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SPORTS



Photo by Sean Poston
Oregon's Colin Dalton (left) and Greg Whiteley each broke four minutes in the Twilight Mile Saturday.

Four-minute barrier bettered by 2 in mile

By Ashley Conklin
Emerald Sports Editor

Greg Whiteley grew up in Southern California, then moved to the East Coast to run collegiately at Brown University.

Now he lives in Eugene and would like to make it "my home for a couple of years." If he keeps running sub four-minute miles at Hayward Field, he should have no problem adjusting to Eugene.

It was the promise of running a sub four-minute mile that

lured Whiteley to run in Saturday's Oregon Twilight Mile, and he did just that with a winning time of 3:59.22 before a crowd of 3,833.

"It's wonderful, a great feeling," Whiteley said of breaking four minutes. "I just tried to hold on at the end. I had to keep a strong pace going because I'm not a great kicker."

Whiteley needed everything he had at the end to hold off Oregon's Colin Dalton, who finished with a strong kick and broke four minutes for the first time ever in 3:59.44.

Dalton could have automatically qualified for the NCAA 1,500 meters with a mile time of 3:59.22, but was more concerned about breaking four minutes than qualifying for the NCAA's.

"I've run in the NCAA's before, but I haven't broken four minutes before," Dalton said. "I don't mind losing as long as I break four minutes."

Dalton said he sat at home Friday night and made a list of what he had to accomplish this weekend. Breaking four minutes in the mile was at the top of the list.

"I had to read a book for English, do some Italian and break four minutes in the mile," he said. "Now all I have to do is do some homework."

While the mile was the highlight of the Oregon Twilight, it wasn't the only event that offered excitement.

Former Oregon star Dan Nelson, the 1987 NCAA champ in the 3,000-meter steeplechase, outkicked a strong field in that event to win easily in 8:34.0. Another former Duck, Matt McGuirk, was second in 8:35.9, followed by Weber State's Brad Barton (8:36.0) and Oregon's Rick Mestler (8:41.7).

Mestler's time broke his old personal record of 8:43.29 and put him under the NCAA automatic standard of 8:43.00.

For Mestler, a two-time all-American, Saturday's race ended a season of frustration that started when he missed most of winter training with injuries.

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