



Emerald photo

Oregon junior javelin specialist Brian Crouser thinks it will take a heave of at least 295 feet to win the NCAA javelin title this Saturday.

Following an injury-filled year, Crouser is back in spotlight

The 1984 season has been the year of the runner for Oregon's men's track team, and it is not difficult to figure out why.

Joaquim Cruz has run the world's fastest 800 meters (1:45.12) and the swiftest collegiate 1,500 (3:37.72); Jim Hill has made a triumphant return from a redshirt season by winning a Pac-10 5,000 title; and Dub Myers, Matt McGuirk, Don Ward and LaMar Hurd have had their moments as well.

Forgotten in this track hysteria is a javelin thrower who won an NCAA crown as a freshman, defeated world record holder Tom Petranoff at the 1982 National Sports Festival, and was ranked third in the country by Track and Field News that same year following a 282-11 mark.

It has not been a publicity-filled year for Oregon junior Brian Crouser. After undergoing elbow surgery a year ago, he has tried to limit his throwing somewhat. The result has

been a sub-par year — for him — with a best of "only" 278-5 against Washington State.

"The press isn't coming around like before," says Crouser. "That's because I've been throwing 270, which isn't that great. It's that type of thing — 270 is OK, but it's nothing unbelievable."

Crouser believes he has the unbelievable in him. He thinks throws of 290, 300 feet will

By Doug Levy

come soon. But he points out that there is a reason for his 270s.

A year ago, the native of Gresham threw 280-6 in an early dual meet against University of Washington, then faced back and elbow problems. He missed much of last season, but couldn't redshirt.

That touched off a little friction between Crouser and Oregon coach Bill Dellinger. Crouser told Dellinger that he

didn't want to be overworked with the 1984 Olympic Games on the way. Dellinger responded in kind, and Crouser has taken less javelin throws this year, though he has messed around with the discus in the meantime.

"He (Dellinger) just had to realize that this dual-meet season wasn't that important for me," says Crouser. "I need more concentration on the Trials. Last year, I threw 280 in the snow, and in turn that wrecks my back and my goal (of winning four straight NCAA javelin titles, which has never been done)."

So Crouser's marks have not been especially prominent. But there are signs that he is ready to pop a big one. Two weeks ago, he threw 272-7 in Pullman, Wash., to win a Pac-10 title. Last Thursday, he uncorked a winning 272-8 at the Oregon State Twilight Meet in Corvallis.

Continued on Page 15

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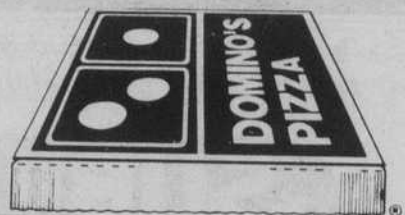
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