

■ Women's golf

McCready, Nealy lead Oregon to 9th place

Kim McCready placed 8th and Johnna Nealy finished 9th at the Kent Youel Invitational in Hawaii

BY CLAYTON JONES & SCOTT J. ADAMS
SPORTS EDITOR & FREELANCE SPORTS REPORTER

Whether it be the beach, the sun or the course, Oregon's Johnna Nealy must really enjoy playing in Hawaii.

The senior from Grants Pass shot a final-round 74 Wednesday to finish ninth at the Kent Youel Invitational.

This was her second-straight top-15 finish in Hawaii — she finished 13th at the same 6,033-yard, par-72 Kapolei Golf Course last season.

Sophomore Kim McCready finished strong and leaped ahead of her teammate with a final-round 72 to finish the tournament in eighth place.

It was the Placerville, Calif., native's second top-10 finish of the fall season, as she finished in a tie for seventh at the Edean Ihlanfeldt Invitational last month.

The play of Nealy and McCready led to a fourth place finish for the Ducks at 895, 36 strokes behind first-place finisher UCLA.

Oregon finished 17 strokes behind Pacific-10 Conference rival No. 6 Arizona State and two strokes behind defending national champion No. 25 Oklahoma.

The Ducks' final-round 303 put them behind the Sooners, who took third place on the final day with a 300.

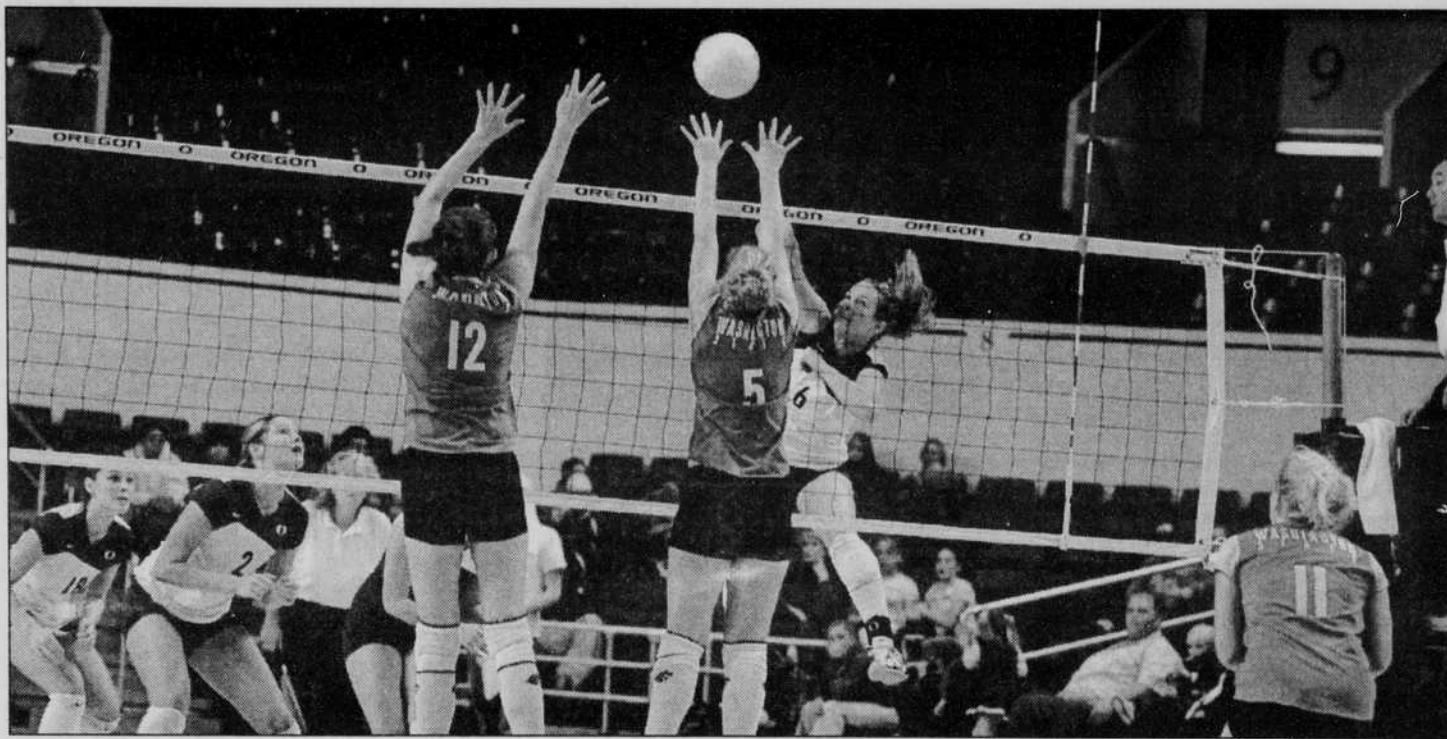
The individual winner was Amie Cochran of UCLA, who shot a final-round 72 to finish 4 under par for the tournament, edging out two of her teammates.

