

Duck softball can learn lessons in offseason

It was another terrific ride for the Oregon women's softball team this season.

Through the ups (a 14-game win streak) and the downs (a three-game shutout weekend in Arizona), the women of the team became the talk of the town for the second consecutive season.

However, now that the season is over — one win away from the Women's College World Series that began Thursday in Oklahoma — there are a few lessons and reminders that you, the Oregon softball team, must keep in mind before the 2005 season kicks off next winter, and they are things that can be applied off the field as well.

• Lesson one: Play like winners. It doesn't matter if you win, lose or get taken to 13 innings by the last-place team from the Mid-Continent Conference; Oregon softball is now on the list

of teams to beat.

Last season, it was OK to swing with the ups and downs. The program was still new to winning after the 24-30 season in 2002. This season, it was less OK, but still excusable. In 2005, after 2003's 37-19 season and 2004's 42-21 season, you ladies should realize: You're expected to win. Use Arizona as your role model if you will. When the Wildcats lose, they get mad. And you can bet they come back twice as hard the next game.

• Lesson two: Start well, end well. Yes, the beginning of the season is time to work out the kinks and rust, but the end of the season is not the time for a 1-6 slump in the Pacific-10 Conference.

It's that consistency issue that kept surfacing during the season, not just consistency during a game, or on a certain aspect, but for a season. It's difficult, but it's possible.



Mindi Rice

The girl and the game

• Lesson three: Know that your time will come. Everyone but Jenn Poore, Anissa Meashintubby, Julie Jaime and Heather Munson will return next year. Add four recruits who have signed — Elmira's Alicia Cook, Tigard's Kristi Jorgensen, Tualatin's Lovena Chaput and Joanna Gail of Poway, Calif. — and that's a mixture with pure potential written all over it.

Challenge each other for starting

positions. Maybe put Beth Boskovich at first base, Amie Morris at catcher and, who knows, maybe Amy Harris will return to the ace role next season? It could be anyone, anywhere, and that will make the team stronger. Even after starting roles have been won for the beginning of the season, keep pushing each other.

• Reminder one: Keep doing what you're doing. Keep sharing the hero role, being open and friendly with the media, amazing fans, encouraging each other, knowing how to calm each other down or pick each other up and working hard. These things that you already do unconsciously as a team are what make you such an easy team to enjoy covering. Whoever is the softball beat writer next year is in for a treat with this squad.

There are so many stories within this team that it is impossible to tell them

all — like the three roommates raising puppies together, the players spending part of July participating in the Canada Cup, the return of Oregon recruits to the Duck squad, the head coach who is already of member of seven hall of fames and will be inducted into an eighth this November — there aren't nearly enough notes packages, features or columns in a season.

• Reminder two: Have fun. Forget the media, forget the opponents, forget the rushed days of traveling — enjoy yourselves and the rest will fall into place.

With all of these lessons and reminders in mind, the softball team should have another successful season around the corner with head coach Kathy Arendsen at the helm.

Contact the senior sports reporter at mindrice@dailyemerald.com. Her opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

WOMEN

continued from page 7

10 in the West.

Sofie Abildtrup enters the 400-meter dash rated fifth with her personal best of 52.92 seconds from the Pac-10 Championships. Abildtrup has been bothered by a hamstring problem recently, but is confident going into this weekend.

"Last week after Pac-10s, I rested a whole lot," Abildtrup said. "My

"I think I have an outside shot (at nationals). I'm definitely going to go in and try. I have nothing to lose and everything to gain."

Laura Harmon
Oregon runner

first hard workout was this past Sunday. I'm seeded fifth right now and if I can hold that position, then I'll qualify for nationals, and that's my hope."

Laura Harmon goes into the 5,000-meters ranked ninth in the field with her season best of 16:46.97 from the Stanford Invitational in late March. Harmon said she hopes to improve her time after resting the past few weeks.

"I think I have an outside shot (at nationals)," Harmon said. "I'm definitely going to go in and try. I have nothing to lose and everything to gain."

Other Oregon representatives in running events include Sara Schaaf in the 800-meters (seventh, 2:08.08) and Kayla Mellott in the 400-meter hurdles (17th, 1:00.72).

Contact the sports reporter at alexam@dailyemerald.com.

MEN

continued from page 7

(25 feet, 4 1/2 inches) and seventh in the triple jump (51-5). Holding ground in the long jump will be enough to advance, but he will likely need to add three inches in the triple jump to secure a spot at nationals.

Coming off a sore knee and what he called a "poor" performance at the Pac-10 Championships, Watson said he's determined to qualify in both events.

"I didn't feel like I had a good workout going into Pac-10s," Watson said. "I was resting, trying to be injury-free before Pac-10s. Now that I'm not worried about injuries, I've been working hard."

