

Rec Center hosts fifth annual 'Circus'

About 65 people, many sporting off-the-wall costumes, compete in the rock-climbing contest

BY AIMEE FURBER
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

Escaped prisoners, nerds and hula girls were all part of the crowd that gathered Saturday at the Student Recreation Center rock wall for the fifth annual Vertical Circus rock-climbing competition.

The five-hour competition included conventional events such as speed climbing and bouldering, as well as eccentric events such as blindfolded and one-armed climbing. A costume contest added to the Circus, with about 65 competitors dressed as everything from '80s breakdancers and spandex-clad sport climbers to Chia Pets and lions.

The rock wall staff had been planning the competition since the beginning of winter term, volunteer coordinator Katie Sadowski said.

"I got introduced to the climbing community here through the Vertical Circus," Sadowski said. "I realized what an awesome group of care-free, fun-loving people are here who are all about getting it started. Everyone is in costume and no one cares. Anything and everything."

Junior Charlie Dorst, a regular at the rock wall, donated a trophy he made for the competition in his metal working class. Dorst spent approximately 40 hours on the trophy, which displayed miniature climbers complete with climbing gear.

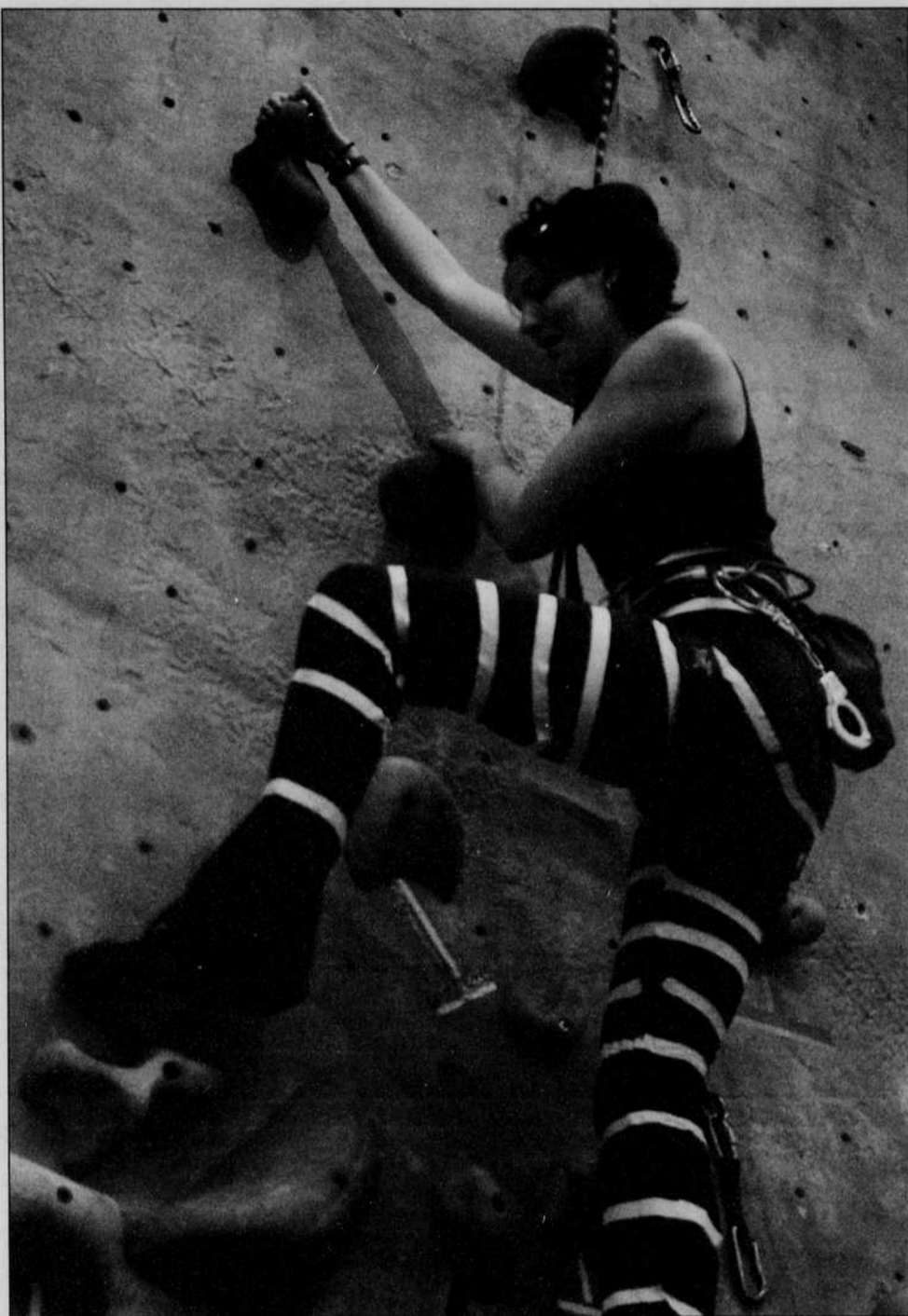
"It shows how much people love this," Sadowski said. "Nobody asked him to make it. He just showed up and said, 'Hey, I made a trophy.'"

