

track

Ducks' California weightmen shooting for the NCAA gold

By MARK STEWART
Of the Emerald

There are two Californians on the men's track team that collectively stand nearly 11 feet tall and weigh a quarter-ton, are the best of friends, throw heavy metal objects far and are called by their coach two of the best weightmen the University has ever seen.

Senior Dave Voorhees and sophomore Jeff Stover has been two of the best weightmen in the country in their particular events this year and both could score points in the NCAA meet to be held here the first weekend of June.

Voorhees, in the twilight of his collegiate career, threw the discus 206-6 in the Twilight meet May 5, which is the best by a collegian this year. Stover has been around 63-0 in the shot all year, with a best of 64-7 (in the May 6 Pepsi Invitational in Los Angeles) which is five feet further than he was throwing at this time last year.

"I'm not a bit surprised," said assistant coach Frank Morris of Voorhees' 206-6 toss. "I've said all along that he's as talented an athlete as we've ever had here." Morris said Voorhees could become a world-class discus thrower if it weren't for one stumbling block — his knees.

"He's capable of throwing with (world record holder) Mac Wilkins providing he's healthy and can do the work he needs to."

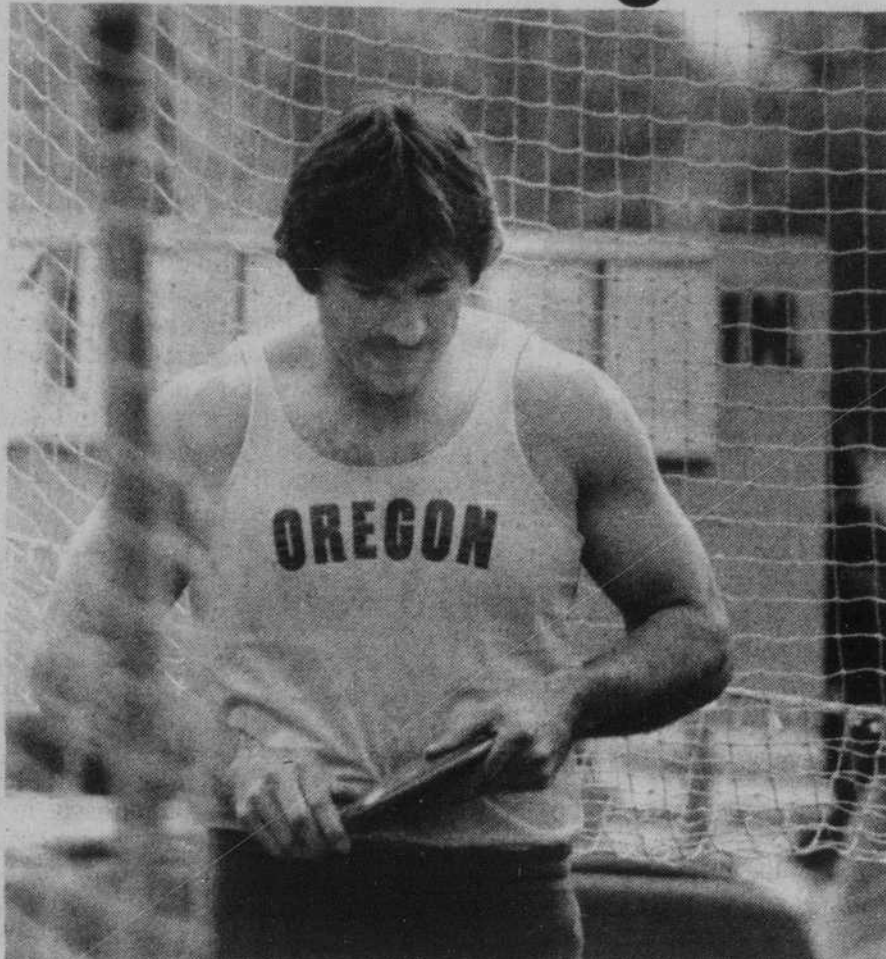
Voorhees hurt his left knee in 1976 after too much weightlifting and throwing.

"My body was worn down and I didn't pay attention," Voorhees said. "I thought it would go away. In April, it got really bad. So I didn't practice until the Pac-8 meet and it flared up then. I didn't perform real well." He placed fifth in the discus.

Surgery was performed in November when the knee did not improve during the summer.

"I had visions of a torn tendon, but there was not much to repair," Voorhees said. After the surgery he still had the same pains as before.

He started throwing again in February of last year and threw for



Dave Voorhees

Photo by Mike Baer

the Oregon Track Club late last spring after red-shirting for the year. His first throws were in the mid-180s and eventually he worked up to 200 feet. "I was happy with that. To tell the truth I still had the old feeling of how to throw."

When last fall came the knee still hurt. And then the right one started giving him problems.

