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Crouser toss steals show

By JOHN HEALY
Of the Emerald

All the talk last week centered on Alberto Salazar. Would he set an American record Saturday in the 5,000 against Kansas?

Or would his slightly tender legs prevent him from dipping below Marty Liquori's record of 13:15.06?

But before Salazar had an opportunity to answer that question, sophomore Dean Crouser stole the show from the distance runner by surpassing one of Oregon's most hallowed records — Olympic gold medalist Mac Wilkins' mark of 212-6 in the discus.

The Oregon sophomore's 213-0 toss was one of 10 wins the Ducks posted against Kansas on the way to a 97-56 victory.

Crouser's record-breaking throw was part of a series that included tosses of 203-0, 198-3, 202-11, 204-9 and 202-3. His average for the series was 204-0.

"I knew I could do something today because I've never opened over 200 feet," Crouser said. "Everything was good today. I felt good physically, the conditions were good, and although the wind could have been better, it was good for Hayward Field."

Crouser attributed part of his success Saturday to the southerly gusts of wind that funneled through Hayward Field. Headwinds translate into added distance for discus throwers, said Crouser.

The sudden improvement over his previous best of 205-11 was achieved by finding a solution to some technical problems.

"If I couldn't have solved my technical problems I couldn't have gotten (the record) this year.

The problems stemmed from Crouser's spin movement across the discus ring. He had been having difficulty keeping his center of gravity balanced as

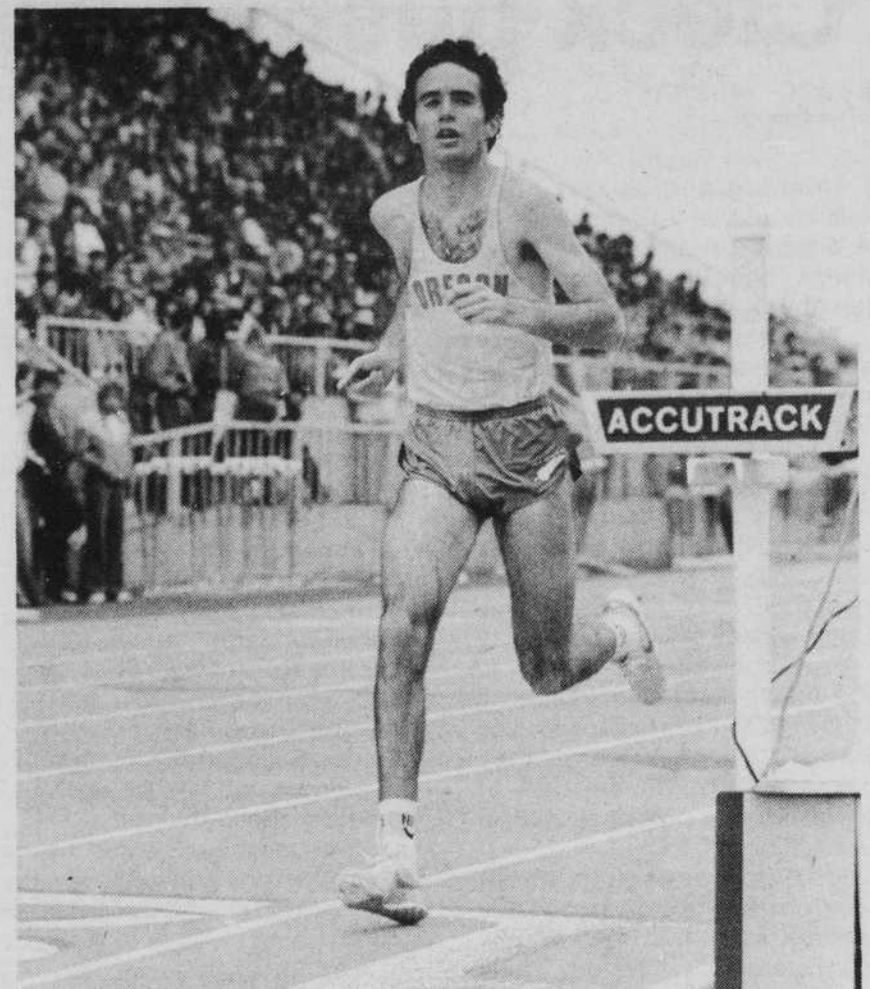


Photo by Steve Dykes

Alberto Salazar checks his time as he crosses the start/finish line on the bell lap of the 5,000.

he moved, but finally solved the problem this week.

While he felt fairly confident in his technique going into Saturday's meet, he wasn't too sure about his overall condition.

"I came out today and wasn't really expecting much because I hurt my knee in a weight workout this week. I was throwing as hard as I could (during practice) but I could only hit 190," said Crouser.

Once he got in the ring Saturday, though, things brightened up. He was in the 210 range in warmups and then went over 200 feet on his first competitive meet throw.

"Today I just felt good," said Crouser. "Usually my opening mark is 180 and today it was 202. It (the 213 toss) was a good technical throw, although I really didn't expect it to be 213."

Crouser, who went 186-1 as a freshman, expects even better things in the future.

"There is still a lot there. I'd really like to get the NCAA record (214-7, set by Washington State's Borys Chambul in 1976) and 220 is a realistic goal for this year. But it's more realistic next year."

Realism hit Salazar just after

the gun went off in the 5,000 meters.

"Right from the beginning it just didn't feel smooth. My legs just didn't feel good. The hamstring hurt a little but it was mainly just a week of not feeling good," Salazar said.

To break Liquori's record, Salazar needed to average 64 seconds per lap. He was on pace for the first five laps, but then began slipping into the 65-66 second range. After that, the only question was whether the Oregon senior could break his career best of 13:22.

"I thought about going to 70's (seconds per lap) but then I thought 'What the hell, I can't start quitting like that. I thought I'd run in the low 20's, but with the wind, not much better.'"

First-place finishers
Javelin — Reidar Lorentzen, Ore., 260-11.
Discus — Dean Crouser, Ore., 213-0. Shot put — Crouser, Ore., 62-1 3/4. Long jump — Mark Hanson, Kan., 24-11 3/4. Triple jump — Paul Titus, Kan., 48-1. High jump — Joel Light, Kan., 7-0 3/4. Pole vault — George Buckingham, Kan., 16-0. 110 hurdles — Don Wright, Ore., 13.9. 400 hurdles — Anthony Leaks, Kan., 52.60. 100 — Larry Bradley, Ore., 10.4w. 200 — Mike Ricks, Kan., 21.39. 400 — Ricks, Kan., 46.70. 800 — David Mack, Ore., 1:50.50. 1,500 — Nate Harrison, Ore., 3:47.68. Steeplechase — Stan Link, Ore., 8:53.3. 5,000 — Alberton Salazar, Ore., 13:35.6. 400 relay — Oregon, 40.55. 1,600 relay — Kansas, 3:15.8.

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