

*"I dunno. I never smoked any AstroTurf."*

Former MLB pitcher Tug McGraw on whether he preferred grass or AstroTurf.

## ■ In my opinion



JEFFREY DRANSFELDT  
THREE TO WIN

## ODE jinx? Not with Swoboda's concussion

It's not possible. Is it? Is there an Oregon Daily Emerald jinx?

Maybe.

Seeing promising libero Katie Swoboda in obvious pain, the result of her head colliding with Kelly Russell's knee against No. 2 Washington's volleyball team Friday, didn't help. Just that day I wrote a feature in the Emerald detailing her competitive nature and accompanying injuries.

Oh, and I mentioned a concussion she sustained her junior year.

She got her second concussion Friday and sat out the following night against Washington State.

Sports fans everywhere have heard of the Sports Illustrated cover jinx, where athletes and teams struggle after appearing on the national publication.

The night after her injury, Swoboda sat court-side. Actually, hovered is more appropriate. The freshman leaned forward, looking ready to sub in an instant.

Knowing Swoboda, if there had been another 24 hours, she probably would have tried to imitate her recovery from a concussion as a high school junior.

At that time, Swoboda was trying to get the ball and she ran into a wall. Swoboda tried to get up several times and go back in only to fall down each time. Doctors checked Swoboda and 46 hours later, her mom assured that she was OK, Swoboda played in a match.

Oregon's team did what good teams do. They covered for Swoboda.

It wasn't pretty. Both teams combined for 50 attack errors.

But Oregon not only won, it swept Washington State in three games. Game three featured six Russell kills, when Oregon relinquished a 21-19 lead and trailed momentarily 26-24, before winning 31-29.

In past games, such as the Civil War match, Oregon lost leads and didn't recover. Oregon had seemingly insurmountable leads in two games and lost.

"To be able to execute in the moments where you kind of lose your confidence, cause in the past you haven't executed — to finally get that is a huge confidence boost for everybody who has ... been struggling with that," Russell said.

Maybe there isn't a jinx. Maybe if Oregon had lost, but they didn't.

Saturday's win gave Oregon the breakthrough they desperately needed. The strong start they wanted against Arizona State, against Arizona, against Stanford ... you get the idea.

Beating Washington State isn't going to save Oregon's season. They play at No. 14 Cal today and Friday against No. 5 Stanford. Oregon returns next week to face No. 19 USC and No. 21 UCLA at McArthur Court.

The win has bigger implications. It gives Oregon and future teams confidence they can do it. Oregon can win in the Pac-10 Conference.

That fact alone makes any jinx an afterthought.

[jdransfeldt@dailyemerald.com](mailto:jdransfeldt@dailyemerald.com)

## ■ Duck volleyball

# Next up for Ducks: Bay Area teams

*After defeating WSU, Oregon seeks to maintain its momentum against Stanford and Cal*

BY JEFFREY DRANSFELDT  
SPORTS REPORTER

Five days after Oregon beat Washington State to earn its first home win in the Pacific-10 Conference in nearly five years, Oregon has another opportunity for its second Pac-10 win.

Oregon plays at Stanford today at 7 p.m. and at Cal Friday at 7 p.m.

Cal presents an intriguing opportunity considering Oregon challenged the then-No. 14 Golden Bears on Sept. 29. Oregon started slow and lost its first two games, 30-25 and 30-16. They recovered to win game three 30-28, but succumbed in game four, 33-31.

Mira Djuric matched her kill total of last Saturday night with a match-high 17 kills against Cal. Senior Kelly Russell had 15 kills, a 0.316 hitting percentage and three service aces.

To prepare the team for Cal, Oregon head coach Jim Moore showed the team film of the first match. When they finished he asked his team what they saw. Responses came back: We hit balls out of bounds, served too many balls out of bounds and didn't block very well.

"We didn't play extremely well, but we played extremely hard and that's what we have to do," Moore said.

The day after Oregon's confidence-builder against Cal, the Ducks lost in three to then-No. 3 Stanford. Oregon started strong, losing game one by two points, 30-28, before losing games two and three 30-15 and 30-23, respectively. Djuric had 18 kills and Russell had 11. Libero Katie Swoboda had 13 digs.

Oregon played some of its best volleyball of the season that weekend. The Ducks have played well against top programs and then had difficulty with lesser opponents.

"We're relaxed against the big level of competition," Moore said. "I think against the teams that we know we have to beat, that's where we're struggling and that's where you have to change that."

Getting past that first win, Oregon's biggest hurdle in conference play, is huge, Swoboda said.

"It'll help us relax a lot knowing that we can do this and stay calm," Swoboda added. "You got to start somewhere and I think that is a good building block for our team."

