IN BRIEF

Top recruiting class adds to Duck wrestling hopes

Seventh-year head coach Chuck Kearney is leading the Ducks into what he feels will be a booming 2004-05 campaign.

"Every coach's goal is to build a strong, solid program," Kearney said. "It has taken some time, but the foundation is now where I envisioned it to be when I started."

Kearney has amassed a remarkable tenure at Oregon as both a coach and a wrestler. He has had recruiting classes ranked in the top 25 in the country seven of the last twelve seasons.

"As a program, we try to recruit not only talented wrestlers, but good individuals who succeed on and off the mat." he said.

The future looks bright for the Ducks, who feature four wrestlers with NCAA Championship experience, numerous key members returning after redshirt seasons and an incoming recruiting class that boasts some of the top talent on the West Coast. Incoming freshmen include Beau Malia, Ryan Dunn and Nick Cautrell. Malia won four state titles at Skyview High School in Billings, Mont. Dunn earned honorable mention All-American status at Estacada High School in Estacada and Cautrell won two state championships at Churchill High School in Eugene.

The Ducks are led by senior Luke Larwin. He recorded a team-high 27 victories last season and will wrestle in the 165-pound weight class. Also returning is junior Shane Webster, fresh off a redshirt season following a sixth-place finish at the 2002-03 NCAA Championships. He comes into this season No. 3 in the nation at the 174-pound weight class.

Fellow junior Joey Bracamonte enters his second season as a Duck after earning a bid to the NCAA Championships last year.

As of late, transfer senior Scott Barker has emerged as one of the top wrestlers on the team. Barker headed into this season No. 4 in the 197-pound weight class nationally and earned All-Big XII and All-American honors while wrestling at the University of Missouri. Barker, Bracamonte and Webster all took home first place in the 197, 165 and 174-pound weight classes, respectively, last week at the Cowboy Open in Laramie, Wyo.

— Scott J. Adams

Miller: Athletes boast Canadian heritage

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location closest to Oregon is in Michigan, and it doesn't require a passport to get there.

Kaela Chapdelaine of the women's basketball team mentioned that she likes to point out every Canadian celebrity to her teammates, "and I make sure I put the 'eh' in there, because that's our heritage."

Chapdelaine, a native of Okotoks, Alberta, also appreciates the mixed cultural legacy of Canada.

"I think we have a diverse country, and we welcome other cultures," she said. Little described her native country as a "melting pot." Interesting, that term has been thrown around somewhere else, hasn't it?

So are there any downsides to Canada?

"Heck no! It's a great place," Ganes said.

Other than the separationist movement in Quebec a while back, Canada has not had to deal with many problems.

"The biggest thing is how to get the snow off the street where it is 10-feet high," Okwumabua said, "Or how we deal with it when the power lines are frozen over."

So what do the Canadians really think about Americans crossing over?

"I'm sure it would be overwhelming, but good for the economy," Okwumabua said. "If people are in trouble, we're not going to kick you guys out."

American's don't necessarily want to help the economy; they are just looking for citizenship or a place to hide.

"I don't blame them," Jones said in a welcoming tone. "There's no more hockey (National Hockey League); it's horrible. I'm dying."

Jones said that she would consider residing permanently in the U.S. if she met a "great guy."

How romantic ... barf!

Said Ganes: "Traveling internationally, you have lots of people in foreign countries that seriously want to marry you to get into Canada."

In the spirit of sports, an international trade should be implemented. Something more permanent than a student exchange program, but not as permanent as marital vows. Yeah, like that would ever fly. In terms of donuts, no ignorant American would ever want to trade their Krispy Kremes for Timbits.

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