

Track team could improve on NCAA finish

By PAUL BUKER
Of the Emerald

It must have been quite a scene after all that had gone on at the XXth Olympiad in Munich.

Here was Steve Prefontaine shrugging his shoulders and going out to drink beer with the British and Finns after his defeat in the 5,000 meters.

The cocky challenger to Europe's stranglehold on distance running was fourth and fading at the finish.

It was a colossal setback for the Oregon runner. The end of the world? Hardly. There would be other chances to avenge the harsh lesson ministered by Finland's Lasse Viren.

And if you're 21 years old, fourth place in the storybook field that lined up in Munich for the 5,000 is an awesome accomplishment—for anyone but Pre. "I know I'm better than fourth in the world."

The target now is Montreal and 1976. For the Oregon track team this year, it's Baton Rouge, La. and another NCAA championship. For Pre, who will be ridiculously undermated in most of his races, finding new collegiate horizons to conquer won't be easy.

He became the first man to win three consecutive NCAA long-distance titles last year when he took the 5,000 meters at Hayward Field. Before that there were two straight three-mile crowns. He capped off his greatest season by blistering 34-year-old George Young in the 5,000 finals at the Olympic Trials and set a new American record of 13:22.8.

When Viren, Tunisia's Muhamed Gamoudi,

and Briton Ian Stewart kicked past in the last 180 yards at Munich, it was his first major defeat since 1970.

For warmups during the Ducks' regular season Pre did things like run a 3:59.7 mile. For warmdowns he ran 3,000 meters and set a new American record, 7:45.8.

Look at it this way: unless the 23-year-old Viren enrolls at BYU this fall (he attended in 69-70) no one's going to get so much as a glance at Pre's track shoes in the last lap.

Quite naturally, with this to build around, and help coming in the form of decathlon super-prep Craig Brigham, Bill Bowerman's charges will be good.

Last year the Ducks boasted NCAA point potential in shotputter Pete Shmock, hurdler Ivory Harris, discus thrower Mac Wilkins and speedster Al Hearvey. Pre was given an automatic 10 points when Hayward Field hosted the NCAA for the first time since 1964.

Nothing else was automatic and Oregon was left with its pants down. UCLA, USC, and UTEP saw that the Ducks couldn't triple-jump, steeplechase or throw the javelin and ran away and hid with the lion's share.

Biggest disappointments were Russ Francis, the national prep record holder in the javelin, Bob Daniel, another spear chucker, and Todd Lathers.

Francis and Daniel, both freshmen, didn't score any points and Lathers, nursing a season-long foot injury, was blanked in the steeplechase.

Oregon led with 32 points and fourth place, a notch lower than its final finish in the Pac-8 meet at Stanford a few weeks earlier. There were many who said the Ducks would

win that one. Final score: USC 140, UCLA 124, Oregon 86.

Shmock isn't around this year but the rest of that supporting cast to Pre is. And writing off the '72 season as a disaster wouldn't be accurate.

Not when Bowerman and four members of the team were in the Olympics and 13 in all from Oregon. Doug Chapman, Ross Blackman and Bob Martin all made the Canadian national team. With Bill roaring his disapproval of this and that around the Olympic village, and Ducks or former Ducks around every corner in Munchen, it looked like a giant twilight meet.

A tough act to follow. But Bowerman's university team will get to the blocks on time and should be stronger this season even if eight NCAA points are gone (Shmock).

For starters the Ducks return Wilkins, fourth in the NCAA and school record holder at 195-11. Then there's sophomore-to-be Steve Bence, who comes off a brilliant freshman year that produced a personal best 1:48.6.

Little Al Hearvey, who went out for Dick Enright's football team this fall as a wide receiver, has shed his "pixie" image once and for all.

The Californian should move up to star status as a sprinter. Al, who loves to run in searing temperatures, went through a yo-yo regular season, didn't place in the NCAA 20.9 and 10.2 men were a dime a dozen. Then Hearvey turned into a lion, sweeping a classy field in both sprints in the Rose Festival and finally he made it all the way to the semifinals at the Trials. "It's the competition," he says. "It gets me keyed up."

Whatever it was he held his own against the likes of Chuck Smith, Larry Black and Harrington Jackson and just missed a spot in that Olympic Trial final. His problem has been acceleration in the last 30-40 meters of the 200—his best race. At that juncture, Al is generally in the lead or close. If he closes that gap, his personal bests of 10.2 and 20.9 will go down.

