had three attempts at two different lifts — the snatch and the clean and jerk.

In the 85 kg division, Jared Siegel finished second with a snatch of 87.5 kg and a clean and jerk of 127.5 for a total of 215.

Three Ducks participated in the 105 division. Luke Rowley placed first with a combined effort of 257.5 — 110 in the snatch and 147.5 in the clean and jerk.

Jason Fife finished second with a snatch of 115 and a clean and jerk of 135, for a total of 250.

Rounding out the Ducks, Erik Cheney placed fourth with a total of 245.

Of the 21 weightlifters who competed, eight of them were in the female division.

The annual competition features a team of Ducks every season.

— Mindi Rice

Mariners take two from Mets

NEW YORK — Ernie Banks used to say, "Let's play two." He apparently didn't envision watching the 2003 Mets play a doubleheader.

The feeble Mets were swept in their third straight home doubleheader this season — and their second in four days — in getting pummeled, 13-1 and 7-0, by the AL-leading Mariners Sunday at Shea.

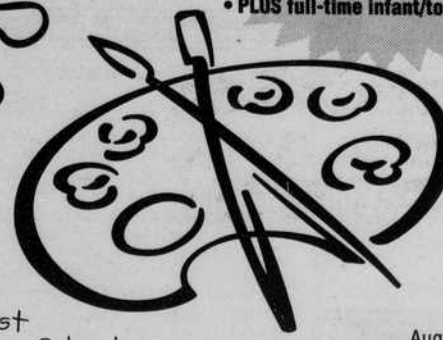
That should be enough to make their fans pray for no more rain to flood the area for the rest of the season.

"You lose two doubleheaders in a row, it's definitely tough. It definitely brings you down," outfielder Jeromy Burnitz said. "The way we're going, we'll probably leave here and the weather will be perfect once we leave."

The Mets begin their interleague tour Tuesday with Alex Rodriguez and the homer-happy Rangers, with a weekend stop in Anaheim against the defending World Series champions to follow. With three more games in Florida next week, Howe acknowledged, "It's going to be a long road trip."

— Peter Botte, *New York Daily News* (KRT)

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