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sports

Ducks nab NorPac title

By Steve Turcotte
Of the Emerald

Shrugging off a possible scare from the University of Washington, the Oregon women's track and field team took home gold at the second NorPac Conference track and field championships Friday and Saturday in Fresno, California.

The Ducks totaled 148 points to outdistance runner-up Washington, which posted a 114 score. California managed third with 97, Washington State wound up fourth with 82, Fresno State was fifth with 75 and Oregon State took sixth with 61.

Ironically, in last season's NorPac Championships at Hayward Field, Oregon, Washington and California finished 1-2-3.

But instead of the cool confines of Hayward Field, the teams had to contend with Fresno's 90-degree heat this weekend. Temperatures ranged from the 80s Friday to the mid-90s Saturday.

"We thought that yesterday (Friday) was hot, but this one was a scorcher," said Oregon women's coach Tom Heinonen, voted NorPac Conference coach of the year for the second straight year.

The heat, however, didn't prevent the Ducks from turning in some fine efforts.

Freshman Janell Thorsland continued her rapid improvement. She zipped to a personal best 13.90 to upset the field and win the 100-meter hurdles,

established a PR 19-10 $\frac{3}{4}$ in the long jump and added a lifetime best 1:02.32 for second in the 400 hurdles.

"I'm a little surprised and excited," Thorsland said. "The weather helped a lot. I compete better when it's hot. In the 400 hurdles, I felt good and went for the PR. I guess I was just loose enough and ready."

Besides Thorsland's hurdles win, Oregon was first in three other events and racked up a lot of points with its depth.

In the 800, Claudette Groenendaal had to overcome Cal's Louise Romo in the homestretch to win in 2:02.99, just off her best. Oregon's Ranza Clark was third in 2:04.16 and Brenda Bushnell, still in search of an NCAA qualifying time, was fifth in 2:10.28.

Romo grabbed the early lead in the race and sustained it until the final 60 meters before Groenendaal made a move. The Duck junior shifted gears and passed Romo near the tape.

"When I got up behind Louise it was now or never time," said Groenendaal. "It was a good race for me. I stuck to it when I wasn't feeling too good. I feel pretty drained."

Another winner for Oregon was Lisa Nicholson in the 400 hurdles, but she may not have been overjoyed by her victory. She finished in 1:01.57 and has yet to satisfy the 59.40 NCAA standard.

Oregon's other winner, Kathy Hayes, finished first in Friday's

10,000 in 33:41.9. Teammate Eryn Forbes was second in 34:04.6.

For Hayes and Forbes, it was a satisfying 1-2. But for 1,500-meter entrant Kim Roth, it was near disaster.

After leading the entire race, Roth was battling Cal's Marilyn Davis down the stretch. The two were neck and neck before Roth stumbled, lost her balance and fell to the track. Davis ran off the winner in 4:24.07, while Roth picked herself up and finished second in 4:47.82.

"Davis came up on her shoulder and as she began to pass, Kim tried to go with her and tied up, lost her balance and fell," Heinonen said. "She still feels a little short of training."

Elsewhere, Birgit Petersen turned in a pair of fine performances in finishing second in Friday's 3,000 and managing a fourth-place in the 1,500 in 4:29.99. Freshman Deanna Schiedler also ran that double, grabbing fourth in the 3,000 and fifth in the 1,500.

In the sprints, Oregon got some big points, as freshman Cam Talton ran a personal best of 24.16 to finish second in the 200. In the 400, Tracy Raade was third in 56.07 and freshman Stephanie Morris clocked a personal best 56.86 to wind up fourth.

Even with the championship, the Ducks only qualified two more people for the NCAA meet — Hayes and Forbes in the 10,000.

"Our goal was to win the meet and get some more national qualifiers," said Heinonen. "Eryn and Kathy were all we got. But those are important ones because Eryn can score in the 10K and Kathy could score really big points if we choose to run her there."

Oregon gets a last chance to bolster its NCAA-qualifying list Thursday at the Oregon State Twilight Meet in Corvallis. There, Nicholson will try to meet the national standard in the 400 hurdles, and Thorsland will give 20 feet her best shot in the long jump.

First entries due for 'The Race 2'

Those interested in entering "The Race 2" June 3 should get their entries in by 5 p.m. today, according to Race Director Peter Thompson.

Thompson said all those who drop off entries at Nike Eugene and Sportstown by 5 p.m. will have to pay only \$8 to run in the 4.9-mile race June 3. After today, the entry fee jumps to \$10.

Thompson said he figures he'll receive nearly 10,000 entries for this year's race, which begins at Autzen Stadium and ends at the finish line across from City Hall. Last year's inaugural race drew 3,000 entrants.

This year's race features a drawing for six prizes, highlighted by the Grand Prize — a new Renault Le Car. Second prize is two round-trip tickets to Europe.

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