

A day after NCAAs, it's...

The Race



Photo by Michael Clapp

Race Director Peter Thompson figures The Race 2 will have 4,000 entrants, and he hopes the NCAA attraction will bring more.

By Doug Levy
Of the Emerald

Most of the focus in Eugene next week will be on track and field. The NCAA Championships are coming, and that means some of the nation's finest athletes will be in town.

It also means a packed Hayward Field, busy restaurants, no vacancy signs at hotels, and a whole lot of out-of-towners.

True, the visitors will be here to watch others run. But many of them love to run themselves, and that suits Peter Thompson just fine.

Thompson, race director of "The Race 2," outlined the affect visitors could have on his June 3 run at a press conference across from City Hall Wednesday.

"With the NCAA, we have a lot of people coming into town," he said. "We're anticipating several NCAA competitors running in our race, and we're hoping some people who came to watch track will want to participate, too."

Thompson said 200 people from out of state are registered for the second annual 4.9-mile run through downtown Eugene, and he hopes that's the first step toward building a national-caliber race.

"There's three steps to building a run like this," Thompson said. "There's the initial impact, the community involvement, and then the participation from outside the community. When you get people from other states saying, 'hey, look at this run,' that's when you've got it. In five years, I can realistically see us having 10,000 entrants."

The Race 2 seems well on its way to that goal. Last year, with Thompson, the Oregon Track Club and Mayor Gus Keller selling sponsors on the idea of a major run through the streets of Eugene, the inaugural run attracted 3,000 entrants. This year, The Race 2 should have at least 4,000 entrants, Thompson said.

And why not? With sponsors like Nike, the Eugene Hilton, The Register-Guard, Sheppard Motors and Frontier Airlines in on the action, The Race 2 is a prizewinner's paradise.

Anyone who runs start-to-finish through the 8-kilometer course has a chance to win a Renault Encore, or two round-trip tickets to Europe, or a \$400 Raleigh Grand Prix bicycle, or... well, you get the picture.

The Race 2 also has the advantage of being a record-setting type of run. The course is fast and flat, according to Thompson's demands, and that translates to fast times. Last year, Kevin Ryan won in 22:54, the fastest 8K time ever by an American, and he returns this year. He'll be joined by Ron Tabb, and Athletics West's Cathy Twomey highlights a strong women's field.

The emphasis is on fast, fast, fast, and therein lies the problem, Thompson said.

"We did so much," he said, "with our first race last year that people have become blasé about this year's race. They say, 'oh, you're giving away a car. Big deal. What else is there?'"

Race 2 Notes — Those interested in registering for the race have until June 2 to pay their \$10 fee. Completed entry forms may be picked up and dropped off at Nike Eugene, Feets Plus and Sportstown, or runners can send forms to P.O. Box 11037, Eugene OR 97440. The race starts at 10 a.m. For more information, call 343-7268.



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Sports shorts

PORTLAND (AP) — It appears Akeem "The Dream" Olajuwon, the sure-bet "franchise" in this year's professional basketball draft, is headed for the Houston Rockets, leaving the Portland Trail Blazers with a tough decision.

After losing the coin flip Wednesday that would have given them the draft rights to Olajuwon, disappointed Blazer officials were touting Kentucky center Sam Bowie as the top prospect but also had words of praise for North Carolina guard Michael Jordan.

The Blazers believe a star center is the ingredient needed to make the team a contender for the NBA title. Olajuwon is considered one of the best to come from the

college ranks in recent years.

General Manager Stuart Inman said Portland probably would select the 7-1 Bowie, who came on strong at the end of his injury-plagued college career.

"We're lucky to be in the draft and lose the flip and come up with a player like that," Inman said at a news conference.

But owner Larry Weinberg, who was in New York for the coin flip, said a final decision hadn't been made.

"Michael Jordan is going to be a superstar in the NBA," he said, adding that the Blazers were "very interested" in Bowie.

The Houston Rockets won the flip and are expected to choose the 7-foot Olajuwon, a hometown favorite who led the Houston Cougars to the NCAA finals this year.

Inman said Bowie is trying hard to build himself physically.

"He's very much of a weight freak," Inman said. "We've heard he's one of the strongest people in the weight program at Kentucky."

"He's a very intelligent, very knowledgeable, very aware kind of person."

Bowie's Kentucky team reached the NCAA Final Four this year but was routed by Georgetown, which went on to win the title over Houston. Bowie's stock improved in that loss, however, as he battled the Hoyas while the other half of the Kentucky "Twin Towers," 6-11 center Melvin Turpin, languished on the bench for much of the second half.

...
Cora Aguilar, a sophomore discus thrower and shot putter from Spokane (Wash.) Community College with bests of 162-0 and 47-3, has signed a letter of intent with Oregon's women's track and field team.

Aguilar, a former Washington state AA discus champion, is Oregon's second recruit. She joins Sharon Otterstedt of Portland's Wilson High School, who boasts a 55.1 400-meter time, the fastest in Oregon prep history.

...
Carol Bot, who averaged 3.5 points and 3.0 rebounds for Oregon's women's basketball team this season as a freshman, has been selected to the Canadian National B Team.

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