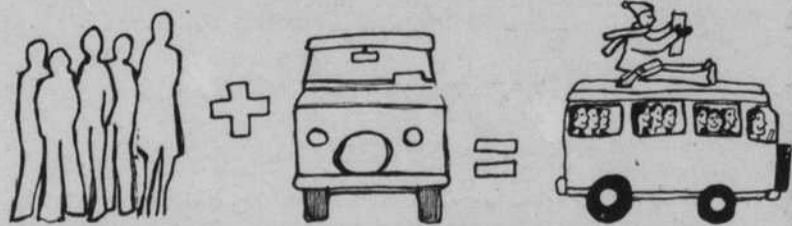


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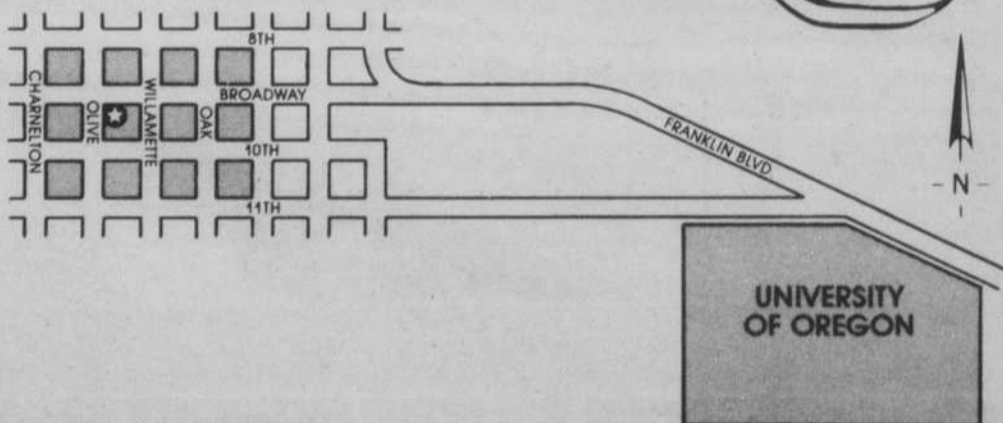
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Ducks the favorite, says WSU coach

By DOUG LEVY

The men's team race at this week's NCAA track and field championships should come down to the same two teams that battled for the Pacific 10 Conference title two weeks ago — Washington State and Oregon. The Cougars easily won the conference title (157 1/3-98), but the Ducks are expected to make a stronger run at Washington State in the NCAA meet. If Oregon should falter, SMU could finish in the runner-up spot. Following are profiles of Washington State and SMU. For a profile of Oregon's NCAA chances, see page 11.

WSU

Washington State University has not lost a track and field dual meet since 1980. The Cougars won their second consecutive Pac-10 Conference Championship two weeks ago. And by all indications, WSU is the team to beat at the NCAA Championships.

But anyone who mentions that to outspoken WSU coach John Chaplin is sure to get the you've-got-to-be-crazy treatment.

"I don't think I'm the favorite — I think Oregon's the favorite," Chaplin says quickly. "I don't see how we're the favorites."

Track and Field News does. The publication has the Cougars winning the meet with 114 points, safely ahead of Oregon's 93.

"But that's without realizing that my distance runners may not double, that Tore Gustafsson is out for the year, that one of our triple jumpers isn't jumping... the Ducks have everybody healthy, and they don't have to double anyone to win. That makes a lot of difference."

Chaplin is famous for being overly pessimistic about his own team and overly optimistic about his opponent, but he has a point. If the Cougars are to win NCAA gold, it will mean double time for a trio of talented foreigners — Julius Korir, Richard Tuwei and Peter Koech.

Sophomore Korir, ranked ninth on the 1983 world list in the steeplechase with an 8:20.11 best, is picked to win that event. He is also doped out for third in the 5,000 (he was fifth in 1983), but may not be around to run it.

Junior Tuwei was third in the NCAA steeple (he has a best of 8:18.2) and eighth at 5,000 a year ago. He is doped for second in the steeple and

ninth at 5,000. Again, doubling back is no guarantee.

Koech may have the most demanding double of the three. He is marked to finish fifth in the 5,000 and second in the 10,000, but hot weather would make those selections tough to live up to.

"The reality of the matter," says Chaplin, "is that we'd have to double those three to win, and it may not happen. Oregon has sure points in the 5,000 (Jim Hill, picked first), 10,000 (Chris Hamilton), steeplechase (neither Matt McGuirk or Harold Kuphaldt are predicted as top-12 finishers), pole vault (Kory Tarpenning) and javelin (Brian Crouser). And they have the Pac-10's great athlete in Joaquin Cruz."

In addition, Chaplin is willing to tell everybody that Oregon has the big advantage with the meet being held on its own Hayward Field.

"Traditionally, being at home is worth 25 points," he says. "I know it, you know it, everyone knows it. So you can say what you want, and if Oregon wins you can say, 'Oh, what an upset.' But if you did, it would be a bunch of garbage."

"Look at the record," continues Chaplin. "Oregon's athletes are 25 percent better at home. They perform better, and they've got thousands of fans going crazy. Which is nice. I admit I'm jealous. It would be nice to run in front of 10,000 fans. It's a big advantage for Oregon, but that's life."

Despite Chaplin's near-outrage at being called a favorite, the Cougars are loaded to the hilt. Korir, Tuwei and Koech have doubled often enough in the past; they'll likely double again.

Joseph Taiwo, picked second in the triple jump, is nursing an injury, but Francis Dodoo is a point-scoring replacement; Gabriel Tiaoh means points in the 400; Omar Ortega will score in either the 800 or 1,500; Brent Harken (7-6 1/2) is picked to win the high jump, and teammate James Cunningham is the Pac-10 champion in that event; sophomore Dimitrios Koutsoukis is a comer in the shot put; Jan Johansson is a top-10 certainty in the javelin; and freshman Carlos Gambetta may get a point or two in the decathlon.

That's a lot of points for WSU, especially when one considers that Chaplin's foreigners have the stamina to double. But Chaplin bristles

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