

Katie Swoboda is fifth in the Pacific-10 Conference in digs in her freshman season with Oregon.

NICOLE BARKER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

## ■ Duck volleyball

# Swoboda plays with passion

After signing with the University in April, Katie Swoboda has become one of the Pac-10 conference's best players

BY JEFFREY DRANSFELDT  
SPORTS REPORTER

Calm and collected, Katie Swoboda makes dive after dive, her 5-foot-5 frame taking the brunt of the impact. Each time Swoboda goes down, she gets up, always the competitor as she develops into one of the next great liberos of the Pacific-10 Conference.

"You have to carry her off (the court) to take her out," Oregon head coach

Jim Moore said.

A concussion. Torn cartilage. Bleeding and bruised hips. Goose eggs on her elbows. You name it, she's had it.

When she was a junior in high school, Swoboda suffered a concussion when she hit a wall during a match. Two days later, after being checked at a hospital and her mom assured she was okay, Swoboda was playing again.

This determination has helped

catalyze her development into a top-notch player. She has quietly risen to fifth in the Pac-10 Conference with 4.53 digs per game.

"I'll do anything to get the ball, so sometimes it kills my body, but it's what I love and what I've worked on my whole life," Swoboda said.

Moore saw Swoboda's potential early, watching her as a high school sophomore while he was coach at Northern Michigan. One year later and needing a libero, he saw she remained uncommitted and considered contacting her.

VOLLEYBALL, page 12A

## ■ Duck soccer

# Ducks and Beavers meet in Corvallis for Civil War

After four straight losses, Oregon's seniors take on Oregon State for the final time of their collegiate careers Friday at Lorenz Field

BY SCOTT J. ADAMS  
SPORTS REPORTER

Oregon travels up I-5 to Corvallis today for a Civil War contest with rival Oregon State.

The Ducks are still in search of their first conference win under head coach Tara Erickson and need a victory over the Beavers to keep alive their hopes of reaching the NCAAs.

Although Oregon State (8-5-1 overall, 1-2-1 conference) does not feature the same level of talent as Arizona or UCLA, team captain Katie Abrahamson of the Ducks assures they are not to be taken lightly.

"It's definitely going to be a challenge," Abrahamson said. "We're very familiar with playing them and expect a lot of fouls and a fight until the end. We have the mentality that we can win any game and we've been that way all year. This game is crucial, we only have five games left and we need to win as many as we can."

Today marks the final Civil War game for Abrahamson and the other seniors on Oregon's roster. The Beavers hold a 2-1 edge over the senior Ducks, who have not scored a goal against Oregon State in two years.

"They beat us last year here and are up 2-1 over us," Abrahamson said. "It's time to level the playing field."

After posting an impressive 8-1-1 record to start the season, the Ducks have been in a

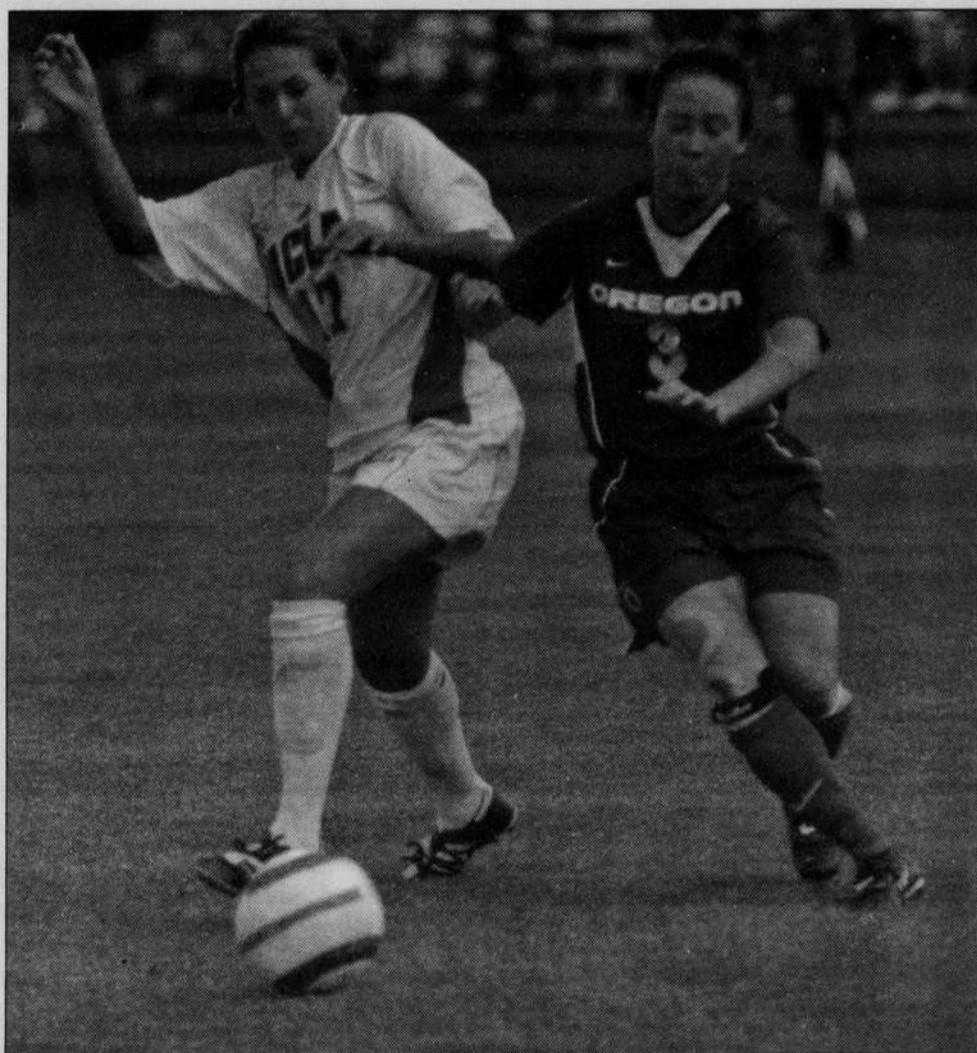
tailspin as of late, dropping the past four games to start conference play. They now have an identical record with the Beavers, who have also struggled against Pacific-10 Conference opponents. They lost to both Arizona and UCLA, but topped Arizona State and battled to a 0-0 tie with USC.

