

Ducks may score in 8 events

Oregon's chances for a good showing at the AIAW meet lie in the arm of Patty Kearney and the legs of Leann Warren.

Both women have the nation's top marks in their events. Kearney unleashed a 180-7 javelin toss April 19 against Washington and Warren clocked a 2:03.04 against Oregon State rival Kathy Weston on May 3. Kearney's closest competition is Cathy Sulinski of Cal-State Chico (176-8), while Warren can expect a strong rematch with Weston (2:03.67, lifetime best 2:00.7).

A first-place finish by each will give the Ducks 20 points — one better than the 19 they scored last year to take eighth place in

the team standings. According to coach Tom Heinonen, the Ducks could also score in the discus, shot, 5,000 or 3,000, 400 and mile relay.

Lisha Lass has been steadily improving each week in the discus, and uncorked a 159-7 throw at the NCWSA meet last week. Teammate Mary Stevenson (158-9) is close behind. Carrie Albano also got her best effort in the shot (48-4½) at NCWSA to qualify for the AIAW meet.

If Eryn Forbes runs the AIAW 5,000, her 16:37.4 best puts her within striking distance of scoring points in the race. The same case holds if she runs the 3,000 instead, where her best is

9:31.39. Grace Bakari has a 53.7 season best in the 400 and is still searching for the competition to approach her 53.1 lifetime best.

The Oregon mile relay team is capable of running much faster than its 3:41 season best, Heinonen says.

"We want to score more points than last year, and we want to move up in the standings," says Heinonen. "It's possible that 20 points couldn't move us up." Heinonen does put some credence in the home field advantage his team will enjoy. "Our people will surely feel comfortable there. And on Friday and Saturday, they'll have a crowd to back them up."

Kearney

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ed for the first couple of weeks training with him. He'd say something about my arm, so the next throw I'd do something about my arm. Then he'd say something about my foot, and I'd say 'my gosh, I can't think of all these things at once.'

"Then one day we went out and trained together by ourselves, and he said 'You know, you don't have to think about all the things that I'm saying every time. I'm just saying them because there's not that much time and I want you to get a full idea of what I'm trying to do.' That cleared things up a lot more, and practices became more pleasant."

Irving feels the trip has helped Kearney's self-awareness. "I think it helped to reinforce some of the things that we had gone over in the past. She's to the point now where she feels a lot of the things that are going on. She's able to correct a lot of those things on her own. That's the sort of thing a coach hopes for, because it becomes a necessary thing when the athletes get into meets."

Kearney also points to a new motivation for training. "In the long run, what it (the trip) gave me is a new sense of training, a chance to look at javelin throwing in a different way. After a while it can get old, the training,

and you need something new to spark you on, and I found some new things to work on."

Kearney is hoping all the extra time and effort will pay off this week, and at the Olympic Trials next month.

"I'd like to have a PR, that would be great. But I just want to be able to perform well," Kearney says.

One other advantage for Kearney in both meets may be the ever-increasing attention of the Hayward Field crowd.

"This year, when the people started to clap, it really helped in my throws," she says. "It just helps to get you more motivated. I think it's really neat that they've given the women throwers more attention."

Kearney is uncertain of her plans following the trials, but hopes to continue throwing. "If my body says it's OK and I keep the desire, I want to continue to throw. I don't think I'd be happy if I didn't continue until I didn't improve," says Kearney.

Because of her improvement each year, Irving also hopes Kearney will stick with the javelin. "It's been a good progression for her, I hope she continues throwing. I'd hate to see her stop, because I think that progression will continue, too."

Whether she continues or

not, Kearney's career at Oregon has to be considered a success.

"She's been enjoyable to work with for the past four years," Irving says. "If I could get a couple athletes every year with her interest in throwing, I'd be very happy. She's done a lot to upgrade the image of throwing for women at the University of Oregon."

No one can argue with that.

Story by Jim Lund

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