

# Willamette Invitational awaits Oregon women

The Ducks compete for the second time in a week and seek consistency

**Scott Archer**  
Freelance Reporter

Oregon is back on the trails again Saturday, exactly one week after the team competed in the Sundodger Invitational in Seattle.

Oregon again heads north on Interstate 5, this time to compete in the Willamette Invitational in Salem at Bush Park.

The Ducks look to continue their early season success. Senior Magdalena Sandoval, who finished second at the Sundodger Invitational, is set to continue after her quality start.

Overall, the team would like more solid contributions from younger runners.

"We need to improve on depth," first-year head coach Marnie Mason said. "The Willamette race will give us a chance to work on that. It's an adjustment. It's a new program and my athletes now work with a new coach."

A feeling-out process must be expected. Mason has only two college coaching meets under her belt. The former high school harrier coach took over halfway through the summer, meaning adjustments will have to be made on the fly.

And although last Saturday's meet went well for Sandoval, some things still need to be improved on.

"We need to work out some kinks and get back in the feel of the more pressure situations," Sandoval said.

Despite having two individuals finish in the top five, the Ducks only finished fourth last week, raising some concerns about where the remaining

points will come from. Teams are scored according to how the team finishes. Runners are scored on their finish — not counting the noncollegiate runners — and are assigned a point value for their finish in the race. The best score possible is a 15, and only the top five times count toward the score.

Oregon will be without one of its star runners from last season; Laura Harmon will redshirt the season.

Eri Macdonald helped fill the void left by Harmon by finishing fifth in the Sundodger Invitational. Harmon, however, did compete last weekend, but was counted as an unattached. Her score didn't count for or against the Ducks.

Harmon finished ninth overall. Tournament officials are expecting approximately 1,300 runners as teams from all over the West and Canada are expected to compete. The day's activities include four separate races: two for women and two for men.

On the women's side of the meet, tournament officials have clumped together Division-I teams, open and club teams, and many junior college squads.

Several notable schools competing include Marquette, Portland State, Hawaii and Iowa.

The Ducks will be halfway through their season after Saturday's race. Oregon will take nearly a month off while preparing for the Pacific-10 Conference Championship in Pullman, Wash., that will take place on Nov. 1.

Oregon, depending on how the team runs, will take part in the NCAA Western Regional Championships in Portland on Nov. 15. That will be followed by the NCAA Cross Country Championships in Cedar Falls, Iowa on Nov. 24.

The 5,000-meter race in Salem is set for 11:30 a.m. on Saturday.

Scott Archer is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.



Sophomore Eleanor Gordon and the rest of the Ducks travel to Salem on Saturday for the Willamette Invitational.

Lauren Wimer Photographer

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