

Geis, Hale will be welcomed distance runners for Oregon

By ART BUSHNELL
Of the Emerald

Paul Geis had had a long week-end.

After running to a first place tie in the Saturday night Bakersfield Track Classic three-mile, he'd stayed up all night to get to San Francisco and run in the Sunday Bay-to-Breakers distance race.

There he ran an unofficial sixth in the 7.8-mile race through the hilly streets of the Bay City.

Now he was dog tired. But his year of exile as a non-competing transfer student was coming to an end and he already began looking forward to the fall cross country season in earnest.

"We're going to have the best cross country team in the nation. No other team will match us," said Geis.

After the collapse of Duck distance fortunes in the Pac-8 meet, Geis' statement may come as a bit of a surprise. But the Texas native makes a good case for his boast.

First he points to Steve Prefontaine, the Duck distance ace, who red-shirted in cross country last season and will be back for another season of eligibility in the fall.

"Pre'll have no worries. He'll be in top shape, coming off a strong European tour."

Then there's Tom Hale, Oregon's other ineligible transfer student.

Tom has run the nation's fifth best six-mile, 27:57.6. The winning Pac-8 time was 28:23.6. And Tom finished an official seventh in the San Francisco mini-marathon Sunday.

The race was won by Hale's Oregon Track Club teammate Ken Moore in 37:15. Jon Anderson in ninth, Russ Pate 17th, Bob Gray 18th and Jerry Tighe 30th rounded out the finishes for the OTC team winners of the coast race.

But the OTC victory would have been even more impressive if the officials had counted Geis' finish.

"I wasn't officially entered. After driving all night and getting an hour and a half of sleep, I got up early to try and get officially into the San Francisco race. But they wouldn't let me enter at the start of the race, so I ran without a number and placed sixth—the second American to cross the finish line."

Geis' week-end performance is even more impressive when he throws in the clincher—he'd had surgery only eleven days before the Bakersfield race—where he

ran his lifetime best by more than six seconds (13:18.8).

I'd missed six days of training because of the surgery and still got a new personal best. Because of the circumstances, I know I'm a lot better than the time indicates."

There's also another circumstance. Geis let up at the end so that he could cross the finish line in a pre-arranged tie with his friend Jim Johnson of Club Northwest. The two had both wanted fast times, so they took turns leading the race each lap. At the finish, Geis felt he had a lot left.

"I could have run a sub-13.14 if I hadn't agreed to tie. It was a stupid move, but I couldn't go back on my word."

Now both Hale and Geis are looking forward to finally being able to compete for Oregon.

Hale didn't know his time for the Bay race—he said it was a little confusing with 4000 runners on the course.

And he would've liked to have placed higher.

But for right now he's looking forward to competing for the Ducks.

"This year's been okay. Cross country wasn't too bad. During the indoor season I got to run as much as anybody. It's just been the last couple of months it hasn't been too fun not competing."

"I would have liked to be able to run in the Pac-8, the NCAA and the UCLA dual. Now I'm going to run the AAU six-mile and then get ready for cross country."

The six-mile will be Hale's event in college. He wants to run it in conference and national meets next year. In the meantime, he'll prepare with the fall outdoor races.

He thinks competition should be pretty good with Washington State—the defending Pac-8 cross country champs who showed up the Ducks in the distances this weekend.

"I was in Bakersfield after seeing the steeple. All I could do was listen to the results on the radio or read them in the paper. It's not too much fun just listening. I want to compete. Next year I'll be there."

Geis says Hale is "a good hill-runner and the NCAAAs for cross country will be on a hilly course in Washington next year."

In describing this fall's competition, Geis gets a little fired up thinking about running against Washington State.

He thinks WSU's corps of foreign runners will all be peaking in the fall for the Commonwealth Games. And he thinks

the Ducks will be ready for them.

"A lot of people are already talking about that rivalry. John Ngeno and Dan Murphy may be good, but Pre is a sure winner. We'll have more depth than they, with me, Hale, Mike Long, Bob Grubbs, Gary Barger and Randy James. I don't see how a team could hope to beat us."

Even so, it's the three-mile that Geis will be concentrating on.

"When Ngeno ran in the quadrangular meet here, WSU assistant coach John Chaplin came over to a group of Oregon runners and said Ngeno would take care of me next year. That just fires me up even more."

You can tell Geis and Hale are looking forward to the fall—and to next spring when they'll be able to compete in the Pac-8 and NCAA instead of just read about them.



TOM HALE

Photo by James Link



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