

weekly emerald sports

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Now it's the guys' turn

Men's track team hopes to crack top 5 at NCAA

The women have set the stage. Now the men's track team will have the opportunity, starting Thursday, to shoot for a high team finish at their national meet — the NCAA championships in Baton Rouge, La.

Track aficionados have picked the Ducks for a top-five finish, and Oregon coach Bill Dellinger would tend to agree.

"I'm hoping we can score around 30 or 40 points. UTEP (Texas-El Paso), Southern Methodist and Arizona State have to be considered the top teams, but behind that I see a bunch of teams with the capability of scoring a lot of points.

"I think we are definitely among that group and if we perform up to our capabilities, we should be able to finish in the top five or so."

Last year, the Ducks compiled 24 points to finish in a tie for sixth. UTEP took the 1980 crown with 69 points.

Only one scorer returns from that 1980 team. Sophomore David Mack took sixth in the 800 meters with a time of 1:47.8. Mack seems to be on schedule this year after winning his second Pac-10 title in 1:46.99.

Rudy Chapa and Alberto Salazar, redshirts last year, are former NCAA scorers. Chapa was the 5,000 champ in 1978 and was second in 1979. Salazar took third in the 10,000 in 1979.

Chapa seems to be returning to form after an injury-filled season. Salazar, however, aggravated a tender knee and ankle at the Pac-10 meet. How it will affect his performance at Baton Rouge is unknown.

Another Oregon runner with a good chance to score is steeplechaser Mike Friton, who took second at the Pac-10 with a personal-best 8:35.