The first part of the competition was devoted to the speed, blindfolded, one-arm and crack climbing. These were timed events where competitors climbed vertically up the wall.

The bouldering event took up the second part of the competition. Climbers attempted a series of routes, called problems, that are low to the ground and can be climbed without a rope. The climbers who finished the most problems moved on to the final problem, a long traverse across the wall.

"This was the most accessible Vertical Circus ever," rock wall manager Dan Crowe said. "Everything went smoothly. The route setting was impeccable. It was a genuine good time with the costumes. It was the most fun I've had at a rock-climbing competition."

Senior Cole Southworth said the atmosphere added to the climbing experience.



NICOLE BARKER | PHOTOGRAPHER

University student Amy McKellar, dressed as an inmate, climbs a rock wall at the fifth annual Vertical Circus. The indoor rock-climbing competition was held Saturday at the Student Recreation Center.

"I like everybody dressing up, their energy, and everybody being goofy," Southworth said.

"Where else do you get pirates, spandex, Chia Pets, and a cow outside of a pagan holiday?"

IN BRIEF

Davis earns second Player of the Week award of season

Senior Brandi Davis led the Oregon women's basketball team to two victories last week in its final homestand of the season at McArthur Court. As a result, she earned her second Pacific-10 Conference Player of the Week honor.

The Ducks (18-7 overall, 11-5 Pac-10) claimed sole possession of second place in the conference over the weekend, a half-game in front of Southern California (17-9, 11-6).

Davis, a native of La Habra, Calif., was the leading scorer for Oregon against Arizona State and Arizona.

The 6-foot Davis supplied 16 points against the Sun Devils on 6-of-11 shooting last Thursday. She then took advantage of the Wildcats and made 7 of 15 field goal attempts for 19 points. She finished the weekend shooting 13 of 26 from the field and converting 7 of 18 from three-point range, while averaging 31 minutes per game.

Davis is averaging 15.4 points per game over the last seven games. She has started five consecutive games — her only starts of the season.

If Davis graduates this June, she would still have another year of athletic eligibility available. She has yet to announce a decision.

Davis is only the fourth Oregon player to receive at least two Pac-10 Player of the Week honors and the first since Arianne Boyer was recognized twice in 1997.

— Stephen Miller

New women's soccer coach Erickson adds two to staff

New Oregon women's head soccer coach Tara Erickson announced the hiring of associate head coach Mike Smith and assistant coach Nicole Wilcox to her staff.

Smith was the top assistant coach at Santa Clara for the past three seasons and Wilcox was a volunteer assistant for Erickson last season at Portland State. She was also a standout player at Washington State, earning second-team All-Pacific-10 Conference honors in 2002.

"I think we have an incredible staff," Erickson said. "Mike and I have worked for each other as region head and assistant coaches and vice versa, so we have an excellent relationship."

