

Ducks face a new test at NCAA meet

By JIM ALLEN
Of the Emerald

The University men's track team finds itself in the unfamiliar position of underdog this weekend as the NCAA championships unfold Friday and Saturday in Champaign, Ill.

After completing a 5-0 dual-meet season capped by a victory in the Pac-10 meet, coach Bill Dellinger's squad is seeking its first-ever collegiate track-and-field triple crown. But it won't be easy, as the Ducks are picked to finish behind the University of Texas-EI Paso. Other highly-rated teams are UCLA, Villanova, Tennessee, Auburn and Alabama.

"UTEP still has to be the favorite," says Dellinger, whose teams haven't won an NCAA title in his seven years as coach.

"We are definitely still in the picture, but we can't afford any injuries to our key guys."



Emerald photo

Hammer thrower John McArdle, who finished fourth at last year's national meet, could be one of several "breakthroughs" the Ducks

may need if they are to capture the NCAA title this weekend in Champaign, Ill.



Don Clary

Don Clary, who holds the second fastest steeplechase time in the nation this year, is one important individual. Clary ran the event in 8:26.9 against Washington State, in April at Hayward Field, but injured his foot during the Pac-10 championships in Tempe, Ariz.

Clary would normally place high at nationals (where he took fifth last season), but the injury may prevent him from running at all.

"He has a bump on his ankle bone," says Dellinger. "Right

now, it protrudes. It may be caused by the extra bumping the foot gets in a steeplechase or by the shoes he's wearing. We have to decide whether he's capable of running the steeplechase, or if he will run the 5,000." Also entered in the steeplechase for Oregon are Ken Martin and Larry Hurst.

The team battle may be decided in the distance races, says Dellinger, where both UTEP and Villanova expect to score well. In the 10,000 meters, the Duck's Alberto Salazar (with a best of 28:40.6 this year) takes on UTEP's Michael Musyoki, the national leader with a best of 28:26.8.

The 5,000 will feature Oregon's defending NCAA champion Rudy Chapa against UTEP's Suleiman Myambui and Villanova's Sydney Maree. Villanova's Amos Karir may also score high in the steeplechase.

In the 1,500, Myambui should duel for the top spot with Maree and Don Paige of Villanova, but the field this year is tightly bunched with 12 runners under the 3:44.0 mark.

UTEP and Villanova will double their best runners in an effort to gain points, but Oregon's

Chapa will run only the 5,000.

"It's a tough double (the 1,500 and 5,000 are scheduled just one hour apart at Saturday's finals) and I think if anybody's capable of winning an individual national title, he should be allowed to be fresh for that race and given every opportunity to win," says Dellinger.

"Rudy has a tough chore ahead of him," adds the coach, "but I think he can repeat."

Oregon and UTEP will also wage their battle on the field, especially in the weight events. Duck hammer thrower John McArdle (ranked fourth) will compete against the Miners' Richard Olsen (second) and Tommie Sjolholm (fifth). In the shot put, the Duck's Jeff Stover is ranked fifth while UTEP's Hans Almstrom is placed sixth.

But the biggest confrontation between Oregon and UTEP should come in the discus, where top-ranked Svein Walvik of UTEP takes on the Duck's second-ranked Ray Burton.

The Ducks will also count on points from Tom Hintnaus in the pole vault and Reidar Lorentzen in the javelin. Both are ranked first in most of the form charts,

but Hintnaus is still recovering from a viral infection, while Lorentzen could be upset in the most unpredictable field event.

Lorentzen has the best mark in the nation this year, but his personal best of 271-2 came over five weeks ago and he hasn't approached that mark since then. Tom Sinclair of Washington, the Pac-10 champion (259-11), and Steve Kreider of Army (264-1) should offer the stiffest challenges to Lorentzen.

The Miners may have a slight edge in the team race with a point total in the low 50's, while the Ducks are predicted to finish a few points behind.

The Ducks may need some surprises to catch the Miners. Phil Bransom found his form in the intermediate hurdles in time to win the Pac-10 title, while he remains a threat to score in the high hurdles. Don Coleman, who took third in both the 100 and 200 at the Pac-10 meet, al-

so has the potential to score.

But the Miners may pull a few surprises, as freshman triple jumper Keith Conner has a lifetime best of 54-0 3/4 but a sore foot as well. Conner, the British Commonwealth champion, is not expected to place but has the potential to win. If he does, the Ducks' title hopes might be over. In addition, the Miners have defending 800 meter champion Peter Lemashon, (ranked fourth) who is off form this year could easily repeat.

But aside from any surprise finishers, most of the points for either team will come in events where they face each other.

Last year USC's sprinters held off UTEP's distance runners and weight men. In fact, the two teams didn't go head-to-head in any event.

Certainly this year will be different, as the Ducks and Miners wouldn't be able to avoid each other even if they wanted to.

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