

Track men surpass expectations, take fourth at final NCAA meet

By Jack Millikin
Emerald Sports Reporter

Talk about rising to the occasion.

The Oregon track team, picked to finish no higher than seventh by Track and Field News in the team race at the NCAA Championship meet in Provo, Utah, propelled itself to a fourth-place finish by scoring 28 points on the last day of competition Saturday.

The Ducks finished with 36 points.

Louisiana State captured the team title with 53 points, followed by Texas A&M with 51. Florida, which was expected to battle for the top spot with defending champion UCLA, finished third with 40.

UCLA, competing without the services of Olympic 400 champion Steve Lewis — forced out of competition with a nagging hamstring — finished sixth with 28 points.

Of the seven Ducks who competed in Saturday's finals, only one, high jumper Andy Young, failed to score. The remaining six picked up the slack by recording, in many cases, season-bests to give the Ducks their highest NCAA finish since taking the team title in Eugene in

1984.

Of the 10 Ducks who competed in Friday and Saturday's finals, eight were able to put points on the board, and, of those eight, four placed themselves in the top five spots.

Due to the 10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 scoring system, which awarded points to the top eight finishers, the Ducks were able to pull in high scores as a result of their performances.

"I'm happy with the way everyone competed," head coach Bill Dellinger told the Associated Press following the meet. "It's been a good NCAA meet for us. There are a lot of young people who feel they could have done even better here, and I like that."

Decathlete Pedro daSilva highlighted the Ducks' scoring tear with a second place finish in the decathlon, finishing second to Arizona's Derek Huff. After seven events, daSilva led the competition with 5,092 points and Huff, who defeated him in the Pacific-10 decathlon by 92 points, trailed by 210 with 4,882.

However, Huff won the pole vault and javelin and finished second in the 1,500 to overtake the Brazilian sophomore, finishing with 8,020 points to

daSilva's 7,885, the best performance of the year by both competitors.

Eric Finch made his last appearance in an Oregon uniform count by netting eight points for the Ducks in the hammer throw, capturing second with a career-best 222-0 behind Christopher Koch of Northeast Louisiana, who threw 233-2.

Finch, who finished third at last year's NCAA meet in Eugene with a then-career-best of 217-8, again came through with a personal record to move him from fifth to second, ahead of John O'Connor (218-9) of Kent State and John Billingsley (216-7) of Washington State. Sophomore Scott McGee finished sixth with a 211-11 toss.

Another pleasant surprise for the Ducks was Spencer Williams, who triple jumped his way to a school record and a fourth-place finish by leaping 53-11 1/4 to add five points to the grand total.

"I was hoping to jump better, but that was the best competition I've had," Williams told the AP. "Most of it was just the plain ol' fact that I'm jumping the way I'm capable of. My mom helped me out a lot, so

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