Oregon's Erin Andrews shot a 77 Wednesday and dropped to 22nd place.

After two rounds of play, Oregon was in third place in the tournament as three Ducks found their way into the top 15 of the field. Nealy, McCready and Andrews found themselves in 10th,

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■ Duck volleyball



LAUREN WIMER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Oregon's Allison Leavitt (6) challenges two Washington State blockers at McArthur Court on Thursday. The sophomore outside hitter recorded a career-high 24 kills.

Ducks lose heartbreaker to Cougars

Washington State earns its first conference victory and steals the spotlight from Oregon's Katie O'Neil and her personal-best 43 digs

BY STEPHEN MILLER
SPORTS REPORTER

Washington State knocked Oregon off its horse in Thursday's volleyball match at McArthur Court.

The two teams exchanged blows, alternating wins through the first four games of the five-game match. Eventually, the Cougars earned their first Pacific-10 Conference victory of the season with a 3-2 victory, 26-30, 30-28, 25-30, 30-25, 15-6.

Oregon (9-11 overall, 1-9 Pac-10) dropped its seventh-straight league match to the worst team in the conference after winning two of the first three games.

"We put ourselves in a situation to win ... We did a lot of right," Oregon outside hitter Kelly Russell said. "But in the moments when we needed to execute to win, we didn't."

The Ducks set the tempo of the match but the Cougars (4-19, 1-9 Pac-10) stayed in step until they committed a hitting error to end the first

game. Oregon hit at a .328 hitting percentage as a team in the first game by landing 23 kills and only committing four errors on 58 swings.

Sophomore Allyson Leavitt ignited Oregon's eager attack early. The defensive specialist-turned-outside-hitter broke her previous career-high of six kills by posting nine in the first game alone. Leavitt finished with 24 kills on 59 attempts for a .220 hitting percentage. The Springfield native also posted one of Oregon's two double-doubles with 26 digs.

"We had some players have some really good games tonight and for some reason we couldn't pull it together," senior libero Katie O'Neil said. "I think they were serving us tough and our serve-receive (passing) was a little shaky. We definitely didn't have it tonight. We stayed positive and supportive all night but just couldn't do it tonight."

On the other side of the net, another Springfield native led the Cougars to their win; sophomore Kelly Rosin recorded a team-high 16

kills from 73 attempts. Her 18 digs also gave her a double-double.

Defensively, each team finished with five players recording double figures in digs.

O'Neil proved to be Oregon's backbone once again, finishing with a match-high 43 digs. That mark will go down as a personal career best, shattering her previous high of 27. Along with that, O'Neil is now third on the Pac-10's all-time list for digs in a match.

"I'm pretty happy to increase as the season goes on ... This is a huge personal victory," O'Neil said. "This is a goal I have been working on since I've been here and I'm going to soak it up, build on it and keep letting it inspire me."

"They're a cross-court hitting team so I felt like I got a lot of attempts and then being able to execute the attempts was good."

Rallies in each game, except for the fifth, led to excessive scoring attempts and defensive showcasing for each team, while providing nail-biting excitement for the crowd.

