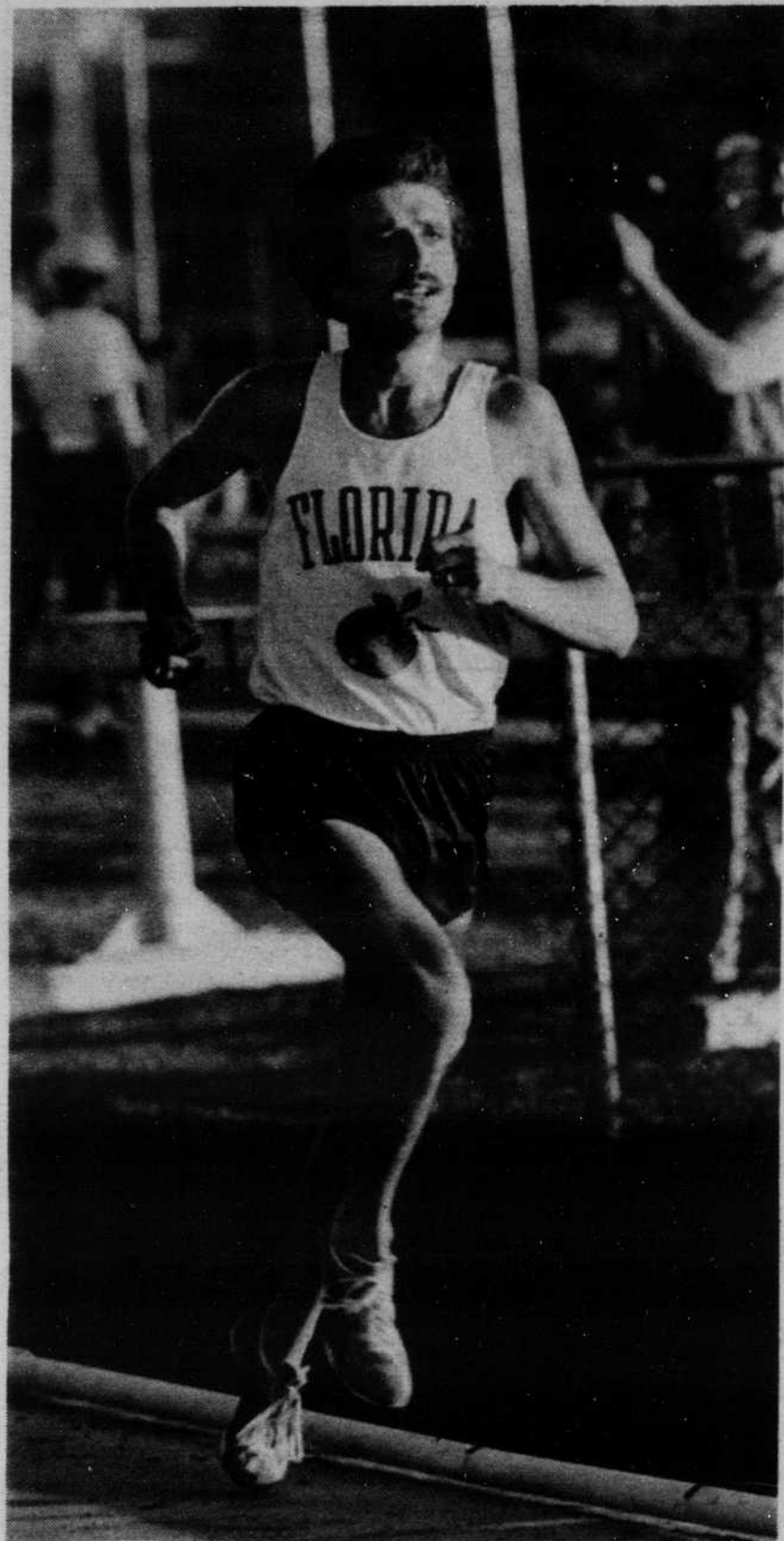


Rikli takes second step in quest for Olympic berth



Frank Shorter, who captured the Olympic marathon title four years ago in Munich, will be one of the favorites Saturday when the Olympic Trials for the grueling, 26-mile, 385-yard event are contested here in Eugene.

Bob Rikli, Oregon's All-American gymnast, takes step two this weekend in an attempt to make the U.S. Olympic team when he competes in the U.S. Gymnastics Federation championships in Berkeley, Calif.

Twenty-seven of the country's best gymnasts will be seeking to qualify for the third — and final — step in making the Olympic team.

The top 12 finishers this weekend advance to the final Olympic trials at Penn State in June, where the field will be narrowed to six representatives and one alternate.

Rikli's chances to make the Olympic team, coach Bill Ballester points out, aren't very good.

But there's a catch. The top 20 finishers this weekend will earn a spot on the U.S. Elite team, which travels around the world competing in exhibitions.

And Rikli's chances to make the top 20, Ballester says, are good.

"I consider Bob an outside shot to make the final trials," said Ballester. "But I think it's a very realistic goal that he make the Elite team."

Ballester estimates Rikli would have to score 110 to make the trials. His best is 107.20, which he achieved in qualifying for the Berkeley meet last month in the Western Regionals meet in San Jose.

Rikli, says Ballester, should have a shot at capturing the high bar and floor exercise individual titles.

"He's been runnerup twice in the floor ex at the NCAA meet," said Ballester. "This is his chance to become a national champion in that event. I think he can do it."

Only a lack of experience is keeping Rikli from being "one of the best gymnasts in the world," says Ballester.

