

Men dethrone UCLA for Pac-10 track title

By Ashley Conklin
Emerald Sports Reporter

SEATTLE — Using the fuel provided by a dominant opening-day performance, the men's track team burned the rest of the field at the Pacific-10 Conference championships here and won their first team title since 1986.

The Ducks scored 141 points to dethrone three-time defending champ UCLA. The Bruins finished third with 98 points while Washington State had 102 points for second place.

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— Bill Dellinger

Oregon won five of seven event finals Saturday, accumulating 89 first-day points and taking a 45-point lead over Washington State. The onslaught continued Sunday when the Ducks added another 52 points.

"We knew we had to score a lot of points in the distance events and pick up some points today," Oregon coach Bill Dellinger said before taking the traditional winner's plunge in the steeplechase pit.

"We scored more points than I thought we would," Dellinger said. "It was a real team effort."

In all, the Ducks won six events in the meet, including Pedro daSilva's decathlon win earlier in the week. Not only did the Ducks win six events, they also got six runner-up performances.

"We just competed very well," Dellinger said. "Everywhere you look, we did a heck of a job. The percentage of our 24 guys scoring has to be pretty high."

In fact, of the Ducks maximum limit of 24 entries in the meet, 22 scored in either an individual event or relay.

Oregon got things started Saturday in the opening event, when Scott McGee, the NCAA leader in the hammer, led from start to finish and threw a personal record of 225-1. Teammate Nick Anastasiades finished fifth with a PR of 193-7.

McGee, who finished fourth at the Pac-10 meet last year, was happy he came through as expected to get Oregon started on its roll.

"It went pretty well today," McGee said. "I had hoped to get off a good throw early and it finally came together at the end."

"Today was the day we needed to score a lot of

points," he said. "We had put enough pressure on ourselves and I was ready. In a meet like this you just have to forget about technique. If you think about technique you're not going to get off a good throw."

The biggest factor in the Ducks win might have been the 1-2 finish of Brian Cullen and Mark Vanderville in the pole vault.

The Ducks had no-heighted in the pole vault each of the last two seasons and last year Cullen was one of the culprits when he wasn't able to clear 16-0 $\frac{3}{4}$.

This time around it was an all-Oregon show.

Vanderville started early at 15-5 and kept going, making 16-4 $\frac{1}{4}$ and then 16-8 $\frac{3}{4}$ on his second attempt for a new PR.

Cullen easily scaled the lower heights and then put the pressure on the rest of the field when he cleared 17-0 $\frac{3}{4}$ on his first attempt. No other vaulter was able to follow suit except Vanderville who cleared the height on his third attempt.

"Going 1-2 in the pole vault I was really pleased for the pole vaulters to do something after the frustration the last two years," Dellinger said. "I'm happy with them."

For Cullen it was a moment of sweet redemption.

"This is the first big competition I've ever won," he said. "Just to clear a height took a lot of pressure off. (Winning) just erased it (last year) right out of my mind."

Cullen said the key was his ability to relax during the competition.

"My only goal was to come here and get my mind off vaulting," he said. "I told myself 'you're playing your own mind games.' I knew I could be here and be relaxed, or being ruined in a pressure situation. Usually I get really nervous out there."

Although Cullen said he thought it would take 17-4 to win, he was one of the favorites to take the championship. However, it was a different situation for Vanderville.

Vanderville, a junior transfer from Highline Community College near Seattle, didn't officially know he would compete until Tuesday. To say the least, it was a nice homecoming.

"The coaches looked back Monday and saw that I had a bad outing last weekend (at the

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Photo by Martin Thiel

Oregon hammer thrower Scott McGee tossed a personal best 225-1 Saturday to win the title at the Pac-10 Championships in Seattle.

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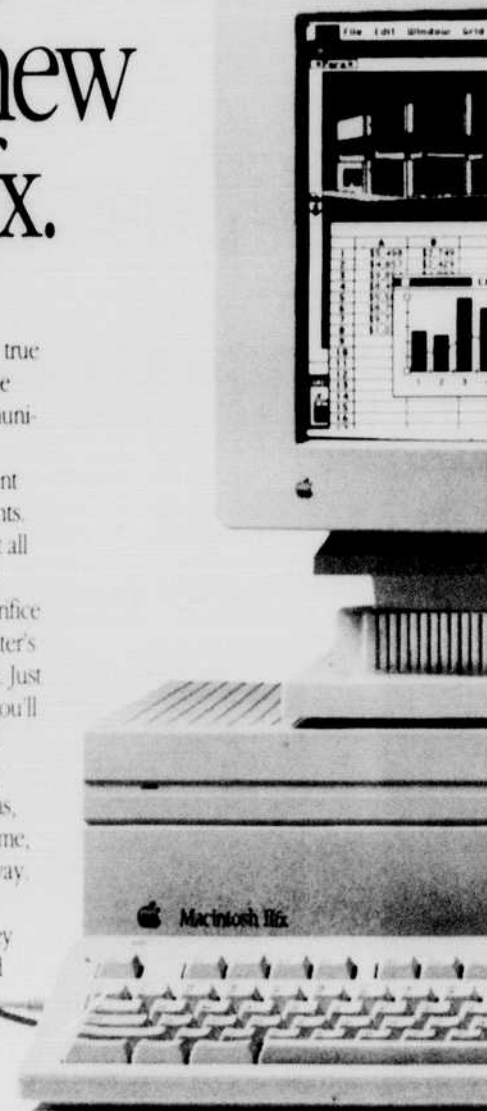
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