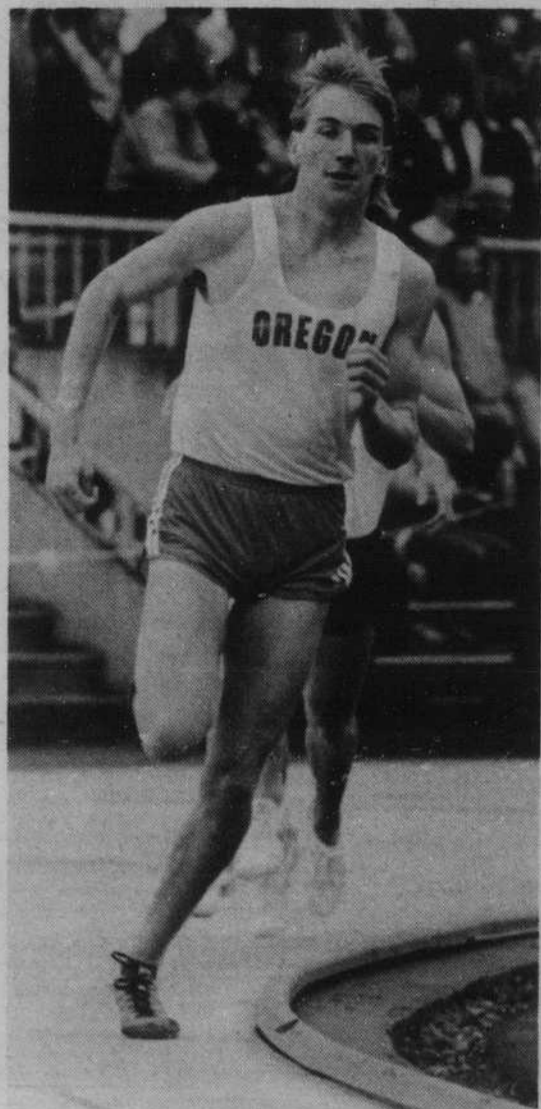


This guy's made a prophet of his coach



File Photo
Matt McGuirk's 8:36.63 clocking at the Pepsi Relays put him in seventh place on the Oregon all-time steeplechase list.

By John Healy
Of the Emerald

When Oregon track and field coach Bill Dellinger talks, sophomore steeplechaser Matt McGuirk listens.

That's because every time Dellinger predicts a time for McGuirk, the former South Eugene prep star goes out and runs that time.

In the process, McGuirk has slipped under the Olympic Trials qualifying time and moved into third on the Pac-10's steeplechase list this year.

"This year, I've mainly been running for a time in the big meets," says McGuirk. "When I got my PR 1½ months ago in our first meet, Bill had told me that week to run for an NCAA qualifying time."

So McGuirk ran 8:44.39, just under the NCAA qualifying mark of 8:45.10. Then, before the Oregon Pepsi Relays meet last weekend, Dellinger told McGuirk to give the Olympic Trials qualifying mark of 8:40.80 a scare. McGuirk proceeded to finish fifth in a loaded field, but in the process clocked an 8:36.63 and moved into seventh on the all-time Oregon steeplechase list.

"I was more prepared for the Pepsi meet," says McGuirk. "I was sure I would run what Bill said I could this time. I listened to my splits on every lap, and with three laps to go I knew I had the Olympic Trials qualifying time."

McGuirk met up with the steeplechase last year almost by accident. After four consecutive weeks of running the 5,000 in dual meets, McGuirk wasn't penciled in for a meet against Southern Illinois.

"Bill had been trying everyone in the steeplechase except me," McGuirk recalls.

"I asked to run in the steeplechase, but he said no, then he changed his mind."

McGuirk went out and won in 8:52.14, but could manage no better than 11th in the Pac-10 meet in the steeplechase a few weeks later.

Things looked rather bleak last fall when McGuirk struggled through Oregon's cross country season. His fall was marred by two twisted ankles before the season started.

But once he got over the ankle problems, McGuirk's workouts went well enough that he met the NCAA steeplechase qualifying time in the Oregon Invitational March 17, and then won tactical races against UCLA and California in the steeplechase.

