

## IN BRIEF

## Men's golf to compete in Pac-10 championships

The Oregon men's golf team tees off Monday in Walla Walla, Wash., for the 2005 Pacific-10 Conference Championships, marking the start of postseason play for the Ducks, whose NCAA Regional aspirations hinge heavily on their outing at the tournament.

The Ducks are looking to earn a ticket to the NCAA Regional tournament, which begins May 19. If they continue their formidable game play at the championships, Oregon head coach Steve Nosler believes his squad has little to worry about with regard to continuing its season after Wednesday.

"If we finish fifth or sixth with the way we've played this spring, I don't see any way the committee can leave us out," Nosler said. "We've got to keep playing just like we have been so we can finish ahead of some schools."

Oregon's lineup features the same five golfers who have been the backbone of the Ducks' late-season turnaround. Oregon is riding momentum following four straight top-seven finishes, including a team title at the Western Intercollegiate in March. There is, however, one alteration being made to Oregon's lineup: Along with all other teams in the competition, the Ducks will include a sixth golfer to compete by way of the tournament's unique format. Only five scores can be recorded by each squad, leaving the highest to be thrown out.

Nosler has called upon Kyle Johnson, a junior from North Bend, to fill Oregon's vacancy. Johnson will be joined by the usual suspects — sophomores Matt Ma and Jay Snyder, and

juniors Gregg LaVoie, Chris Dukemier and Justin St. Clair. Ma (72.9) and LaVoie (73.5) lead the team in scoring averages and occupy the No. 1 and 2 spots on the roster, respectively.

Fourteenth-ranked Southern California enters the tournament as the highest ranked team in the Pac-10 and will most likely battle No. 16 UCLA, No. 17 Arizona State and No. 24 Arizona, the defending champions, in a close race for the team title.

— Scott J. Adams

## NBA playoffs kick off with a little more parity

Before the NBA playoffs begin, a little pop quiz:

Q: What do Kobe Bryant, Kevin Garnett and LeBron James have in common with Michael Jordan, Karl Malone and Phil Jackson?

A: The closest they'll get to this year's postseason is watching on TV.

After a season of chaos and change, the NBA playoffs will begin this weekend without a target team for everyone to take aim at.

Remember not so long ago when this time of year revolved around the Los Angeles Lakers? They're as gone as the two-handed set shot.

Shaquille O'Neal is still around, the massive centerpiece of another top team. But he's wearing red and black these days, playing for the Miami Heat and taking every available opportunity to remind people what fools the Lakers were for trading him away.

Gary Payton is still kicking, too, with the Boston Celtics, one year removed from the failed project of pairing himself with Shaq, Kobe and Malone on a dysfunctional Lakers team that was stunned by Detroit in the championship round.

The Pistons are still here, too, by the way. And yes, there's speculation swirling around head coach Larry Brown's future in Detroit.

But with the postseason beginning Saturday, and with the casual fan not all that cognizant of the fact that the Phoenix Suns finished with the league's best record, the 2005 playoffs will unfold with several of the NBA's superstars sitting on the sidelines wondering how they missed out on one of the most wide-open chances for a championship in decades.

For the first time since the late 1970s, there is no clear-cut gigantic obstacle that needs to be overcome.

Recent playoffs always began with challengers knowing they might face O'Neal and Bryant — Lakers teammates since 1997 — and trying to outwit their coach, Jackson, who accumulated nine titles over 12 years.

Anyone wanting a championship in the years prior to that had to go against Jordan, Larry Bird or Magic Johnson — superstars of their eras who went to the playoffs every year as the favorite.

This season, there's no marquee team and no superstar tandem to be toppled, creating a much greater sense that it's a wide-open race for the title.

"It is clear that the Lakers are the team to love or hate, and a playoffs without the Lakers are going to draw lower (ratings) than one with them," commissioner David Stern said. "But aside from that, there are some interesting and exciting teams that are generating coverage, and a lot of young players and player combinations that people are talking about."

The first round will continue over 16 days — a reduction from the 18-day span from recent years that led to complaints of too much downtime.

— The Associated Press

## Track: Logsdon set personal record of 13:49.99 in 2005

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done track in Oregon since I was in the sixth grade, running in Oregon was always a big draw," Logsdon said. "When I was in the recruitment process and looking around, I knew I wanted to stay on the West Coast and probably a Pac-10 school, and I remember talking to the coaches here and they were talking about bringing Oregon back to prominence on a national and conference level, and I really bought into that."

Under the guidance of Smith, Logsdon dropped his 5,000 time from 14:28.30 in 2001-02 to a personal record 13:49.99 during the 2005 indoor season. Logsdon's goal is now to shave off those last six seconds, something that both Logsdon and Tyson believe will happen before the end of the season.

Logsdon has also had to deal with the addition of distance runners Galen Rupp and Scott Wall, two runners from Salazar's Oregon Project. Logsdon admits to not working with them much, favoring instead to show them little things if need be.

"I think he has taken a quiet approach to it, and I think that is the way he should take it just like I have to take a quiet approach," Tyson said. "I don't think he wants to be in controversy right now, so I think he's smart in staying back. He's real tight with Kyle Alcorn and Brett Holts, so there is enough of the Martin people here to keep him feeling good."

The man who likes music when he's off the track — trying to find artists few people are listening to;

Otis Redding, for example — is only one of two runners from a talented recruiting class that includes teammate and fellow All-American Holts.

"I still remember the first day we came in here," Holts said. "There were six of us freshmen and now Logs and I are the only ones left. It definitely takes a certain kind of athlete to work at a Division I level, at a level like Oregon, under Coach Smith's program, and obviously if you are that type of runner and you stick with it, good things can happen to you, as we have seen with Logs definitely."

Holts also admits there is little that can stop Logsdon from reaching his goals.

"He's a great runner and a great athlete," Holts said. "It would take a lot more than the diversity the year has thrown at us to stop Eric. He hasn't put in five years of work, day in and day out, coming into practice, summers, Christmas breaks, and if anyone thought that Eric would use this as an excuse, that would be doing an injustice to Eric and everything he has worked for and an injustice to Coach Smith and the program. I don't think Eric would have handled it any other way. I think he has handled it the way coach Smith taught us to and it says a lot about him."

Because after all, 13:43.82 is just over the horizon.

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