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Andrews leads UO golf early

A sluggish fall season has the men looking toward the future; the women look to repeat their fast start in the spring

By Brian Smith
Freelance Reporter

The 2003-04 fall golf season saw the Oregon golf teams going in opposite directions.

Fielding relatively young squads, the women started the season with their first team title since the 2000 Lady Aztec Invitational. In contrast, the men struggled to a 10th-place finish at the Topy Cup in Tanagura, Japan.

"It was important that we got off to a strong start," Oregon women's head coach Shannon Rouillard said. "I told the girls that if we play well, we would have a chance to win the tournament."

They responded, jumping out to grab the opening-day lead of the Lady Vandal Invitational. They held on to win, mainly behind the strong play of the team but in particular because of sophomore Erin Andrews. Andrews grabbed her first collegiate victory and the first individual title for an Oregon

golfer since Jerilyn White won the 2001 Peg Barnard California Collegiate.

Andrews, who had been ranked as high as 33rd this season, continued to impress throughout the fall. She followed up her win with finishes of 12th at the Edean Ihlanfeldt Invitational, 20th at the Stanford/Pepsi Collegiate — which included a NCAA championship-caliber field — and a 21st-place finish at the Hawaii Fall Golf Classic.

The Ducks took the momentum they created and carried it through the four fall tournaments, capturing three more top-ten finishes along the way. The Ducks received outstanding play from the entire team, including freshman Kimberly McCready, who Rouillard said "has had tremendous impact on our team and has really elevated her game from high school."

The Ducks are looking to shore up some of their fundamentals during the winter before focusing on reaching their first NCAA championship berth since 2000.

The Oregon men, coming off of their surprising entry in last year's NCAA championships, looked to start strong. A 10th-place finish at the Topy Cup in Japan, along with finishes of ninth or worse in three of the final four tournaments, never gave the Ducks the momentum they were looking for.

"We did not have the finishes that we

are happy or satisfied with," Oregon men's head coach Steve Nosler said. "Our goal each and every year is to make it into post-season play and to make each tournament a learning experience."

A learning experience is the biggest positive that can be taken away by a team that includes six freshman and four sophomores.

"The group as a whole played hard," Nosler said. "Each member of the team is playing a lot, which is good in the long run because it means more experience for the individual."

Seniors Jimmy White and Mike Sica provided the most consistent play of the fall. White played the best golf, finishing in the top-20 in two of the five events he played in. His fourth-place finish at the Northwest Collegiate Classic included a final-round 63, which set the school record for the lowest single-round score in Oregon history.

White's 63 coincided with the team's only top-five finish of the fall.

The Ducks will come back in the spring looking to find a way to gain some momentum for a difficult post-season run. The women return to play Feb. 27 at the Pinehurst Challenge in Pinehurst, N.C., while the men open at the Ping Arizona Intercollegiate in Tucson, Ariz., on Feb. 2.

Brian Smith is a freelance sports writer for the Emerald.

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BASKETBALL

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two classes are combined together."

Leunen was named Oregon's 4A player of the year last season and was listed as the 28th-best forward in the nation by RivalsHoops.com.

"I felt like Maarty and I got along really well," Jackson said in regards to his relationship with the Oregon native. "Ever since he came down, I felt like he was in the same position I was as far as what schools he wanted to go to and

what kind of a player he is. I tried to just explain to him as best I could that this would be a good fit for him and he'd probably be happiest here."

Oguchi averaged 24.3 points per game last season for George W. Bush High School. The 6-foot-5 guard was ranked as the 23rd-best shooting guard in the nation by The Insiders.

"Chamberlain gives us an opportunity to have the best shooter out of Texas," Kent said, describing him as a cross between Davis and former Duck Fred Jones. "He is a deadly deep range three-point shooter."

Taylor averaged 28.6 points per game last season at Harvard-Westlake High School. During his junior year, he broke the school's single season scoring record with 1,003 points. The record was formerly held by Jason Collins, who attended Stanford.

"In our opinion, he is the best perimeter shooter on the West Coast," Kent said. "He really will surprise a lot of people with the fact that not only is he a shooter but a big-time finisher."

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SOCCER

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their roles within the team," Steffen said. "They all gave us moments of leadership, and that's one thing that isn't reflected in a stat line. Our biggest concern is coming up with quality leadership from the returning players."

Garbin and redshirt freshman Andrea

Valadez will be returning next year as Oregon's leading scorers. They both had seven. Oregon isn't ready for it to be over.

"Our players want to take a week off and start another season," Steffen said. "They know where they can go. They've had a taste of it, and now they want more."

Oregon accomplished more than most expected this season. Yet, no statistic or box score can provide proof of

how the Ducks feel after one of the best seasons in the program's history.

"It was a great year for us, it was a really great year," Lainez said. "Even though we didn't win on Sunday or on Friday, reflecting back on it, we accomplished so much more than not being able to go to the tournament."

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VOLLEYBALL

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may not be her most valuable contribution to the team. Mason brings a passionate and fiery attitude to the court that she doesn't attempt to hide. She attributes her intense style of play to old high school and club teammate Lindsey Lee. As a 5-foot-5 middle blocker, Lee taught Mason to play with emotion no matter what the score was.

Mason has taken Lee's words to heart. After putting away a kill, Mason routinely shows her "island fever" by

yelling across the net.

"I like to intimidate (my opponents)," Mason said. "Make them think twice before sending the ball my way and just kind of get in their heads and shut them down."

"One of my big things is I need to fire my teammates up and bring intensity out."

At times, Mason's intensity has been a little too much for referees to swallow. Mason has been issued several yellow cards during the season, which is a warning for unsportsmanlike conduct. Despite the warnings,

Ferreira said Mason's intensity has worn off on the rest of the program and she shouldn't tone it down.

"She has a no-fear mentality, and she just goes for it," Ferreira said. "I'm never going to handcuff that emotion. It's a cultural thing, and it can be very infectious. I think her teammates feed off it."

Off the court, Mason becomes a self-proclaimed goofball who is usually engulfed with laughter. Mason and roommate Heather Madison combine to make quite the comic duo.

Monday "night for example, we put on music in our room, and we danced like grandmas," Madison said. "I don't know how to explain (Mason) other than she's a riot."

During her limited free time, Mason can often be found hanging out with her freshmen teammates in HP Barnhart Hall, or relaxing at teammate Kim McNally's house where Mason said McNally "cooks for me and takes care of me."

Entering tonight's match against Arizona, the Ducks are still looking for their first conference win of the season. Despite this, Mason's enthusiasm has helped the team continue to stay upbeat.

"Sarah's awesome," assistant coach Rhonda Rust said. "She plays with her heart and soul every day. It's a joy to watch her and a joy to coach her. She's been very special to the entire team, and we enjoy her enthusiasm."

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