

Bennion displays dependability, leadership

By Kevin Allen
Emerald Contributor

Slow starter hasn't lost a race this season

When Oregon Coach Bill Dellinger assigns 10 of his runners the task of winning the

Pacific-10 Conference Championship next Monday at Stanford, one of the individuals he

will be relying on most heavily is a consistently strong Chad Bennion. Bennion has lead the

Ducks to a 5-0 dual meet record by finishing first for Oregon in victories over Auburn, Washington, Washington State, Portland and Oregon State.

But Bennion has not always run so dependably. In fact, Bennion described his own running two years ago as "erratic." His career has been marred with an extreme case of Murphy's Law.

Take, for example, last year's NCAA Track and Field Championships at Baton Rouge, La.: In the third lap of the 10,000-meter race, a runner behind him tripped, causing a chain reaction that took Bennion out and prematurely ended a fine season. The Ducks staggered home with their worst NCAA finish in more than 20 years.

This summer, Bennion was hit by a bicyclist while he practiced, knocking both of them down. This time, however, the bicyclist paid for it with a broken collarbone.

"I have a tendency to get in accidents," Bennion admitted. So this season he is taking no chances in his endeavor to earn all-American status in cross country while leading the Ducks to a Pac-10 championship.

This means paying extra attention to his health, while avoiding anything that could



Chad Bennion

lead to injuries. He has learned from past flukes. "I want to make up for those things," he said.

After running his freshman year at the University of Utah, Bennion, an international relations major, took two years off from school to work as a missionary before transferring to Oregon.

Bennion first learned about the great tradition of track and cross country at Oregon during his high school days in Murray, Utah. Dennis Dawson, his coach, subscribed to Track and

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