

track

Morris finds success with his ideas

By MARK STEWART
Of the Emerald

Frank Morris, Oregon's assistant coach, resents being referred to as coach of Oregon's weightmen. "I had my first success in high school as a hurdler."

When Morris attended Medford High School in the early 1950s, his time of 19.3 was the best prep time in the country and he had the second best prep high hurdle time of 14.4. As a freshman at the University of Washington, Morris was the Pac-8 Northern Division champ in both the high and low hurdles.

His competitive days ended one weekend in the summer of 1954, when he was training for the decathlon.

"On Saturday after the first five events I was 155 points ahead of Bob Mathias' world record," Morris said. "The next day I was in the hospital with polio. That ended my athletic career. It paralyzed the calf muscles in my leg and I couldn't run with any speed."

When Morris' career as an athlete ended, he turned his thoughts and abilities to coaching. "I always knew I wanted to be a coach," said Morris. "I knew that as a junior in high school."

After college, Morris coached football, basketball and track in Oregon at Powers and Rogue River in the early 1960s. He took four years off to go into business with his brother and returned to the coaching ranks at Springfield High School in 1969 as track coach and football assistant. In 1972 he was an assistant trainer at Oregon and in 1974 became one of the track coaches.

"My whole life revolves around athletics," Morris said. "The only

regret I have about coaching track at the collegiate level is I miss basketball. I love it as much as track. But I wouldn't go back."

"Basketball is a team sport that involves constant activity and involves changing strategies all the time. Those are things that makes basketball the exciting sport it is today." And the sport Morris misses most.

"In track I have my own ideas on technique. It's fun to see if my ideas work." Morris said he reads and re-reads technical journals and does film studies on the world's great athletes and Oregon's athletes. Another thing he does is study the laws of motion.

"Physical laws determine what you can and can't do," said Morris. "I can't tell an athlete to do something that conflicts with the laws of motion." Another thing Morris is starting to explore is the area of bio-mechanical analysis — analysing the mechanical processes of the body.

Some of Morris' techniques have paid off. Mac Wilkins, the world record holder and 1976 Olympic gold medalist in the discus, has been his best achievement. In fact, Wilkins is probably the athlete responsible for Morris getting his reputation as a weight event coach.

"As a trainer, I was given the assignment of working with the discus throwers," said Morris. "One of them was Mac Wilkins. Since then we've had a number of outstanding discus throwers. When he was named as assistant coach by Bill Dellinger, Morris became coach for all the weight events, the vertical jumps, hurdles and decathlon.

Morris enjoys coaching be-

cause of the challenge it presents him.

"I like the challenge of taking an athlete I consider to have outstanding athletic potential and developing that potential as far as I can the four years I have him." Wilkins' development as an athlete has been the highlight of Morris' career as a coach, according to Morris.

"He was an intense athlete and fun to work with; he had total dedication. I enjoy working with the guys now just as much as Mac. They're fun to be around."

Morris enjoys challenges off the field also. He is the individual most responsible for building the fieldhouse under Hayward Field's west grandstand.

"I enjoyed being able to com-

plete the fieldhouse not only because we needed it but I needed a sense of accomplishment I guess," said Morris.

Morris said when he was recruiting pole vaulter Tom Hintnaus, he told Hintnaus that there would be a fieldhouse for him to jump in. "I didn't know how I was going to get one."

"When Hayward was built it was to have a fieldhouse underneath it. The money never materialized," said Morris. "I went to an architect, a member of the Oregon Track Club, and asked him to draw up the plans. He did. Then I went to different people and got materials, from Portland to southern Oregon, donated. Then a local contractor to oversee the project. Then the track

team... went out and built it. It took about two months to get it finished."

As much as Morris enjoys athletics and coaching, he said coaching does have its drawbacks.

"Coaching is a different kind of business, putting your security and your job in the hands of 18-22 year-old kids. If they don't produce, you're out of a job. Coaching is funny and exciting." But Morris' next statement gives one the idea he won't give up coaching. At least not very darn soon.

"It's a tremendous challenge to see if you can develop someone to their potential and to see if you can bring a group of people together that's better than someone else's."



Photo by Mike Baer

Frank Morris doesn't like being referred to as Oregon's weight coach; but his success in that area has brought attention to himself and Oregon nationwide. One of Morris' top athletes was Mac Wilkins, who won the discus in the 1976 Olympics and is the world record holder in that event.

This Week
at MURPHY'S

Wed. & Thur.
DAKOTAH
Fri. & Sat.
**LAST CHANCE
BAND**
SUNDAY
Benefit for
**EUGENE MUSIC
BULLETIN**
featuring:
ROBERT CRAY BAND
Mon. & Tue.
From Ghana, W. Africa!
**ORIGINAL
HEDZOLEH SOUNDZ**
High Life Funk
& African Jazz

LOWENBRAU
Light & Dark
MILLER ON TAP
85c Pitcher - \$1.85 Large Pitcher

**MURPHY & ME
TAVERN**

JUST OFF FRANKLIN ACROSS FROM OREGON HALL
1475 FRANKLIN 485-9274

GREAT LUNCHES!
11 AM - 7 PM
HAPPY HOURS!
Mon - Thurs; 2-5 PM
FRIDAY - 2-6 PM

EMU Food Service
95¢ BREAKFAST

**2 Eggs
Hashbrowns
Toast**

The Cafeteria Grill
Open 7:00 am Mon-Fri