

## Peterson, Wright qualify for NCAA meet

By Ashley Conklin  
Emerald Sports Reporter

Rarely does a track meet — or anything else — do what it's supposed to.

But on Wednesday evening at Hayward Field, the Ralph Hill Open, formerly the Last Chance Open, did what it was supposed to as Oregon's Eric Peterson and Brian Wright automatically qualified for next week's NCAA meet.

Peterson, benefiting from the pacing of teammates Rick Mestler and Danny Lopez, won the 1,500 meters in 3:41.35, beating the NCAA automatic standard of 3:42.20 and his old personal record of 3:41.79. Meanwhile, Wright won the 400-meter hurdles in 50.70 to surpass the automatic standard of 50.75.

For Peterson, who qualified for the NCAA meet as a sophomore but failed to last season, the pacing of Mestler and Lopez worked to his advantage.

"It's been real frustrating, as I told you last week, when you get in a race and you have to run in a way to win and score some points," he said. "That isn't the best way for me to run."

"The best way for me to run is to get in behind somebody and that way I don't have to take full responsibility," Peterson said. "It's so much better for me to let someone else take that out and come in from behind."

Wright, like Peterson, was coming off a second place performance in last weekend's Pacific-10 Conference meet. But unlike Peterson, who had been improving throughout the season, Wright's seasonal best of 51.15 came in a dual meet with Washington State on April 14.

However, Wright said there was a reason for that.

"I've been so busy that I'm our number one scorer doing three events every meet," he said. "All I had to do today was do one thing."

After watching teammates Tye Van Schoiack get a PR in the steeplechase with a time of 8:45.33 and Pat Haller

PR in the 5,000 with a 14:10.98 clocking, Wright said he had extra motivation for the race from those two performances.

"You can pass a lot of guys at the end and I really dug in there," Wright said. "I saw Pat Haller dig in and Tye Van Schoiack dig in. Everyone was doing it and I decided I'm going to do the same thing."

After qualifying for the NCAA meet last year at the Oregon Twilight Meet, Wright cut it much closer this time, but despite qualifying at the last minute this year, Wright said he believes he's got a good chance to score at the NCAA meet.

"I've been picked for eighth, then ninth and then 10th," he said, "but I'm not stuck in the 51s anymore. I think I have a chance (at the NCAA meet) and I'll give those guys a run for their money."

After placing sixth in the steeplechase at last week-

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