

Sports Editor:
Hank Hager
hank.hager@dailyemerald.com

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Men's tennis season brings optimism for future

The Ducks will return seven players next season including all-conference players Sven Swinnen and Manuel Kost; an even better season could come

By Clayton Jones
Freelance Reporter

After three seasons of being the doormat of the Pacific-10 Conference, the Oregon men's tennis team dusted itself off and showed a glimpse of the team it could become.

MEN'S TENNIS

This season, the Ducks shook their four-year Pacific-10 Conference losing streak, upset a top 20 opponent and made their first appearance in the NCAA team tournament since 2000.

"It was definitely our coming out party this year," ninth-year head coach Chris Russell said. "We made progress with the Pac-10 and that is a big step."

Russell said their strength of schedule helped the team out immensely. Before the conference season started, Oregon played No. 14 Rice, No. 28 Georgia Tech, No. 37 Minnesota and a nonconference match against rival Washington, which was then ranked 18th in the nation.

"We haven't had a schedule like this before, and the competition early in the season helped," Russell said.

In the match against Washington, the Ducks fought hard and pulled off the upset 4-3. It marked only the fifth victory for the Ducks over the Huskies in 112 tries.

"The Washington victory was a monumental victory and really put the wheels in motion for the season," Russell said.

Oregon went into Pac-10 play 8-4, but dropped its first three matches. The slow start didn't deter the hopes of the Ducks as they went into a home match against No. 34 Arizona State. The Sun Devils were the last team Oregon beat in Pac-10 play back in 2000.

Oregon fell behind 2-0 but came back and won four of the next five matches to upset the Sun Devils and end their losing streak in the Pac-10.

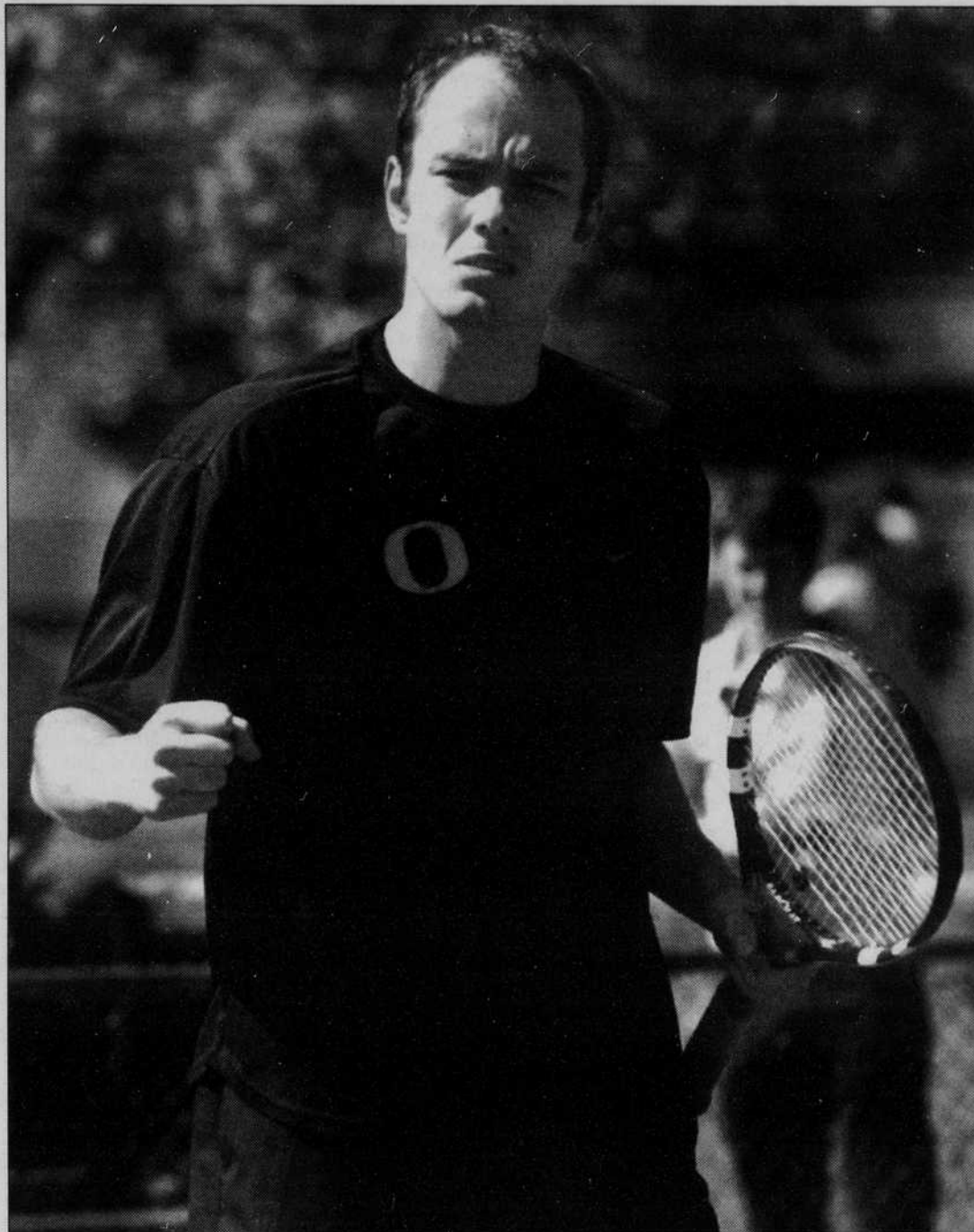
Oregon finished the season with losses against No. 3 UCLA, No. 4 USC and No. 23 Washington. The Ducks were on the bubble of making the tournament with a record of 9-10 and their postseason fate depended on the tournament committee.