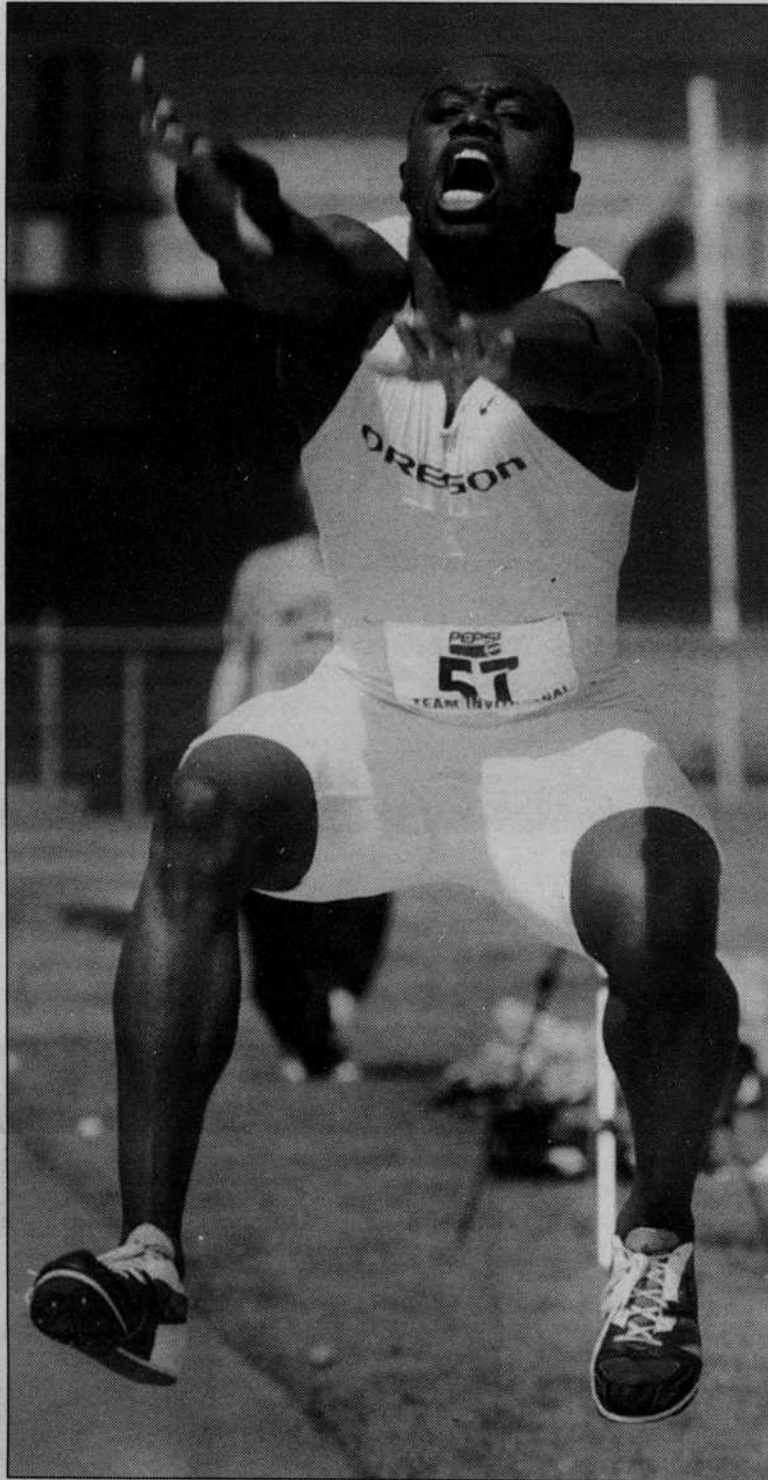
Two Oregon athletes who have an easier path to nationals are Tommy Skipper and Eric Mitchum.

Skipper automatically qualified for nationals when he cleared 18-8 3/4 during an indoor meet in Nampa, Idaho, in early February. This clearance was also a school record for Skipper, breaking Kory Tarpenning's 19-year-old mark of 18-6 1/2. The Sandy native holds the second-best outdoor height in the West (18-3 1/4) behind Fullerton State's Giovanni Lanaro, but has repeatedly said he's more concerned with improving his technique at regionals, rather than winning.

Mitchum owns the nation's second-best time in the 110-meter hurdles (13.50) and would almost certainly be selected for an at-large bid if he were to falter at regionals.

Other Oregon athletes who enter weekend competition ranked in the West's top five include: Matt Scherer in the 400 (fifth, 45.95), Brett Holts in the 3,000 steeplechase (fifth, 8:44.57), Ryan Andrus in the 10,000 (fifth, 28:56.67), Jeff Lindsey in the high jump (fourth, 7-1 3/4), Adam Jenkins in the javelin (fifth, 227-4) and the 4x400 relay team of Travis Anderson, Holliday, Kedar Inico and Scherer (third, 3:03.49).

Contact the sports reporter at jonroetman@dailyemerald.com.



Lauren Wimer Senior Photographer
Junior Leonidas Watson enters the weekend ranked fourth in the long jump. The transfer is one of a number of Oregon athletes that will look to qualify in their respective events for the NCAA Championships. Some Ducks are already bound for Austin, Texas — the site of the 2004 NCAA Championships — but others can qualify for the final collegiate meet with a top five finish at the 2004 Western Regional in Northridge, Calif.

Welcome to
YOUR LOCALLY-OWNED
NEIGHBORHOOD RESTAURANT
SERVING OVER 100 TEQUILAS
ALONG WITH THE
BEST MARGARITAS IN TOWN!
CHECK OUT LOW-CARB OPTIONS
ON OUR NEW MENU.

BEST of eugene 2003-2004

Mexican & Salvadorean Restaurant
900 West 7th Ave. • 633-9171

deluxe designed skirts \$28-\$32

DELUXE
men's and women's fashion shop 1331 willamette

WE BUY
YOUR COMPUTERS,
DESKTOPS OR LAPTOPS
(WORKING OR NOT, PARTS ALSO)
FURNITURE, TV, DVD, VHS
FOR TOP DOLLAR!

We will pick it up! Call us.
Make some money now!
Jackpot 688-8569 or 543-3055
2699 Roosevelt Blvd.