

Cross Country

Recruiting builds program

By KEN SANDS
Of the Emerald

Money means success in sports, and Tom Heinonen, women's cross country coach, has the money.

"We recruited for the first time this year, and we proved that we could recruit top-flight athletes," says the fourth-year coach. He lists money, population, and geography as the major stumbling blocks to women's athletics at Oregon. "As long as we have the money, the major stumbling block is removed," he states.

The Ducks didn't just stumble into the AIAW Championships for the last two years though. A strong program was established before the recent availability of money. According to Heinonen, athletes are attracted here because of Eugene's reputation as "Track Capital of the World."

Population and geography remain as trouble spots for Heinonen, but he is coping with them by recruiting and scheduling outside of the Northwest Region.

On Oct. 7, the team travels to Berkeley to meet some of the

nation's best teams. "It's a chance to meet some national class competition," Heinonen says.

Upgrading the schedule is important to Heinonen, as they don't get much competition in the weak Region 9. "In the past two years, we've won every meet until we got to nationals," explains Heinonen. "When a runner is used to being in first, and she finds herself in 50th, it's hard to handle," he states.

Heinonen believes that his women are beginning to hold their own at nationals. "If people stay healthy and in good shape, we have every reason to believe that we're a national class team," he estimates.

He also figures that he'll need five of the women in the top 50 in order to challenge defending champion Iowa State for the AIAW title. "We have a better chance this year than last year," he says of the Ducks 1977 seventh place finish.

Returning are nine runners, and at least four new runners are expected by Heinonen to contribute. Seniors Jennifer Bates, Jennifer Daniel and Char Marino return for their final year.

Katy Mountain, and Ellen Schmidt are juniors, and returning sophomores are Molly Morton, Jody Parker, Debbie Richie, and Heather Tolford. Freshman runners include Cheri Williams, Irene Griffith, Lori Alzner, and Terri Wells.

Seven Ducks have run the 3,000 meters in less than 10 minutes, and Williams has the fastest track time. "There's no way I can predict who is going to be our number one runner, because so much depends on the course," emphasizes Heinonen.

The University of Washington presents the only real threat within the region, and such teams as Cal-Northridge, Iowa State, Tennessee, and Penn State are the major contenders for the AIAW title.

Opening the season Sept. 30, the women run their only Eugene race at LCC's Garrie Franklin Classic. After the Berkeley meet, the Ducks meet OSU at a high-altitude location in Central Oregon. The Shasta Invitational on Oct. 21, precedes the regional meet in Seattle. Nationals are scheduled for Nov. 4, in Denver.



Distance runner prepares for nationals

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Cross country success at the University is not limited to the men's NCAA Championship team. With scholarships available for women runners, coach Tom Heinonen has built a powerful program.

Vital to this program is sophomore Heather Tolford, the University record holder in four distance events: the two-mile, 3,000 meters, 5,000 meters and 10,000 meters.

In the Bohemia Mining Days half-marathon last summer, Tolford ran an unofficial world's record. In National Amateur Athletic Union meets over the last three years, she has placed 14th, 13th and 10th in the 10,000 meters.

With this impressive list of accomplishments, her confidence in herself and the team is justified. "One of my goals is to be on a National Championship team, and another is to be an All-American," she reveals.

Last year Tolford rose from an "also-ran" to one of the best collegiate runners. Running in the

prestigious Sportswest meet in August, she lead for half of the 10,000 meter race before succumbing to world record holder Kathy Mills. "It was one of the few times that anyone has ever lead in a race against her," says Tolford.

She may also run in a half-marathon next month if coach Tom Heinonen approves. "It's in Dayton, Ohio, and it's in the middle of cross country season," she explains.

The season comes first, and both of Tolford's goals are in sight. "We definitely have a good shot at the title," she believes, "with seven that run the 3,000 in less than 10 minutes we'll be in good shape."

This abundance of depth indicates the strength of the team. "Usually teams just have a couple of stars, but we'll have a JV team that could beat other varsity teams," she boasts.

Naturally this creates some rivalry within the team, but Tolford feels that it is a friendly rivalry. "We have so many good people that it's going to be highly competitive to get on the team," she

states.

However, the harder the individual competes, the better for the team, so Tolford sees the competition as a plus. Another big plus is the helpfulness of coach Heinonen. "He's a great guy. He's gone out of his way for me, and he has a flexible program to accommodate everyone," says Tolford.

The more miles the better for

Tolford, whose personal program includes 20-mile road runs. Suited best for distance, she ran her first marathon Sept. 10, as an experiment. "I have some good friends that are marathoners, and they are all older, but I didn't want to wait until I was 30 to start running the race," she says.

Her goals are limited because the longest Olympic race for

women is 1,500 meters. "That's just a sprint for me, and I'm no sprinter," she laments. If Olympic rules do not change soon, she plans to continue on the "road circuit."

Going on the road would mean plenty of travel, and being wined and dined by the promoters. "I really enjoy the road-race circuit," she comments.



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