In her first year as head coach for Oregon, today marks the first Civil War game for Erickson, who is no stranger to the heated rivalry between the two schools. Playing at Washington and coaching for Portland State gave her a chance to sample Oregon and Oregon State soccer, which she feels is one of biggest rivalries on the west coast.

"I came from Portland State and we saw our games against Oregon State as rivalry games," Erickson said. "Anytime you play a rival you get up for it and coaching her has given the rivalry a whole new meaning for me. It's a traditional rivalry and I anticipate a heated game, it seems like every year the score is close."

In their past three meetings, the away team has walked away the victor with latest being the Beavers, who blanked Oregon 3-0 last season in Eugene. In 2003 the story was different in Corvallis. Seniors Andrea Valadez and Nicole Garbin each scored goals to lead the Ducks to a 4-3 win in overtime. Mele French, now

SOCCKER, page 12A



TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTO EDITOR

Sabrina DeMonte of Oregon battles for possession with Caitlin Ursini of UCLA. DeMonte has been both a starting defender for the Ducks this season and has filled in for the injured Cristan Higa as of late.

## ■ Club men's lacrosse

# Oregon ranked first in Pacific Northwest League polls

With two returning first-team All-League players the Oregon club lacrosse team is hoping to better last year's mark of 11 wins

BY JACOB MAY  
FREELANCE REPORTER

After finishing the season among the top eight club teams in the nation the past two years and building a roster with more than 40 athletes, it is safe to assume that the men's lacrosse team is not an average club team.

The team is ranked No. 1 in the Pacific Northwest League pre-season polls, thanks in part to the return of first-team All-League members Julian Coffman, Kyle Tolzman and second-team members Matt Connors and Nate Cordova.

This year the team is looking to improve on its 11-4 record from the previous season, where it was the Pacific Northwest League champion and finished sixth in the nation. Michigan beat Oregon in the quarterfinals of

the national tournament.

On the team's quest to gain more national exposure it faces stiff competition from its schedule. Major opponents this year include the usual league rivals Washington, Oregon State and Simon Fraser. On the national level, however, the team will play perennial Top-25 teams that include Texas, Missouri, Minnesota Duluth, BYU, Chico State and national runner-up Sonoma State.

The Chico State game is one of the games the team is most eager to play. Last year was the first time the men's team defeated Chico (11-10) and in turn, exacted revenge on the team that has proven to be most disrespectful in the past. In previous years after a victory, the Chico team would place their stickers on the turf field

lightposts in order to humiliate its opponents after a defeat, proving that there can be heated rivalries in a club lacrosse game.

The Sonoma State and BYU games are the team's best chances to prove they should be mentioned among elite lacrosse teams. After the Seawolves crushed the team 16-6 last year it hopes to redeem itself by playing at a higher level.

"It's a big game because we have something to prove," Club Coordinator and senior goaltender Nate Cordova said.

Cordova also believes that the team simply did not show up ready to play last year and hopes the team will play at a more consistent level when facing challengers.

BYU may prove to be the team's greatest challenge as it was the number one seed heading into the National Tournament last season. The men's team will travel to BYU to play in a nationally televised game, something that is extremely rare among club sports.

Cordova explains that the team travels frequently because it is trying to be as competitive as possible. The Pacific Northwest League has proved too easy a schedule and the team needs to play against the best teams in order to be recognized nationally and have a better chance of advancing through the national tournament. The frequent traveling explains why the team's dues are among the highest of the club sports.

Because of the program's popularity, the team is able to recruit some of the best players from the region. Cordova believes that the lacrosse team is the best in the Northwest because the school has such an attractive program and is capable of competing at a Division II to Division III level.

"It's close to home and most of these players don't get noticed from East Coast schools," Cordova said.

The lacrosse team will host the Oregon Fall Classic Tournament which will include Oregon State, UC Davis and Linfield on Oct. 29.