

IN BRIEF

Ducks well-represented at NCAA Championships

Ten Oregon athletes will compete in the 2005 NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships in Fayetteville, Ark., today and Saturday. Sophomore pole vaulter Tommy Skipper leads nine men and one woman in the event hosted by the University of Arkansas.

Skipper, the 2004 NCAA runner-up, has posted the highest collegiate indoor mark of the year (18-6 3/4) and is the favorite entering the event. Junior Jon Derby enters the competition with the NCAA's 14th-ranked mark (17-6 1/2).

In the 400 meter, junior Matt Scherer (45.95 seconds) and senior Kedar Inico (46.41) have the nation's second and 12th best time, respectively, and both look to medal.

Also competing for an NCAA gold is senior long jumper Leonidas Watson. The St. Louis native is ranked second with his season-best jump of 25-11.

In the 60 meter hurdles, junior Eric Mitchum heads into the meet with the season's fifth best time, 7.74 seconds.

Competing in the 3,000-meter event is senior Eric Logsdon. The Canby, Ore., native is ranked ninth in the event (7:54.29) and is only six seconds behind the leading entry.

Representing the women, senior cross country All-American Laura Harmon will be running in the 5,000 meter. Harmon's time of 16:18.56 has her seeded 15th.

Also competing for the Ducks are junior Ryan Voge in the heptathlon and the men's 4x400 meter relay team, which has Travis Anderson, Inico, A.K. Ikwaakor and Scherer.

— Beau Eastes

Women's tennis faces Boise State and Princeton

For the second straight week, Oregon will be pitted against a former tennis affiliate of head coach Nils Schyllander.

Last weekend, the Ducks captured a victory over Schyllander's college tennis head coach, Mark Tichenor, when the Ducks defeated Boise State 5-2. Schyllander played for Tichenor at Northern Arizona, where he earned the team's MVP award and was named athlete of the year in 1995.

This week, the Ducks (10-2, 1-1 Pacific-10 Conference) will host their former assistant coach Kathy Sell and her Princeton (3-3) team at noon on Sunday at the Student Tennis Center.

Schyllander downplayed the close ties in both matches.

"It's just another match," Schyllander said. "They are both two special matches, in a way, but also it's all business, and Princeton is hopefully another 'W' for us."

Oregon's 10-2 record is the team's best start since the Pac-10 merged women's tennis into a nine-team conference in 1997. The Ducks will also try to continue their strong play at home after having lost just once in eight home dual matches.

— Alex Tam

NCAA: Team practicing for potential first-round game

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is also a definite consideration.

ESPN's bracketologist Charlie Creme gives Oregon the number seven seed in the Tempe Region, with a first round matchup against Louisiana Tech from the Western Athletic Conference on March 19 in Seattle.

"I think regionally it would be nice to stay in the Northwest," Smith said. "It would create excitement for the tournament if you had a local team, and we're pretty local. But really, our preference takes second priority to just getting into the tournament."

Not all predictions concur though. As of March 5, according to CollegeRPI.com, Oregon is the 10th seed in the Chattanooga Region with a first-round matchup against Boston College in Knoxville, Tenn.

Wherever the Ducks may be heading, the big point is that they should be going somewhere.

"I feel like we should (have a lock on a bid)," Kraayeveld said. "We feel that we've done well this year and that

we should be picked for the tournament, and we have a lot of confidence that will happen."

Oregon's resumé includes two wins against top-25 Rating Percentage Index teams — top-ranked Stanford (27-2 overall, RPI No. 7) and Arizona State (22-8, No. 21). The Ducks have also beaten three other teams with an RPI above 50, including USC (19-10, No. 34), Arizona (19-11, No. 42) and George Washington (22-8, No. 38). Oregon also defeated Miami, who has an RPI of 51, earlier this season.

Oregon suffered only one loss to a team with an RPI ranking under 100 — its 81-57 defeat against Washington.

The Ducks will find out their tournament fate Sunday at a "parings party" at Mac Court, where the team and 500 fans will watch ESPN's one-hour selection show at 2 p.m. The doors will open a 1:30 p.m., and fans will receive free soda and popcorn.


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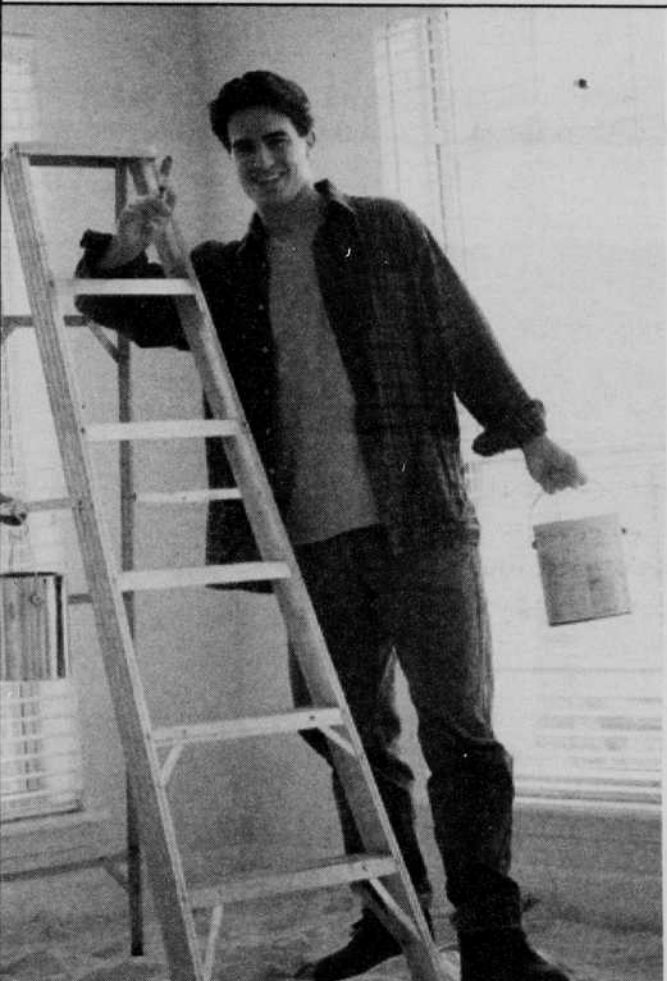


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