

# Cougars start off weekend

The Oregon men's tennis team faces Brigham Young to start off a tough three matches in four days

By Alex Tam  
Freelance Reporter

The Oregon men are looking ahead to a grueling dual-season schedule when they take on three opponents in the next four days.

The Ducks (1-0) will play No. 61 Brigham Young (1-1) in the Student Tennis Center today at 5 p.m.

Oregon, currently ranked one spot ahead of Brigham Young at No. 60, is coming off a season-opening win against Santa Clara, 5-2. After putting together four singles wins and sweeping all three doubles matches, led by sophomore Thomas Bieri and junior Manuel Kost, head coach

Chris Russell said his young team needs to continue improving its play. "It is a good start (to the season)," Russell said. "Our goal is get better. We need to play a little more fearlessly and not let the emotions get in the way of our guys' game styles."

The historically strong Brigham Young men's tennis program is led by No. 82-ranked Erik Nyman. The Cougars have won nine Mountain West Conference championships, including five singles and four doubles champions.

However, Oregon has had the upper hand the past two years, winning both of their head-to-head matches. In Provo, Utah, last year, the Ducks won the dual match, 5-2, behind the singles play of junior Sven Swinnen, and they received strong support from Bieri and Kost. In 2002, Oregon slipped by in a 4-3 upset.

The Cougars' first-year head coach Brad Pearce said they are ready for their early season matches after coming off an easy 7-0 victory over Utah State and a tough 5-2 loss to Denver.

"I am very excited about this week," Pearce said. "I really feel like our guys are ready to take on (Oregon). They gained a lot of confidence from last week's match. This will be a good trip for us."

The Oregon men will continue action throughout the weekend, hosting the Louisiana-Lafayette Ragin' Cajuns (0-1) of the Sun Belt Conference at 11 a.m. Saturday and the Pacific Tigers, from the Big West Conference, at 11 a.m. Sunday.

Russell said this week will be a true test for his team to see how they will react to playing three matches in four days against up-and-coming men's tennis programs.

"This will be a challenging and revealing three matches for us," he said. "All three are programs that are on the rise, but we like to think that we are as well. The team that has the most hunger this weekend should prevail."

Alex Tam is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

# UO softball prepping for start of season

Thirteenth-ranked Oregon will open its softball season Feb. 6 with a rematch against No. 10 Georgia

By Mindi Rice  
Senior Sports Reporter

The No. 13 Ducks fielded questions Wednesday as part of media day, just after fielding balls as the squad took on members of the local media in a six-inning game.

## DUCK SOFTBALL

It was the first time since two exhibition games in September that the Ducks have played a contest other than an intrasquad game. Next up, Oregon opens at the Florida International Tournament in Miami on Feb. 6 with four games during the weekend.

"We're a young team right now," catcher Jenn Poore said. "I think it's kind of good to be young. Fresh arms, fresh everything — they're really excited to be playing."

The Ducks lost five starters from a squad that was picked to finish eighth of eight teams in the Pacific-10 Conference last season. That same team finished the season in May ranked No. 11, tied for third in the Pac-10 and as the runner-up in

its NCAA Regional tournament.

"They've worked so hard," head coach Kathy Arendsen said. "This is a real enjoyable group to work with. A lot of enthusiasm, a lot of talent. We're young so there's a lot of energy too. There's some real positives going on."

The Ducks' strongest area this season is the pitching staff. Oregon lost third-team All-American Andrea Vidlund and her nation-leading 11 saves to graduation, but the Ducks return starters Anissa Meashintubby, Lindsey Kontra and Amy Harris.

"I think our depth is as good as anybody's in the country, maybe the best," Arendsen said. "Right now, we don't have Amy healthy yet, but when she comes back, holy cow, what a staff."

Harris suffered a wrist injury to her pitching hand in September, Arendsen said. The team isn't rushing the healing process, and the right-hander will likely be back at full strength in three to four weeks, Arendsen added. The Ducks open the February tournament against No. 10 Georgia, a team they beat last season when the Bulldogs were ranked No. 12 and Oregon was unranked.

"We're ready to get out of here," sophomore Beth Boskovich said. "All we've been talking about is Miami this and Miami that. We're excited to play Georgia again."

Contact the senior sports reporter at mindirice@dailyemerald.com.

## POINT

continued from page 13 with the team.

"It will then be just a matter of how well his body responds as to when he can get back to us," Kent said.

It is possible that Brooks could return Feb. 19 against Arizona at McArthur Court. That would put him on target to return six weeks after the injury, matching the 6-to-8 week timetable the Ducks originally set for him.

The Ducks will enjoy Brooks' ability to make the sharp pass, something he was getting accustomed to doing as Oregon started off its season.

In nine games before the injury —

all starts — Brooks averaged 23.9 minutes, 6.7 points and a shade under three assists a game. Those figures were punctuated in the game before the injury, a 92-74 win for the Ducks over Southern California in Los Angeles.

In that game, he scored 13 points and dished out four assists.

Until he returns, though, those figures will stay frozen.

In the meantime, Davis and Lincoln will handle the point guard duties. Third place is at stake when the Ducks host California tonight at McArthur Court.

"I think it means a lot (third place) for us with the fact that we lost our point guard and we've been able to survive the first half of the

conference," Kent said. "I think that would say a lot about this basketball team, that we finish in third place. Obviously with two great games this weekend, we have the opportunity to do that."

"(Lincoln and Davis) have not run it with the effectiveness Aaron Brooks would have, but I think they've done a commendable job there. We've kind of patchworked that position a little bit, and that again is a great compliment for this team, that we can get through this weekend without that point guard position where it needs to be."

Contact the sports editor at hankhager@dailyemerald.com.

## WOMEN

continued from page 13 winning track."

Leading the Ducks offensively is center Andrea Bills. The junior is scoring an average of 12.1 points per game and leads Oregon with 8.4 rebounds on average.

"We're just going to keep focusing on what we've always focused on," forward Eleanor Haring said. "Mainly rebounding and defense. It's the same focus — keep going hard and keep pushing."

The focus has paid off for the Ducks in their preseason and against Oregon State and Washington State. In its last 10 games, Oregon is 2-8

with the conference victories the only bright spots on its schedule.

A scare regarding starting forward Kedzie Gunderson's lateral meniscus in her left knee was a false alarm. An MRI on her left knee came back negative. Gunderson went down 35 seconds into Saturday's game and returned to the bench for the second half but did not play.

Sophomore Chelsea Wagner partially tore the lateral meniscus in her left knee in the Jan. 15 game at Washington. Wagner's MRI six days later confirmed the tear, and the guard now plays with a brace on her left knee.

Oregon opens the road trip with a game against the Bruins. In this season's first match between the


two teams, the Ducks had a 14-point lead in the second half before UCLA implemented a full-court press that led to a 20-4 run for the Bruins. The Jan. 4 game ended in a 63-57 victory for UCLA.

The Ducks opened Pac-10 home play against the Trojans on Jan. 2 with a 69-55 loss. Oregon committed 24 turnovers in the game and USC led 21-6 after the first nine minutes.

"We had chances to beat them here," Mizusawa said. "So going on the road is going to be tough for us, but I think we're ready to go. Especially with a great week of practice so far."

Contact the senior sports reporter at mindirice@dailyemerald.com.

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