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Home swing at Mac Court brings UO new fortunes

Oregon hopes its return to McArthur Court this weekend will bring better results than in past weeks

By Scott Archer
Freelance Reporter

The Oregon wrestling team will finally return to McArthur Court this weekend.

DUCK WRESTLING

Oregon welcomes Fresno State and Cal State-Bakersfield to Eugene. Cal State-Bakersfield will be at Mac Court Friday in a 7 p.m. match. Fresno State follows with a 5 p.m. match Sunday.

It's been a long trip for the Ducks, who haven't wrestled in front of friends and family since a match against No. 1 Oklahoma State on Dec. 14.

The road in between hasn't been so kind to the Ducks, but Oregon hopes to turn its fortunes around.

The advantage of hosting a match

is the mere fact that there is no traveling involved.

"The big thing about wrestling at Mac is that it gives us one more day of preparation because we aren't having to travel," head coach Chuck Kearney said. "We are excited about wrestling in front of family and friends. It always gives you a boost with the atmosphere. (The wrestlers) are looking forward to it; (the coaches) are looking forward to it."

Must win

One of the biggest clichés in sports is a "must win."

Oregon is coming home from a trip where the Ducks won just one of their matches. That was against Air Force in a tournament on Jan. 9.

In wrestling, must-win situations do not happen often.

"Well, the (Pacific-10 Conference tournament) and the National Tournament are must wins," Kearney said.

Other than that, Oregon isn't faced with too many must-win situations that will make-or-break its season.

While this season's team is 1-7, and 0-3 in conference play, the record shouldn't take anyone by surprise.

Kearney made a conscious decision at the beginning of the season that several key contributors would red-shirt the season, setting up a quality team for next year.

Part of Kearney's challenge this year is getting his wrestlers to not get too down on themselves.

"The first thing they need to realize is that they are not inventing this problem," Kearney said. "Everybody that has ever wrestled in their careers has gone through what they're going through right now."

"It's not them, it's just where they are at, at this point. In this situation we're at right now, it is tough. It's tough to sustain it and it's tough to do the hard work and do the things you have to do to be successful when you are struggling with results."

Nevertheless, Kearney and the squad still have expectations for themselves, something they hope will come to fruition this weekend.

"We want to win this weekend," Kearney said. "Winning makes things exciting."

Scott Archer is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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