The team continued to practice, and it paid off as it was announced it would travel to Mississippi to face Vanderbilt.

The Ducks bowed out to the Commodores, 4-0, but Russell believes the experience was priceless.

"We had exposure to a lot of good tennis, and we can use that experience for next year," Russell said. "This season was very successful for us, but we still have things we want to accomplish."

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Sven Swinnen achieved the highest national ranking in program history at No. 16. Swinnen's 21-8 record moved him up to third all-time at Oregon in career singles victories at 60. The Switzerland native returns next year for his senior season along with six other Ducks.

Danielle Hickey
Photo Editor

Wisconsin transfer reaches NCAA meet with UO

Bree Fuqua earns her first automatic bid to the NCAA Championships in Texas

By Alex Tam
Sports Reporter

Bree Fuqua is reaping the benefits of her decision to come to Oregon.

The first-year transfer from the University of Wisconsin took fourth place in the shot put at Saturday's NCAA West Regional Qualifier in Northridge, Calif., and will make her debut at the NCAA Championships

WOMEN'S TRACK

beginning June 9.

The junior from Polson, Mont., achieved a personal record on her first throw when she tossed the shot 52 feet, 8 3/4 inches. Her subsequent attempts, though, showed no improvement. Fuqua's mark held up over the rest of the competition to finish in the top five and earn an

automatic bid to nationals.

Her personal best inches her closer to Oregon's all-time shot put record holder, Quenna Beasley, who threw 53-1 1/2 in 1983.

"I accomplished what I wanted to do," Fuqua said. "I never had done the regional system before because I redshirted last year, so I wasn't sure

how it was going to work. But I knew I was going to be in the top five. After I threw my first throw, I was pretty sure I was in. The first throw felt good, but the rest didn't feel good at all. I wasn't really sure why."

Fuqua has battled multiple injuries during her collegiate career, including

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Tim Kupsick Photographer

Paul Swangard, who heads the James H. Warsaw Sports Marketing Center as its managing director, says he's confident in the direction the center is headed.

Swangard, Warsaw Center building on first 10 years

Paul Swangard has kept the Warsaw Center going strong a year after Rick Burton's departure

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

Paul Swangard sits in his fourth-floor office at the Lillis Business Complex. On a wall is a signed Pavel Bure jersey from his days with the Vancouver Canucks. Outside are copies of Sports Illustrated and

Sports Weekly, spread out on a desk where students from the James H. Warsaw Sports Marketing Center relax in between classes.

Swangard is the managing director of the center, which has been called the best in the nation by Sports Illustrated and is considered by many as a successful breeding ground for sports executives.

The catch: Just last year, the center's executive director, Rick Burton, left to serve as the commissioner of Australia's National Basketball League.

Last year, the center celebrated its 10th anniversary. And starting in the fall, its official identification will be SBUS (Sports Business), replacing the familiar MKTG (Marketing).

How do you go forward through all that?

Enforce what you've been doing. Build on it. Add to the foundation that has allowed the center to cultivate relationships with companies such as Nike, Adidas and Safeco Insurance — the namesake for Safeco

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