Another Duck sprinter made banner headlines during the summer when he covered 100 yards in 9.2 during an all-comers meet at Hayward Field. It was the high point of John Mays' emergence as a genuine contender in the dash. The Portland senior's previous best was 9.5 and he's still coming.

Oregon speed in the spring relay (sixth in the NCAA) returns in Ross Blackman, Vince Buford, May and Hearvey. And the mile relay quartet that was second to UCLA in the big meet is back in its entirety.

The field events find Bowerman searching for a shotputter, and hoping that Francis and Daniel find maturity on the javelin runway. Of course there's no guarantee that Russ will throw come spring—he's pure football player and the pressures of track were a hassle last year.

The world's fastest 18-year-old steeplechaser two years ago was Todd Lathers. After that it's been a steady decline because of injuries but if the St. Helens product gets himself together he can score in any meet.

Intermediate hurdler Paul Wilkinson could improve on his 51.6 best. All he needs is more exposure to the big races.

The Ducks are secure in the quarter mile with Buford (46.6) and Vance (46.9). The real speedster here could be Ross Blackman, who turned in fantastic legs in the NCAA mile relay semifinal and final.

Now throw in the super-frosh. Oregon went after Brigham, just around the block at South Eugene, like survival depended on it. They got him.

He moves up as the team's top pole vaulter immediately (16-4) and will be tough in the high jump, where he's gone 6-8.

Brigham's exploits are well known. The 6-2, 195-pounder led South to the AAA track title by scoring 36 points—himself. He brings marks like 183-2½ (discus) and 57-8½ (shot) to Hayward Field. And the kid's had big meet experience, he was in the Olympic Trials' decathlon.

What would Oregon recruiting be without a top miler? This time it's Gary Barger of St. Helens who won the AAA title in 4:11.1 and was second in the 800.

Other candidates are two-miler Bob Grubs of Washington high in Fremont, Cal. (8:53.2) and sprinter James Holloway of North Salem. Holloway was second in the AAA 220 and 440 and owns 9.8 and 21.8 credentials.

If this team doesn't come on like instant excitement, Hayward Field will. It's just a matter of time before those dilapidated old grandstands give one final heave and collapse in a heap.

If the seats just hold together through the dual meet season and the Pac-8 championships, help is on the way in the form of a fund drive.

For the Ducks, help has apparently arrived.



Pre—eyes 1976 Olympics.

Photo by Phil Waldstein

Cross-Country

NCAA champs almost didn't show

Bill Dellinger told last year's Oregon cross-country team they wouldn't be going to the NCAA meet in Knoxville unless they won the Northern Division championship.

They didn't, but Steve Prefontaine won the individual title and was the defending NCAA champ. He wouldn't go to Knoxville unless the whole team went.

So what happened? The Ducks flattened the field and won their first NCAA title with a 1-12-19-22-29 point performance. Pre won his second straight NCAA crown and Dellinger

admitted later "we were so far ahead we could have won it without him."

It's a good thing. The team won't have Pre this year. He's taking a rest after his hectic season which culminated with a fourth-place finish at Munich in the 5,000 meters.

But back this fall is Randy James, who earned all-American ranking with his 19th place finish last year in the NCAA meet. The other scorers, Pat Tyson, 31st place, Mike Long 35th, and Rick Ritchie 48th, also return. Todd Lathers, the Ducks' star steeplechaser, will add depth.

Oregon's 83-point total was far ahead of WSU's 122. Penn was third with 158. The finish came after the Ducks had taken runner-up honors in both 1969 and 1970.

This year's Northern Division meet comes Oct. 29 in Seattle, with the PAC championships two weeks later. The national meet is in Houston this year.

Other candidates for team positions include mile recruit Gary Barger of St. Helens, and Bob Grubs, a California high school champ in the two-mile.



Bill Dellinger



Todd Lathers



Craig Brigham

Photo by James Link

Open House at Eugene Montessori School.

What it is and what it can do for your child.

If you have any doubts about the effectiveness of your child's present education program, you'll want to come by the Eugene Montessori School this Sunday afternoon and talk with our instructors and visit our classrooms.

This is a special Open House for members of the University community. Come and see an education alternative that respects your child's ability to learn and provides the environment he needs to freely pursue his learning.

The Eugene Montessori School is a non-profit organization that is qualified under welfare. Scholarships are also available.

Join us this Sunday from 12:30 to 4:30 P.M. And please... don't forget to bring your children.



EUGENE MONTESSORI SCHOOL
2255 Oakmont Way
Eugene, Oregon 97401
Phone (503) 345-7124