

Regional Championships Recap

By Erik Lyslo

Jan. 18-21, Oregon ODP took eight teams to Phoenix, Arizona for the ODP Regional Championships. This is the largest and most competitive event in ODP where teams from each state compete against each other the bragging rights of Regional Champions. The two oldest age group, the 91's and 92's, fight for a spot in the National Championships with a win here as well. Oregon faired very well.

For the first time in Oregon ODP history, we took eight teams to this event. The 91's, 92's, 93's and 94's represented our state and we once again took another step in the right direction with some new Oregon ODP records. Oregon put 4 of the 8 teams into the Semifinals (an Oregon ODP record) and one teams into the Finals (the 94' boys).

The semifinalist teams included the 91' boys, 92' boys, 94 boys and 93' girls. Other than Cal-South, who took home all eight championships, Oregon had more teams in the semifinals than any other state for the weekend. Overall, Oregon finished with 13 wins, 11 losses and 5 ties. The winning record and 13 wins for the weekend were also Oregon ODP records. The boys finished 9-5-1 and the girls finished 4-6-4. As a state, we scored 57 goals for the weekend and gave up 28.

Overall we fell short of our goal of winning a Regional Championship. But, I was very pleased with how our teams participated and competed. We continued to improve as a program and we had a lot of people continue to rave about how far our state has come at the ODP level. As a program, we will continue to work to improve and we will work to achieve our next goal of increasing our number of Regional Players for the fifth straight year at Regional Camp.

91 Boys

A slow start in both of the first two games almost knocked them out early, but big plays in the second half against both Nevada and Hawaii put them at 2-0. A solid 1-0 shutout of Idaho then put them into the semifinals against New Mexico. A hard fought first half kept the teams scoreless until the fireworks began. A very questionable Red Card was given to Jean-Marie Mwanga on a very clean tackle of New Mexico's National Player putting Oregon down a player. The referee who gave the Red was later confronted and admitted to giving the wrong card. Either way, Oregon went up 1-0 despite being down a player but NM came right back and scored to tie the game at 1-1 before the game headed to extended play. NM scored in the first 10 minute extra period to take a 2-1 lead and Oregon couldn't manage a goal after that ending the great run of the 91' group.

92 Boys

Head coach Nelson Larson said he thought his team looked good in this final training session before the event and he was right. They came out quick and drilled Washington 2-0. They then held off Idaho for a 2-1 win and tied New Mexico 1-1 to send them to the semifinals with Arizona. Oregon took a 3-2 lead with 15 minutes to play before another red card did in Oregon. Ethan Olson tripped the Arizona forward as he was headed to

goal and that put Oregon down a player with 15 to play. Arizona scored on the free kick and then scored again 2 minutes later to take a 4-3 lead. Oregon never recovered and missed out again on taking on Cal-South in the finals.

93 Boys

After a tough 3-0 loss to Arizona in the first game, the 93's bounced back and had Utah down 2-1 before giving up 3 straight and falling 4-2. The 93's rebounded with a 5-0 victory over the Arizona 94 boy's teams to finish the weekend on a good note and build for the future.

94 Boys

Minus Mikhail Doholis and Josh Miller, the two National Players in the group, the 94's showed off their depth and won three straight games and a date with Cal-South in the final. In the first half, Oregon knocked off Idaho 2-1, beat New Mexico 5-3 before knocking off Nevada 2-1 in the semifinals. In the final, Cal-South was the only thing in the way of Oregon's first Regional Championship. Cal-South jumped out to a 2-0 lead early and seemed on their way to an easy win, but Oregon stormed back with 2 straight goals just before half to grab the momentum. Both teams created chances early in the second half before Cal-South finally scored the backbreaker on a bicycle kick goal from 20 yards out, deflating the Oregon team. Cal-South put two more on the board late for the 5-2 victory.

91 Girls

A tough 1-0 defeat to Washington in the first game doomed the 91's for the weekend. It didn't help that they were missing a Regional and National player either. After losing to Washington, Cal-South was next on the schedule and the eventual champs took it to the Oregon group with a 3-0 victory. The 91's rebounded with a dominating 8-0 victory over Nevada in their final game to salvage the weekend.

92 Girls

Another slow start by the 92's doomed their chances at advancing for the weekend. A 1-0 loss to upstart Arizona in the first game did the damage and despite a 0-0 tie to Cal-South, the first time this Cal-South team didn't score a goal ever, and despite a 4-0 victory over Nevada in the final game, the first game was the backbreaker as the 92' group lost out on points to Cal-South. It was a lesson learned for this group and one they will remember for about one year.

93 Girls

By far the surprise team of the weekend, the 93's showed up to play early and often with a 6-0 victory over Idaho in the opener. In the second game, Oregon led for all but 30 seconds in the game as Colorado tied the game on a goal with 15 seconds remaining in the game. Oregon tied the next two games with Utah and Arizona, and took on Cal-South in the semifinals. CS scored early to take a 1-0 lead, but Oregon missed on numerous chances, including two shots off the cross bar, but couldn't sneak one in. CS scored late for a 2-0 win but it was a solid weekend for the 93' group and head coach Kevin Plechl.

94 Girls

As did the 92's, the 94's came out flat on Friday and dropped a much needed game with Nevada 2-0. In the second game they took eventually champion Cal-south to the limit before dropping a 1-0 decision. The next two games the 94's showed up to play and knocked off Utah 2-1 and Arizona 3-0, just missing out for a chance to the semifinals. It was another lesson learned for the girls groups, you have to show up to play all four days.