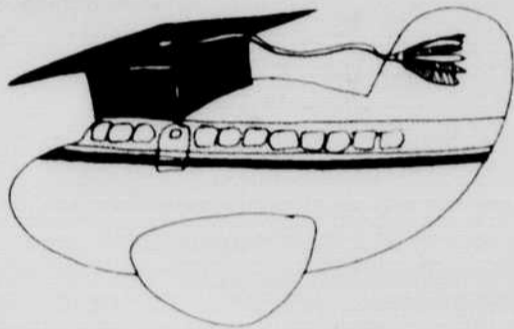




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Oregon distance runner Stephanie Wessell finished eighth in the 10,000-meter race at the NCAA Championships in Durham, N.C. Thursday to earn the Ducks their first point.

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Wessell takes eighth, Peterson exits early

By Ashley Conklin
Emerald Sports Reporter

While it was another day of qualifying for the Oregon men's track team at the NCAA Championships in Durham, N.C., Thursday, Stephanie Wessell was the lone competitor for the Oregon women.

Wessell finished eighth in the 10,000-meter finals with a time of 34:15.05. The race was only her second ever at that distance.

Wessell was Pacific-10 Conference champ in the event two weeks ago in her first-ever 10,000 meters. She ran a time of 34:25.42 at the Pac-10 meet, and although that time didn't better the NCAA automatic standard of 34:18.00, she did make it to the NCAA meet via the provisional list.

By finishing eighth, Wessell grabbed one point as the top eight finishers score on a

Oregon's Scott McGee, the favorite in the hammer throw, qualified for Saturday's finals with the best throw of the day at 217-5. The next best mark was a 211-0 effort by Mike Morales of Cal-Irvine.

Also moving on to Saturday's finals was Oregon's Spencer Williams in the triple jump.

Williams jumped 51-11 for the seventh-best mark of the day. Festus Igbinochene of Mississippi State had the best jump of the day at 52-9½ while Pac-10 champ Mike Harris of California was next at 52-9¼.

However, Eric Peterson failed to qualify for the finals of the 1,500 meters when he finished 18th out of 19 entries.

Peterson's time was 3:49.60, more than eight seconds off his best. The surprising thing about Peterson's poor performance was that he was running better than he ever had leading up to the NCAA meet and was expected to perhaps finish in

Eric Peterson failed to qualify for the 1,500 meters when he finished 18th. His time was 3:49.60, more than eight seconds off his best.

10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis. The eighth place finish also earned Wessell all-American status.

This year's NCAA track meet was the first for Wessell, a junior from Coos Bay. Wessell had competed in two NCAA cross country meets, but that was her only national experience.

Among the men, it was another day of mixed results for the Ducks.

the top five.

A senior, Peterson's only other NCAA appearance was two years ago when the meet was held in Eugene. He placed eighth in the finals that time.

The day's top time in the 1,500 was turned in by Clemson's Philip Greyling and Western Michigan's Paul Vandegrift

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