

Cross Country

Oregon's harriers seek 4th NCAA title but competition tough

By BRIAN CHAPMAN
Of the Emerald

A handful of teams laden with foreign imports appears to be the only obstacle between Oregon and its fourth NCAA cross country title in the last five years.

But if coach Bill Dellinger already has made room for the trophy in the Mac Court lobby, he's not telling anybody. The third-year man remains cautious despite the fact that he has another bottomless well of talent from which to select a team.

"It'll be tough to repeat last

year," Dellinger says referring to Oregon's 1974 NCAA title. "I believe we will be a stronger team but so will Washington State, West Kentucky, the University of Texas at El Paso and Villanova."

The competition to make the Duck's team will be as fierce as many races the squad runs in. Five of the six runners on last year's platoon return, including Paul Geis (fourth in the 1974 NCAA cross country championship), Dave Taylor (fifth), Terry Williams (sixth), Gary Barger (25th) and Bob Hensley (161st).

Geis, Taylor and Williams were the first Americans across the line last year and, together with Barger, won All-American honors.

The NCAA showdown will be fought out over six miles at Penn State on Nov. 25.

Geis, the gutty transplant from Rice, must be considered one of the favorites in the race.

Taylor, one of the nation's most underrated distance runners, was America's number three cross country runner last year by virtue of his slashing fifth place in the AAU Championship, a race in which he beat Frank Shorter, Marty Liquori and a host of other world-classers.

Williams, another junior who's run a slick 13:26 three-mile, will give the Ducks a 1-2-3 combination unmatched anywhere.

And that's just the beginning. Gary Barger, an 8:48 steeplechaser who leapt into national prominence last spring, could be the surprise of the squad. The Pac-8 steeplechase champ, Barger's

adeptness at clearing steeplechase barriers will give him an added asset on rugged courses.

Bob Hensley apparently has been hammering out the miles in Connecticut and will be back to reclaim his place on the team.

Bob Smith, a senior from Ashland, has combined a weight training program with a mind-blowing mileage regimen this summer in a final attempt to etch his name firmly into the Oregon cross country tradition.

Tom McChesney, a sub-nine-minute steeplechaser, is presently training hard and appears to be running strong. In the Pre's Trail run three weeks ago, Olympian's Mike Manley and Jon Anderson had problems shaking the dogged McChesney.

Newcomers to the squad include Matt Centrowitz and Steve McChesney, younger brother of Tom. Centrowitz, a transfer from Manhattan College who sat out last year's track season to become eligible, clocked a 3:59.2 mile while "sitting" and could threaten to make the top seven.

Other Oregon runners include steeplechaser Larry Hurst, Don Beckwith, Stan Adkins and newcomer Don Clary from Alaska.

Scott Daggatt, Pac-8 mile champ, will likely run cross country after returning from the Pan-Am Games in Mexico City.

The Ducks open their short competitive season on Nov. 1 in Eugene with the Northern Division race. An October 18th meet at Tokatee will be run to select the team.



Geis, Williams lead the pack

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