One of the things that got Voorhees down was the weather. "I was raised in the sun," he said, "I'm like a duck out of water here. I get so down mentally that I go nuts." So Dave Voorhees sat down to have a talk with Dave Voorhees.

"I told myself, 'Dave, you better do it.' I got more intense. I had to commit myself. I don't want to sound like an egotist, but I wasn't applying myself."

When the weather's good, Voorhees usually throws well. When it's not so good, he has a hard time getting psyched to throw.

In the mist, wind and cold at

Washington, Voorhees threw 183-1. The next week in the sun he threw 195-5 against UCLA. In the Washington State meet the next week, Voorhees threw 183-9 in the rain. Against San Jose State, he threw 187-11 in the rain. Then against Oregon State, Voorhees threw for a lifetime best 205-0 and the next week in the Twilight threw over 206-0 twice. If he could throw further than 204-6 in the NCAA meet, he would be the new discus record holder. He's already done that three times this year.

While Voorhees still throws the shot (he's also one of the team's best shot putters), the arrival of Stover allowed Voorhees to concentrate on his "first love" — the discus.

Stover, an all-league fullback in California for four years, was a good shot putter from his junior high days.

"In eighth grade, the high school coach asked me to throw the 8 pound shot," Stover said. I had a feel for it. At the time I threw better than the sophomores did with the 10 pound shot."

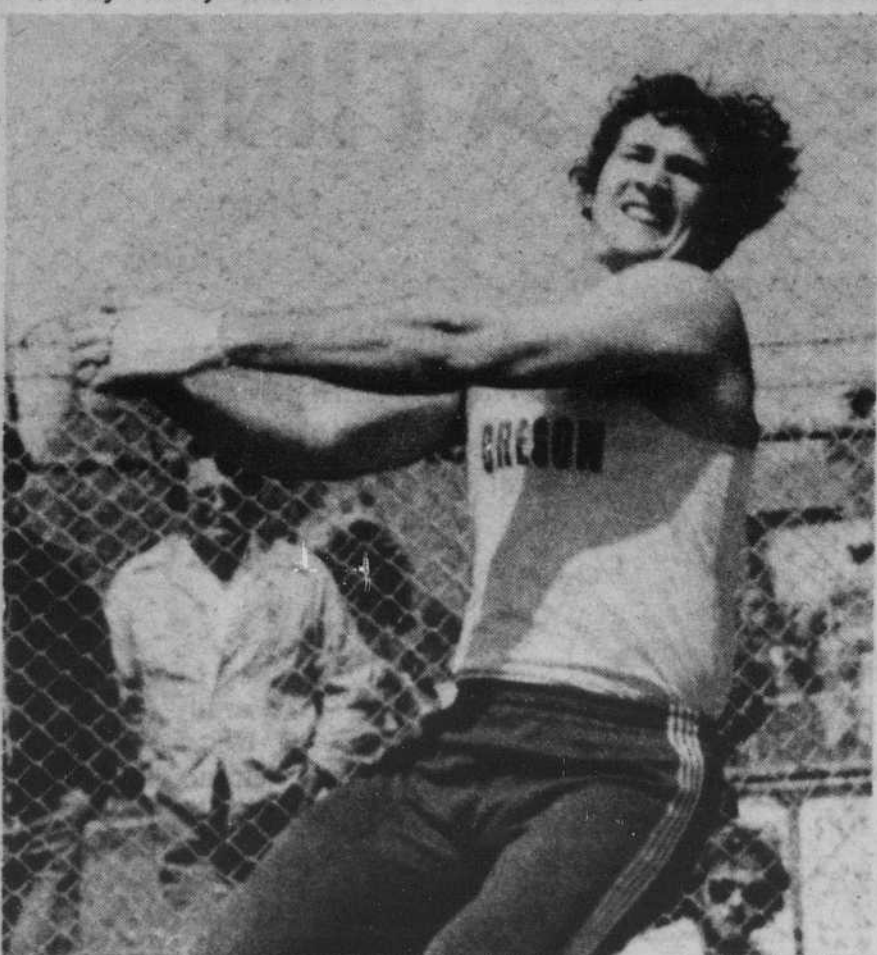
Though he enjoyed playing football, his heart was not in team sports. So he began to concentrate on the shot. He was recruited by Oregon State, Colorado, Idaho State, and Washington to play football, but was not interested because they had good shot putters. He really wasn't noticed as a shot putter until late in his senior year.

"I didn't throw good until I had good competition," he recalls. "My last three meets I threw really well."

He ended up at Oregon because his coach, Gary Burton, had a nephew, Ray, at Oregon and between the two Burtons the Oregon coaching staff was kept informed of Jeff Stover's accomplishments.

"I didn't know anything coming in (to Oregon)," Stover said. "Technically, I was not good. Frank taught me everything. My next two years I'll come to him every two weeks to keep my skills up."

(Continued on p. 4B)



Jeff Stover

Photo by Bill Ross

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