A senior, Rikli only began competing in gymnastics seriously when he came to Oregon. "Compared to the other 26 guys he'll be competing against, Bob's had about half the training."

The top four spots this weekend are virtually cinched, according to Ballester. Bart Conner, a high

school gymnast from Morton Grove, Ill., California's Tom Beach, former Brigham Young ace Wayne Young and Indiana State's Curt Thomas should battle for the top positions, he says.

The meet begins tonight with compulsories and finishes up Saturday with optionals.

—sportfolio—

Ballester signs 3rd All-American

Jim Vokurka, an All-America gymnast from La Grange, Ill., has signed a national letter of intent to attend Oregon.

Vokurka was MVP and team captain of his Lyons High School team in La Grange this past year and earned high school All-America honors in four events — high bar, rings, floor exercise and all-around.

He also earned All-America honors as a junior on high bar and all-around.

Vokurka has a 3.4 cumulative grade point average and is the third high school All-America gymnast to sign with Bill Ballester and Oregon this spring.

"We're really pleased with Jim's signing," Ballester said. "Without question, he's one of the top ten high school gymnasts in the country. He has Olympic aspirations, just like the other two gymnasts we've signed (Breck Grigas and Gene Christensen)."

Vokurka was one of 12 young gymnasts to accept an invitation last summer to the U.S. Gymnastics Federation Olympic Development Camp.

He narrowed his choice of colleges to Oregon, California, South Illinois, Indiana State and Michigan before choosing the Ducks.

Jacobsen, Sanders make Pac-8 team

Oregon's Peter Jacobsen and Jeff Sanders have been named to the 1976 Pacific-8 all-conference golf team, it was announced Wednesday.

Others who made the eight-member team were Scott Simpson and Larry Collins from Southern California, Jay Johnston and Mike Peck from Stanford, California's Dave Fowler and Washington's Joe Runte.

Rugby Alumni game on tap Sunday

The Oregon club sports rugby team will play former alumni Sunday at 1:30 on the Intramural Field.

All Duck rugby players, past and present, are welcome to play. A banquet will follow the game for team members and guests.

For more information call 343-7375 or 343-6300.

JC transfers give Oregon a breakaway threat

By GREG STILES
Of the Emerald

After Saturday night's Alumni game, it was apparent that Don Read was successful in recruiting talented running backs last fall from the junior college ranks.

Dennis Bullock and Greg Gilchrist — both new additions to the Oregon backfield — combined with George Bennett and Eugene Brown to give the Ducks what apparently will be a powerful running game next year.

"We'll have a blend of inside and outside running," said Read. The Ducks' running game hasn't exactly awed its opponents in recent seasons, partly because of injuries, a lack of speed, and a relatively weak line.

"We'll have a lot more punch," said Read. "They (the running backs) ran like they did all spring...the threat is definitely there."

The first time Gilchrist got his hands on the ball Saturday he rambled for 11 yards to set up a 17 yard burst by Bennett on the very next play to give the varsity a 14-0 edge.

Bennett followed with a 20-yard sprint on his next carry, and before the half was

over Bullock had shown his stuff with a couple of sizeable gains.

"Those kids are a lot faster than Don Reynolds was," said Read. "Reynolds was a good running back, but he didn't run away from the defense like these guys can. He would cut back against the grain."

A group of scouts from Colorado State University, including head coach Sark Arslanian, seemed impressed by the Oregon running game.

"We think those new runners are class backs," said Arslanian. "He's (Read) tried to play down how good they are, but we'd sure like to have them playing for us."

Read wasn't ready to admit the new backs are as good as runners as Reynolds was but implied they were potentially as good as any that have donned the Oregon uniform in quite a while.

Something Read won't know about until next fall is how good the Ducks will be at returning punts and kickoffs.

"We haven't practiced very much this spring on our kicking game," said Read. "In the past we've spent time on punt and kick-off returns."

"We hope the kick-off and punt returns are going to be better because of the speed we've acquired."

Elsewhere Oregon's gridders look to be improved too. "We're going to be much improved all the way around," claimed Read.

The receiving corps will be improved over a year ago, led by returning stand-out Greg Bauer, who'll be joined by Jo Jo White, Tom Cafferty, Bill Vincent and Jeff Butts.

"The skilled areas will be much more improved," said Read. "Bauer is as good a little guy as there is anywhere."

Read will be looking forward to starting next season with a proven quarterback in Jack Henderson, who is one of the top returning passers in the nation from a year ago.

"People know that Jack Henderson can throw the football," said Read. Henderson completed 63 per cent of his passes Saturday night, hitting 12 of 19 attempts, mostly in the first half, for 93 yards.

Southern California football coach John Robinson was watching from the press box and he, too, was impressed.

"I'm much impressed with their quarterback (Henderson)," said Robinson. "He's very efficient...he understand what he's trying to do and executes very well."

Robinson said he thought the Pac-8 race would be "tighter" than in the past, and the team that managed to stay injury-free would most likely be the Rose Bowl team.

Nick Markulis, an Alumni team player who played for the Ducks during the mid-50s, also was impressed by new additions.

"Gilchrist had a lot of speed," he said. "He had good cutting ability too."

Pete Carlson, another alumnus, said, "Bullock, Gilchrist and Bennett were really impressive. I thought they really were running hard."

When Read started substituting freely in the second half, the Alumni battled back to come within two points.

But as one University official said, "I think Don proved his point in the first half."

He'll need to prove it again, though, when Colorado State invades Autzen Stadium Sept. 11.