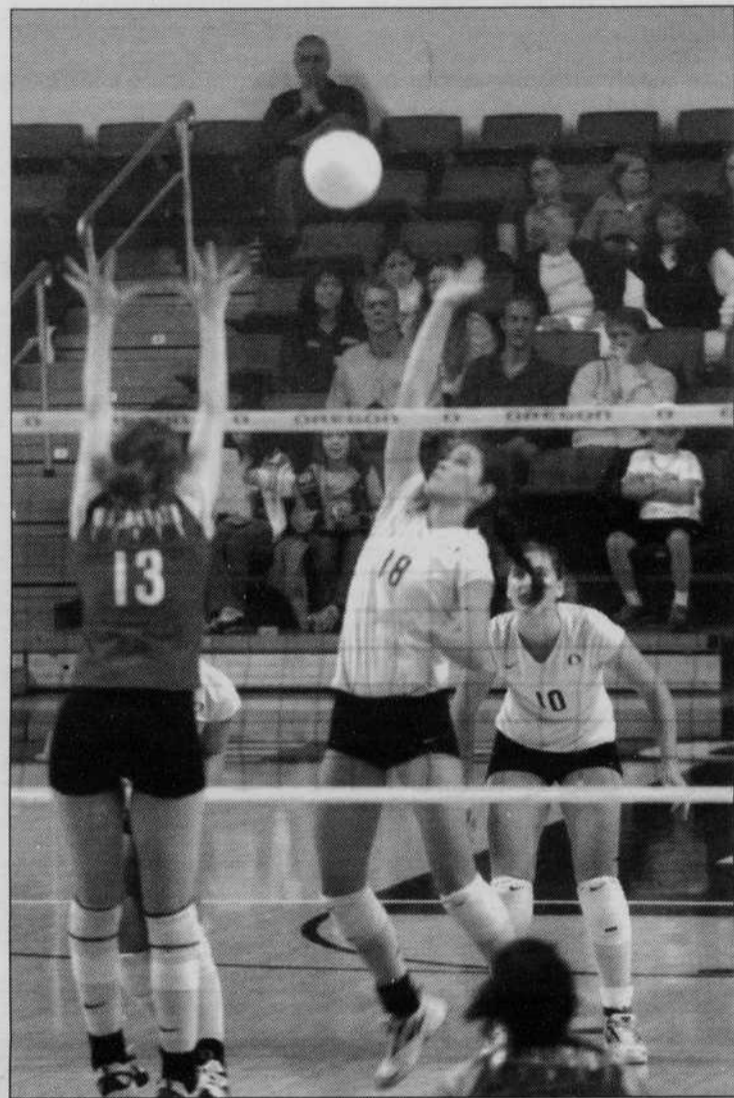
Stanford and Cal have problems themselves at the halfway point of Pac-10 Conference play.

Promising Stanford freshman Cynthia Barboza is going to miss the rest of the season after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in her left knee in a match against Cal last weekend. Barboza is second to Djuric in the conference with 297 kills to the Oregon freshman's 300. Stanford (18-3 overall, 7-2 conference) maintains a hold on second place in the conference behind No. 2 Washington and is on a two-match winning streak.

Cal (13-5, 6-3) has lost consecutive matches to Stanford and Arizona. Angie Pressey is second in the conference in kills with 4.52 per game and Samantha Carter is third in assists with 13.22.

One win into the Pac-10, Oregon is focusing on maintaining its momentum.

"We are going to be on a high from winning this game (against Washington State), obviously and we are going to come out and we can always play better against good teams and we play with them, so we're going to go down there and give them a run for their



KATE HORTON | PHOTOGRAPHER

Kelly Russell jumps for a kill in Oregon's win against Washington State Saturday.

money," Stephanie Alleman said.

Swoboda, after not playing against Washington State due to a concussion, said she hopes to be able to play today, but she is focusing on returning next week when Oregon plays USC and UCLA at McArthur Court.

Alleman will fill again as Moore said the junior fits in seamlessly. Against Washington State, Alleman had 18 digs.

Tasha Demkiw filled in briefly when Swoboda first exited Oregon's sweep to Washington. Swoboda left toward the end of the third game after her head collided with Russell's knee.

"I have total confidence in everyone on my team," Swoboda said. "They're just going to do as good a job. I'm not going to be selfish about it. I knew they were going to do just fine. Even though I want to be out there I got to get better first."

[jdransfeldt@dailyemerald.com](mailto:jdransfeldt@dailyemerald.com)

## ■ Club fencing

# Fencer fights to tourney championship

*Josh Conner defeated all comers when he captured the prestigious Leon Auriol Open in Seattle*

BY WILL SEYMOUR  
FREELANCE REPORTER

The trophy isn't anything special to look at. It's just a big silver cup. The names engraved on it are a different story. The past champions listed on this piece of hardware include legendary Olympians and now a Duck. Oregon student Josh Conner defeated scores of rivals Sept. 24-25 in Seattle to take the title at the Leon Auriol Open, one of the most prestigious fencing competitions in the western United States. Two other members of the Oregon Fencing Club placed in the top 15, raising the possibility of more championships in the future.

The Leon Auriol Open holds a special place in the hearts of fencers from the Pacific Northwest. The tournament's namesake is a French immigrant who gained notoriety coaching elite fencers in Washington,

Oregon and Canada before he branched out, giving lessons to any willing learner in the region. He is credited with developing the sport in Seattle, Portland and beyond.

"All the fencers in the Northwest are linked to him," Conner said.

At the Open, Oregon entered its first tournament of the year in the mixed epee division, which featured 67 participants, the largest field at the competition. Matches using the epee, French for sword, finish either at the end of three three-minute rounds or when one fencer reaches 15 "touches" or hits on the opponent. Touches can be scored anywhere on the body with the epee, as opposed to the foil and sabre, where points are recorded only on the chest.

Fencing tournaments are divided into two stages, pool play followed by a direct elimination bracket. Entrants are assigned a ranking based on their showing in previous tournaments, ranging from A to E, with unranked fencers thrown in. The pools are formed so that usually there is only one fencer of a particular rank in any given pool. They then face off in a round-robin format using shortened matches, in which the first person to five touches wins. The records

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