

SPORTS

Oregon cross country teams win Pac-10 titles

By Paul Morgan
Emerald Sports Reporter

The Oregon men's and women's cross country teams sped past the Pacific-10 competition Saturday at Stanford on the way to dual conference championships.

The Oregon men barely nudged Arizona for their third consecutive Pac-10 title, and the women, favorites in the meet, held off Washington to win their fourth conference title in five years.

The men's team finished with 39 points, followed closely by Arizona's 41 points and Washington's 53 points.

The women's team won their title by avoiding an upset-minded Washington. The Huskies finished with 56 points, while Arizona was third with 61 points.

Seniors Liz Wilson (16:52) and Stephanie Wessell (16:55) finished first and second, respectively, for the Ducks on the 5,000-meter course. Sophomore Nicole Woodward moved from 17th place to eighth in the last half-mile, to secure the victory for the Ducks.

Woodward's move was especially important because, in the process, she passed three Washington runners that could have supplied the Huskies with an upset victory.

"(Woodward) really saved us from an embarrassing defeat," Oregon women's Coach Tom Heinonen said. "The last three people she passed were all from Washington."

"I was really surprised with Washington's performance," he said. "That's a team we have eaten alive in the past, but they put their top seven runners in the top 20."

The top three runners from last year's Pac-10 meet - Sabrina Han of California, Jennifer Robertson of Washington State and Bridget Smyth of Arizona - took an early lead, and Wilson and Wessell tucked in behind them for the first mile.

Then Stanford's Melanie Bloch made a big move to the front at the one-mile mark and held it until the two Oregon runners stepped up and took the lead at the three-mile mark.

"We looked really good up front but the others weren't very focused," Heinonen said. "We have run conservatively all year and it has worked well, but this time we ran too conservatively. They just went out way too slow."

One reason for the lackluster performance might have been the absence of junior Lucy Nusrala, who is usually the pace-setter for the fourth through seventh runners.

Heinonen pulled Nusrala near the one-mile mark because she had not been feeling well, and the pace for that group of runners lagged as a result, he said.

Julia Saul (17:54) finished in the 21st spot, while Lisa Karnopp (18:05) closed out the Oregon scoring at 24th.

The key to the men's victory, Coach Bill Dellinger said, was the depth of the team. Five Oregon runners finished in the top 15, with two in the top 10.

Oregon junior Colin Dalton (23:47) finished three seconds behind Arizona's Marc Davis to finish in second place.

Junior Pat Haller was the second Duck to cross the finish line in sixth place with a time of 24:40, and Andy Maris (11th), Shannon Lemora (12th) and Colden Baxter (15th) closed out as Oregon's top finishers.

Davis held the lead for the first three miles, when Dalton edged into first. On the last half-mile, Davis caught Dalton on a downhill stretch to claim his second straight conference title.

"Everybody competed well," Dellinger said. "Arizona was favored, but we are not surprised we pulled it off. Now it's a three-way battle for the regional meet."

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Film: *Fate of the Forest*, October 31, 12:00-1:00 pm, EMU Walnut Room

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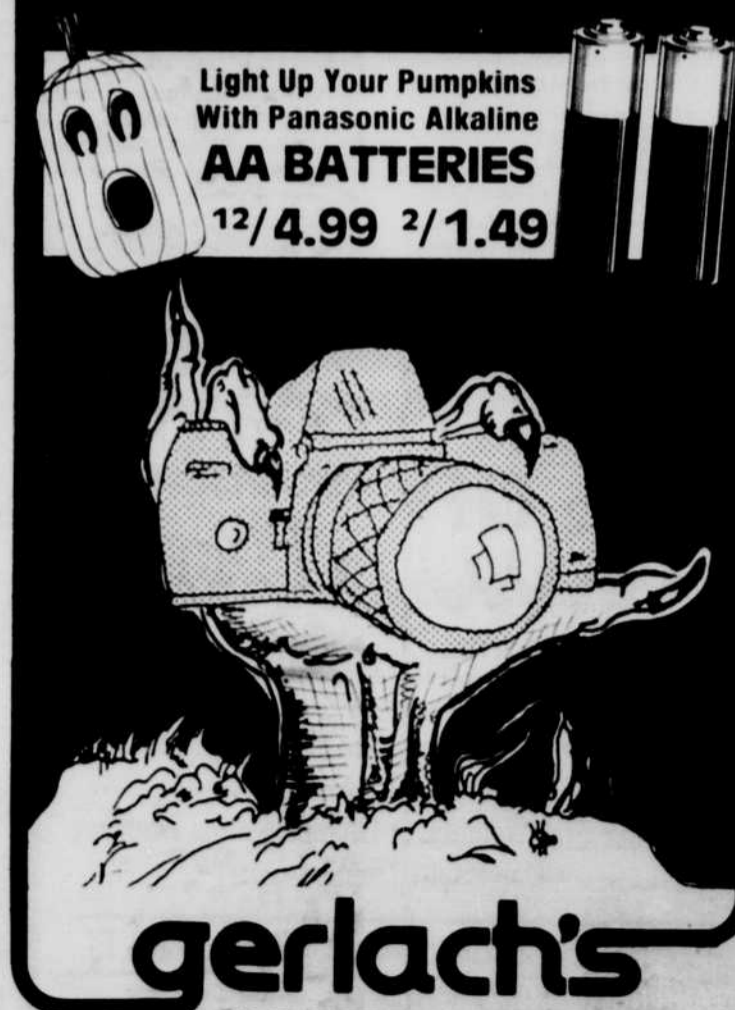


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