"I thought the 5,000 would be my best race when I came to Oregon," McGuirk says. "I was pretty good in the 1,500, but better in the 3,000, so I thought the 5,000 would be my event."

McGuirk labels himself a "long-distance runner," pointing out that he doesn't have the speed to compete in the 1,500 against the likes of Oregon's Joaquim Cruz, the NCAA favorite at the metric mile.

Races on uneven surfaces also seem to suit McGuirk, probably because they handicap runners with great speed who sit and kick at the end of a race. McGuirk won the state prep cross country title his senior year over an uneven course.

"But I'm also a year older, and I've matured a lot physically," he says. "Also, Bill says he doesn't expect anything from us in our first year here, because he says it is an adjustment year."

"I think he's right, because this year I'm running the same workouts as last year,

but they are easier this year," McGuirk says.

He plans on concentrating on the steeplechase for the rest of this year, and probably for the remainder of his collegiate career. But McGuirk says Dellinger thinks good things could be in store for him in the 5,000 as well.

"Bill told me I could run 13:40 in the 5,000 based on the shape I'm in now," he says. "He also says I'll go under 8:30 this year in the steeplechase, and he's been right the two times he has made a prediction."

By the time this year ends, Dellinger and McGuirk will probably be three for three.

Ducks sign state 400-meter champ

Oregon's women's track team has signed Sharon Ottestedt, the 1983 Oregon Class AAA high school 400-meter champion, to a letter of intent.

Ottestedt is a senior at Wilson High School in Portland. She is also the owner of the state's best time in the 400. She has run a 55.8 in her specialty.

Ottestedt's signing gives the Ducks another young talent in the 400. Coach Tom Heinonen already has freshmen Stephanie Morris and Cam Talton and junior Tracy Raade in that event.

Oilers edge Islanders, 1-0 Bucks gore Nets 98-97; advance to Eastern final

UNIONDALE, N.Y. (AP) — Fourth-string center Kevin McClelland scored early in the third period and goaltender Grant Fuhr collected his first playoff shutout Thursday night as the Edmonton Oilers got the jump on the New York Islanders with a 1-0 victory in the opening game of the Stanley Cup finals.

The Oilers' triumph was their first against the four-time National Hockey League champions in 2½ years, a span of 11 games. It also snapped New York's nine-game winning streak in the final round.

Game 2 of the best-of-seven series will be here Saturday night.

Edmonton's victory was built around a surprisingly staunch defense and the sensational goaltending of Fuhr, who outperformed his more celebrated counterpart in the Islanders' net, Billy Smith. Fuhr — who did not play against the Islanders in New York's

sweep of last year's finals — orchestrated the victory with cat-like quickness in handing the champions' their third shutout loss of the 1984 playoffs.

The third-year goalie made 34 saves. McClelland, obtained during the season from the Pittsburgh Penguins, was an unlikely offensive hero. The Islanders held Edmonton's most potent scorers — Wayne Gretzky, Paul Coffey, Jari Kurri and Glenn Anderson — in check, but fell victim to McClelland's opportunism.

Pat Hughes dug the puck out of the left corner and fed McClelland 10 feet to the right of Smith. McClelland's wrist shot eluded Smith to his far side at 1:55.

The Islanders' best chance to solve Fuhr came midway through the third period when Bossy stormed down the slot.

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — Marques Johnson scored 11 of his 25 points in the fourth quarter and Paul Pressey sank a crucial free throw and an 18-foot jumper in the final 1:22 of play as the Milwaukee Bucks defeated the New Jersey Nets 98-97 Thursday night to clinch the best-of-seven National Basketball Association semifinal series 4-2.

Junior Bridgeman added 20 points, Bob Lanier 17 and Sidney Moncrief had 15 of his 16 points in the second half as the Bucks advanced to the Eastern Conference finals against the winner of the Boston-New York series, which the Celtics lead 3-2.

The Bucks, who trailed at halftime for the first time in the series, opened the third quarter with an 18-6 surge to take a 61-52 lead. The Nets trimmed the deficit to 65-63 on Birdsong's two foul shots with 2:28 left in the period, but the Bucks widened their lead to 73-67 heading into the fourth quarter.

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