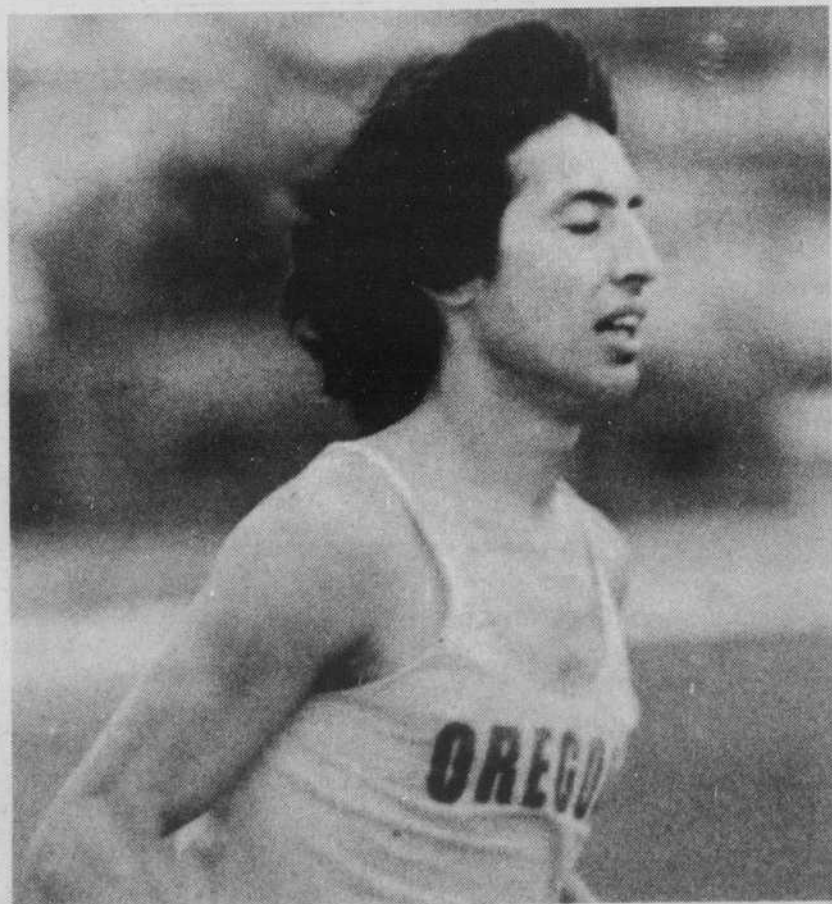
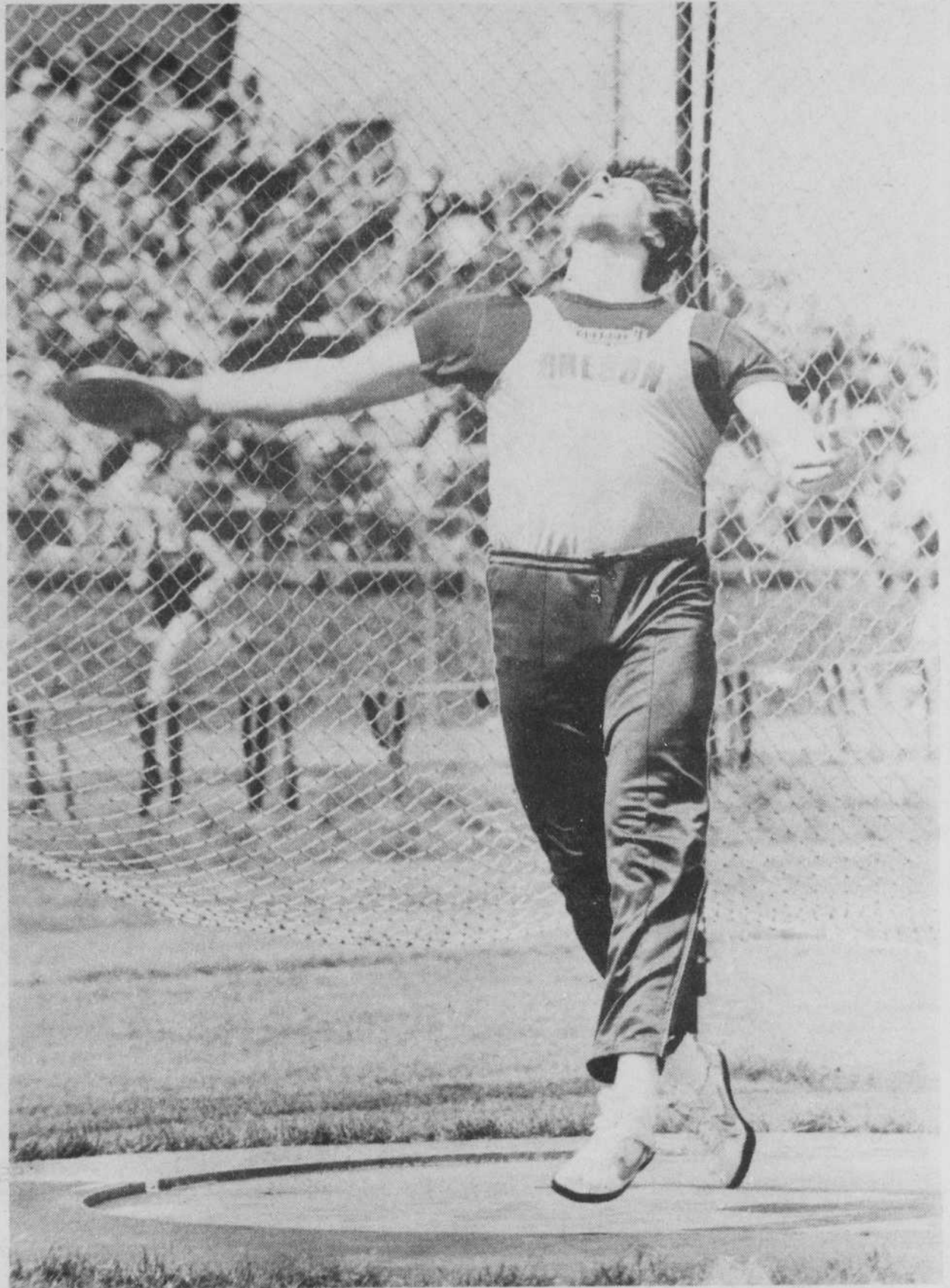
In the field events, Oregon has two athletes who led the nation in their events during the year. Reidar Lorentzen's 265-0 in the javelin is now surpassed only by Washington State's Laslo Babits (265-5). Lorentzen defeated Babits and the Pac-10 field with a 261-2 toss.

Dean Crouser is still the nation's top collegiate discus thrower with his 213-0 toss against Kansas. Crouser is currently experiencing a little stiffness in his knees, but otherwise feels ready for the NCAA.

"I really can't wait to see what will happen. A 200 throw will place in the top three, but I'm looking for more than that."

Others who will make the trip are Jim Hill (5,000), Greg Erwin (10,000), Don Wright (110 hurdles), Don Ward (400 hurdles), Frode Stomyr (javelin), Kent Landerholm (hammer), Eric Hohn (hammer) and both relay teams.

Oregon athletes with a good shot at NCAA points include Dean Crouser (left), Mike Friton (below left) and Rudy Chapa (below).



Photos by Steve Dykes