



Sitton's Sports Notes

CINDERELLAS FOR THE MOVIES: SURVIVORS FOR REAL LIFE

JENNIFER SITTON

If you have any interest in Oregon sports teams, you have heard about the disastrous debacle that became the Oregon State Women's Basketball Team. You read *The Oregonian* article illustrating how former head coach LaVonda Wagner threw chairs in the locker room, created a culture of fear in her program and ordered players to take part in Weight Watchers. Her harassment led them to seek counseling after playing for her. After the 2009-2010 season, the team was left with no head coach, no assistant coaches and fewer than four players. Many believed the program had reached the point of no return.

After hiring head coach Scott Rueck from Division III George Fox University, holding open tryouts to find players who knew what to do with a basketball and taking part in what must have been one of the most frantic recruiting sessions a Division I coaching staff

has ever participated in, the OSU Women's Basketball Team finally had enough girls to field a team. The next question was: Can a team of freshmen, community college transfers and walk-ons possibly have what it takes to compete at the Division I level?

So far, they're competing. Barely. They finished pre-season with a 7-4 record. But so far, the Pac-10 Conference games have yielded nothing but losses. I personally watched them lose to a Washington State team that had only previously won two games all season. On the plus side, at least they have enough girls to field a team, right?

Athletic programs go through ups and downs and the Oregon State basketball programs, both men's and women's, have been in some serious crevasses lately. The men are rising up with two early Pac-10 wins against Arizona and Arizona State. We can hope that it won't take the women as long to earn



Photo courtesy of Alyssa Martin
Alyssa Martin, Oregon State University freshman guard, shoots a three-pointer over a defender in one of the team's first games of the year. The OSU Girls' Basketball Team suffered a tumultuous few years under the questionable leadership of LaVonda Wagner, but has surpassed many fans' expectations simply by fielding a team for the 2010-2011 season.

respect in the Pac-10 as it did the men.

It's a fascinating story. What kind of Division I basketball team holds an open tryout to recruit players? What athlete goes into her summer break not knowing if she will have a team to play on the next year? It has the makings of a Cinderella story that we might find at a movie theater. The only problem is, they haven't yet proven themselves as serious contenders. While Rueck and his players deserve applause for surviving and keeping their program alive, it isn't a winning program yet. This is real life.

While it would be nice to say that I watched the Oregon State Women's Basketball Team claw its way from the depths of program destruction and come back to win a National Championship, that's not realistic. Leave the Cinderella stories to the movies; all we need in real life are survivors.

Swim Team prepares for Districts while overcoming new challenges

ETA SANTORO

With the addition of Canby and Grant to the Three River's League, the Swim Team is fac-

ally, they were able to practice Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at the Tualatin pool and at Lewis & Clark on Saturdays. The team consists of many club

Lindsey Gilmore, junior, has also made an impression during the season, according to Wilson. Gilmore's first individual win was the 200



Photo by Andre To

Adam Oldenkamp, senior captain, races in the 100 yard butterfly against Lake Oswego. Oldenkamp took third place, however, the team as a whole lost to the Lakers, the boys 112-58 and the girls in a close 86-83 contest.

ing new obstacles this season. According to Adam Oldenkamp, senior captain, those two schools, along with Lake Oswego, will be the team's toughest opponents. Despite this, Oldenkamp remains confident.

"We lost our last two meets unfortunately, but we're going to win the next one," Oldenkamp said.

Earlier in the season, the girls beat Grant 103-65 but lost to Canby 98-72. The boys lost two competitive matches against Grant and Canby, but bounced back on Jan. 6 to beat Oregon City 104-56. The girls also won against Oregon City 98-56, with both teams winning the majority of the events.

Scheduling pool time for practices was another challenge for the team. Eventu-

ally, they were able to practice Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at the Tualatin pool and at Lewis & Clark on Saturdays. The team consists of many club

swimmers and others who have been devoted to the team since they started swimming. "We have a really evenly spread team and since everyone swims at different speeds, we have people from different classes and levels. The JV and varsity practice together," Katie Wilson, Varsity swim coach, said. "They all do the same amount. It makes the JV stronger so they can see where to improve. We're good at relays, because they like to do that. They're all really competitive: they want to win."

According to Wilson, Braden Brooksby, junior, and Oldenkamp are some of the best swimmers who don't compete for a club. Some of the newer swimmers are Ciara Wolfe, freshman, and Ryan O'Leary, sophomore. They have been impact swimmers as well.

freestyle against Oregon City, and then proceeded to win a 100 freestyle.

"Even though she's a club swimmer, she's willing to do more for the team," Wilson said.

On Jan. 13, the boys lost against the Lake Oswego Lakers, 112-58. The girls also fell in a close one, 86-83. A week later, the team took on Clackamas and secured two wins. The boys won 87-80 and the girls dominated 102-67. Recently against Lakeridge the boys lost 82-86 and the girls won 86-81. Both teams beat Clackamas, the boys 84-80 and the girls 100-70.

The Swim Team will compete today and tomorrow at Districts. Wilson hopes the team will finish in the top three and continue to State.

Ski Team's expectations for upcoming races set very high

DEREK FIELDHOUSE

Making it to State and performing well there are common team goals. However, they are rarely attained. The Ski Team, which has aspirations of placing in the top three at State, proved in its opening competitions just how attainable that goal may be.

In the most recent competition on Feb. 5, it was all Lions. The girls and the boys both took first. Individually, West Linn skiers were the top performers on both sides. Stephan Splitstoser, junior, and his first place finish led a group that dominated their peers, with six athletes in the top ten. Mackenzie Burns, senior, continued a successful season with a first place finish.

The competition prior to this was also successful, with the boys taking first and the girls ending up in second. These two successful weeks followed a competition where the girls and boys both won. Alec Ramsey, senior, and Burns finished first in their respective competitions. This competition was considered the Ski Team's first league race of the season, due to the fact that the original first league race on Jan. 15 was canceled due to abnormally warm temperatures.

"The competition on Jan. 8 went very well. There were several surprising finishes on both the JV and Varsity teams," Cooper Raasch, head coach, said. This was the first race that the Ski Team has participated in since the season began and not all members competed because the boys' Varsity team was attending

different competitions at the time and so others were given a chance to test their skills.

"It was more of a fun competition than a serious one and I found it quite an experience for the first competition this season," Carson Pike, freshman, said.

The girls placed second overall, with Jesuit winning the competition. According to Raasch, this competition was filled with many skilled racers. Burns placed third and Madeleine Martus, senior, finished 14th. Ski races are scored by adding up the top times of a competitors best three races. The lower the time, the better.

"The team did very well, but there is always room to improve as the season goes on," Raasch said.

The team will be working on its balance and strength, which according to the head coach, will be incredibly beneficial during this upcoming season.

Along with having a plethora of new skiers, the team also has a new coach, Raasch. He has coached two other teams and comments on how "bonding with this large and diverse group of ski racers has been fun and exciting." This diversity, or depth as Raasch says, is one of the strongest aspects of the team. It will allow them to race no matter what the conditions.

The team will have a competition every Saturday for the next six weeks and Raasch suggests coming to watch one to better grasp how exciting ski racing is.