Oregon's defense collapsed in the fifth game, and its attack lost rhythm.

"In the late game they got runs of points in

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■ Duck soccer

Untimely injuries continue to hinder Ducks

Redshirt sophomore Andrea Valadez remains questionable for this weekend's games against Stanford and California in the Bay Area

BY BRIAN SMITH
SPORTS REPORTER

Heading into the fourth weekend of the conference schedule, the injury report for the Oregon women's soccer team continues to grow.

Another Duck forward's participation is questionable for this weekend's matches against Stanford (10-4-2 overall, 4-2-1 Pac-10) and California (9-4-2, 2-2-1) in the Bay Area.

Redshirt sophomore Andrea Valadez suffered a possible season-ending ACL injury against Washington last week. Doctors were unclear on the specifics of her injury, but Valadez will travel with the team and expects to play this weekend.

Regardless of the extent, Valadez's injury will weaken an already wounded offense that has had problems scoring goals all year long.

Through 15 games, the Ducks have scored 12 goals and are the only team in the Pacific-10

Conference averaging under one goal per game. In addition, Oregon has only managed two goals so far in conference play.

The Ducks also rank near the bottom in shots (158 total, eighth in conference), points (31, 10th), goals per game (0.80, 10th), assists (7, 10th) and assists per game (0.47, 10th) in the Pac-10.

Including Valadez, three of the Ducks' top scorers in 2004 are out, leaving freshman Kami Kapaku — the Ducks' leading scorer this season with four goals — with the brunt of the scoring responsibilities. Kapaku netted the only two conference goals for Oregon last weekend.

Surrounding Kapaku will be a forward-by-committee approach with Sabrina DeMonte, Cristan Higa, Rachel Grushkin, Salina Karia, Valerie Mayer, and Gennaka Fox. DeMonte is tied for second on the team in assists with one, while

Higa is fourth on the team in shots with 10.

"We worked on playing as a team and playing faster," Oregon senior defender Christine Mintz said. "Because Stanford will be good in transitioning and playing team defense and since we don't have any one big personality player, we all have to do the work."

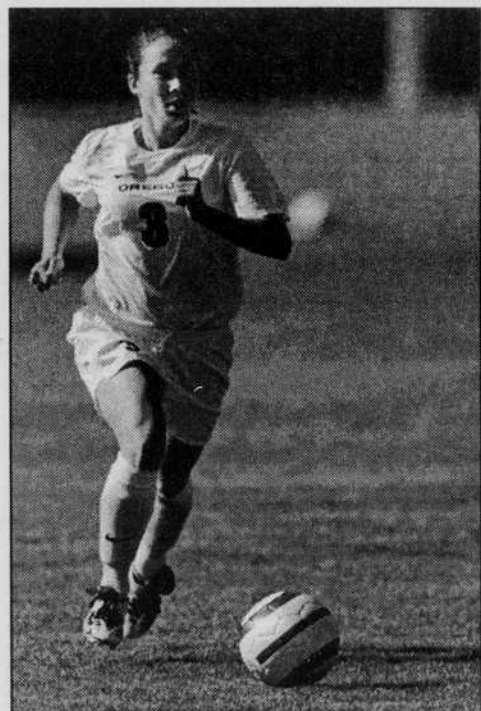
Cardinal defense possesses shutdown skills

Stanford will do little to help Oregon's scoring woes; the Cardinal is one of the strongest teams defensively in the conference.

Behind Nicole Barnhart and co-captain goalkeeper Behind team leader, Stanford is ranked first in goals allowed, giving up a mere 0.50 goals per game. The Cardinal has given up only eight goals all season. As a team they have nine shutouts in 2004, with Barnhart recording six of them. She has 34 career shutouts and 186 saves since 2000.

"Stanford is strong technically," Oregon head coach Bill Steffen said. "They get chances and put them away. We have to try

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ERIK R. BISHOFF | PHOTOGRAPHER

Oregon redshirt sophomore Sabrina DeMonte will look to help capture the Ducks' first conference victory this weekend. She is tied for second on the team in assists.