

Ducks grab second in Pac-10

By John Healy
Of the Emerald

True to form, the Oregon men's track team finished second behind expected winner Washington State Friday and Saturday in the Pacific 10 Conference track and field championships in Pullman, Wash.

But while the team race followed the expected format — with the Cougars scoring 157½ points — a number of Oregon's less-publicized athletes used the conference championships to successfully introduce themselves to the rest of Pac 10. "We performed up to — and beyond — my expectation," said Oregon coach Bill Dellinger. "Everyone we had out there competed very well."

Although the Ducks were expected to be challenged by Arizona, Arizona State, California and UCLA for the runner-up spot behind defending conference champ Washington State, they ended up in a spirited battle with USC for second.

Oregon used its distance strength to turn back USC's sprinters, 98-94, but it was some second-stringers who gave the Ducks their cushion.

As expected, Oregon got wins on Friday from Brian Crouser in the javelin (272-7, a new meet record) and Kory Tarpenning in the pole vault (17-4). Hammer thrower Ken Flax provided a mild upset with his win in the hammer (229-9, Oregon school record) over Stanford's Shaun Picknell. And on Saturday, Jim Hill won the 1,500 in 3:42.29, Joaquim Cruz won the 800 in a world-leading 1:45.12, Dub Myers finished second in the 800 in a personal record of 1:47.51, and Don Ward finished second in the 400 intermediate hurdles in 51.28.

Unexpectedly, the Ducks got points from Bobby George and Frode Stormyr in the javelin, Kerry Porter in the pole vault, John Zishka in the 1,500, Chris Hamilton in the 5,000, and Todd Post in the high jump.

George, who prepped at Pleasant Hill High School, has been hindered by injuries the last few years. But on Friday, he uncorked a throw of 260-1 — almost 20 feet further than his previous best — to grab second. Then Stormyr — throwing for the first time in months because of an elbow injury — threw 254-9 for fourth.

Porter, who had a previous best of 16-5, vaulted 17-0¾ to claim third and provide the Ducks with their third surprise performance Friday.

On Saturday, Zishka stepped down from his usual race — the 5,000 — and ran the 1,500, finishing third behind Hill and the Cougars' Omar Ortega. Hamilton, who will run the 10,000 in the NCAA meet, came through with another third-place finish. He clocked 13:50.5, a PR by six seconds, and beat the Cougars' vaunted Peter



Joaquim Cruz

Emerald photo

Koech. Finally, Post tied for fifth in the high jump with a leap of 6-10¾.

"Everyone should be pleased with their performance," said Dellinger. "Our runners should gain a lot of confidence for the NCAA out of this."

Cruz, picked to win the NCAA 800 and 1,500 by Track and Field News, and Hill, tabbed to win the 5,000, were especially impressive Saturday.

Cruz led the 800 from start to finish — something he almost always does — to win his second straight conference 800, and pronounced himself after the race in need of a little speed

work before "I will be running in the 1:44s."

Hill, who won the Pac-10 1,500 title in 1982 before redshirting last spring, used his new-found kick to blow by the pack on the final lap.

"I knew I could kick the whole last lap and still have enough left to kick again the final 100 if anybody was still with me," said Hill.

Oregon also got points from Brad Simpson in the 10,000 (sixth in 30:33.16), Mike Blackmore in the 5,000 (sixth in 14:00.5), and Harold Kuphaldt in the steeplechase (sixth in 8:56.90).

Women's crew takes title race

The Oregon women's Lightweight-8 crew finished first in the Pacific 10 Conference championships Sunday.

The women, who beat USC for the conference title, also finished third in the race for the Western Intercollegiate Rowing Association title.

Members of the team include coxswain Kristi Kniffen, stroke Gayle Johnson, and crew members Marge Kughn, Twila Johnson, Annie Donahue, Teresa Hukari, Shellie Downs, Celine Carvalho, and Becky Weeks.

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