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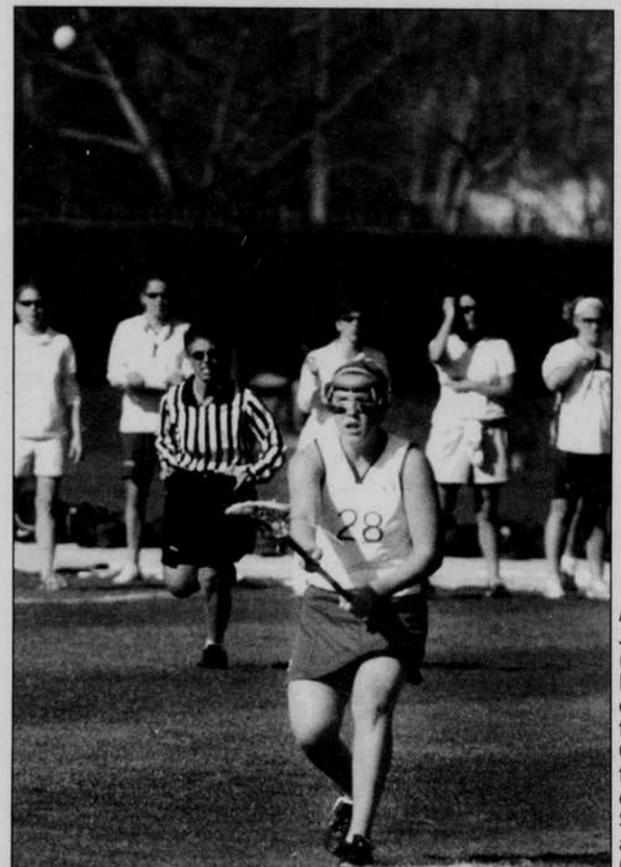


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Women's lacrosse



Attacker Jana Bradley (28) leads the Ducks with eight goals in four games. Oregon looks for its first win of the season Saturday against Colgate.

KATE HORTON | PHOTOGRAPHER

Inexperienced Oregon to tackle veteran Colgate

The Ducks, who feature 23 freshman, have yet to win a game in their first season as a varsity sport

BY BEALI EASTES
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

The Oregon women's lacrosse team looks for its first victory along with continued improvement from its young roster in Saturday's 4 p.m. home game against defending Patriot League champions, Colgate.

"These freshman have so much to learn about the college game," head coach Jen Larsen said about the 23 players on her squad in their first year out of high school. "They're taking in little by little."

The Ducks (0-4 overall, 0-3 Mountain Pacific Sports Federation) face a Red Raider team (3-1, 1-0) loaded with talent and experience. The Patriot League's 2004 Coach of the Year Katrina Silva's team returns its top two scorers and the reigning Patriot League Defensive Player of the Year, goaltender Sue Bielamowicz. Junior midfielders Katie McVeigh (51 goals, 22 assists) and Kelly Winning (42 goals, 13 assists) lead a team that is picked to repeat as Patriot League victors after going 13-7 last year.

Colgate, who only lost one athlete from its 2004 squad, is coming off a 13-5 victory at Villanova on Sunday and will travel to St. Mary's, California and Stanford in the week following its stop in Eugene. The Red Raiders advanced to last year's NCAA tournament, but lost in the first round to then-No. 1 ranked Princeton.

Oregon, which lost a heartbreaker, 11-9, Sunday against UC Davis, will be led by attacker Jana Bradley (8 goals) and midfielder Jen May (4 goals, 12 caused turnovers). Oregon will play without freshman midfielder Alison Leiner because of a broken foot.

While the Ducks have yet to notch their first victory, they have shown constant improvement, which is vital to the team, according to the first-year coach.

"Everyone's had such a great learning curve, and that's just going to continue," Larsen said. "It's reassuring that I walk off the field and know we're going to be able to improve in a week's time, where not every team has that capability."

After being blown out by second-place MPSF finisher Stanford, 19-6, in their season opener, the Ducks came within two goals of knocking off last season's third-place finisher, UC Davis, only three weeks later.

"This team is going to have a full-out improvement each week," former All-American Larsen said.

One area certain to see positive gains from the Ducks' last game is penalties. Oregon committed 32 fouls, and had three yellow cards and one red card in the league loss to UC Davis.

The Ducks' game against Colgate is the second in a four-game home stand.

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