"Nicole infuses youth, intelligence and hard work, too," she continued. "I like the fact that the staff can exchange ideas freely, to optimize a strategy that takes Oregon to a new level."

— Clayton Jones

Club Sports

Club hockey wins first-ever Pac-8 Championship

After upsetting second-seeded Cal, 7-3, the third-seeded Ducks edged rival Washington, 3-2, to capture the title

BY LUKE ANDREWS
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

For much of the season, head coach Scott McCallum continually raved about his Oregon Club hockey team and its chances of winning the Pac-8 Championship.

It appears he had legitimate reason.

After capping off the most successful season in school history, the Ducks rode momentum into the Pac-8 tournament and defeated California and Washington to claim their first ever Pac-8 Championship.

"We set a goal at the beginning of the season to go to the Pac-8 Championship game," McCallum said. "They put in so much time. They deserved it."

The third-seeded Ducks, after nabbing two victories against Boise State

to end the regular season, marched into the first round of the tournament in Berkeley, Calif., to take on Cal, the second seed and last year's tournament winner.

Cal managed an early 1-0 lead in the first period, but Oregon's Nate King, the tournament MVP, quickly responded to knot the score at one apiece. The Ducks again fell behind moments into the second period, but it would be the last lead for the Golden Bears.

Down 2-1, Oregon tacked on back-to-back goals to take its first lead of the game. Oregon's deep bench wore out the Bears as the Ducks reeled off four goals to close the game with a 7-3 win.

King, Ted Martin and Scott Tedrick came up big for the Ducks, accounting for five of Oregon's seven goals against Cal. King finished with three,

Martin with two and Tedrick pitched in one. Cal Brackin scored the other two goals for the Ducks.

"Every team in our league has one or two really good lines," senior captain Mike Tornabene said. "The difference is how well the third line plays, and ours put the puck in the net."

The victory set the stage for a final-game battle of Northwest rivals as the Ducks met the fourth-seeded Washington Huskies, who also recorded an upset in the first round by defeating No. 1 UCLA, 6-4.

The Husky offense was quiet against the Ducks in the first period, as Oregon mustered an early 2-0 lead. Justin Savich scored the first goal nearly 11 minutes into the game and then assisted on a Ryan Jones goal to give the Ducks a two-point advantage.

In the opening minutes of the second period, Washington cut into Oregon's lead with an early power-play goal, but Martin responded to reestablish the Ducks' two-goal lead.

Another Husky goal on a power play in the final minutes of the second period brought the score to 3-2 and set up the dramatic final period.

Clinging to a one-point lead, the Oregon defense remained intact and preserved the 3-2 victory to claim the Pac-8 Championship.

"Normally, a one-goal lead is not good enough against a team like Washington, but we shut them down," King said. "It just made it that much sweeter of a victory that it was against UW, our biggest rival."

As the horn sounded, the Oregon bench erupted onto the ice and rushed to the goal to surround goaltender Matt Nuernberg, who finished with 52 saves in the tournament.

"We came a long ways," Jones said. "No one in the Pac-8 expected us to be near as good as we are."

Oregon, which finished with a record of 22-4-2, also claimed many individual accolades for its impressive season. McCallum, in his first year as

head coach at Oregon, received Pac-8 Coach of the Year honors. Tornabene, who has led the team in goals the past five seasons, was named to the All-Pac-8 first team. In addition, Mike Roley was a first-team defense selection, and Jones and Nuernberg were selected to the second team.

While the first Pac-8 Championship may have been the highlight, it was a season of many firsts for Oregon hockey. The Ducks secured the first 20-win season in school history, as well as the first 1-5 Cup victory over Washington.

For the veterans, the season quickly erased the memories of a two-win season a year ago.

"All these seniors have seen the lowest low for a team, but we turned it around in a single season," Tornabene said.

"I think before this, we were sort of overlooked and no one paid attention to us," McCallum said. "That won't happen anymore."