

WOMEN

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Courtesy of Villanova
Sonia O'Sullivan of Villanova hopes to repeat her first-place NCAA finish in the 3,000 this week.

Nebraska may surprise everyone.

The Cornhuskers had some incredible performances at the Big Eight Conference meet and are definitely on a roll.

"We may well have had our best women's meet ever," Nebraska Coach Gary Pepin said of the Big Eight meet.

The star of the show was sprinter Kim Walker, who recorded the top collegiate 200 time this season with a 22.57 reading and also ran the 100 in 11.35. Walker also had a big hand in the Cornhuskers' two relays, which should challenge LSU and others this week.

The Cornhuskers have more talent than just

Walker.

Ximena Restrepo owns a best of 22.92 in the 200 this season and has gone 51.25 in the 400. Javelin thrower Lynne Frey has a 166-1 best this season and should place, as will Fran ten Bensel in the 1,500. Shanelle Porter and Denise Lucas also give Nebraska good depth in the sprints.

Heinonen is one coach who definitely likes Nebraska.

"Certainly head-to-head, LSU and Nebraska are the top teams, based on all their automatic qualifiers," he said. "They're (Nebraska) a real dynamo."

UCLA may get a boost from the fact that its strength lies in the shot put and discus while teams such as LSU, Texas and Nebraska are relying heavily on the sprints.

With senior Tracie Millett and freshmen Dawn Dumble and Melissa Weis, the Bruins have three of the top nine shot putters in the meet and three of the top seven in the discus.

Millett is the defending champ in both events, but the real star might be Dumble, who set a Pacific-10 Conference record by tossing the shot 56-7½ at the Pac-10 meet.

LSU's Coach Henry acknowledges that UCLA's shot-discus strength could help the Bruins, but he said his team has depth on the field as well as on the track.

"It could work to their advantage," he said. "I think people look to LSU as a sprint-hurdle team, but at our conference meet we scored more points in the field events than the running (events)."

One team that is mostly sprinters and hurdlers is Florida.

The Gators have two of the top five 100 hurdlers in Terry Robinson and Michelle Freeman. Tasha Downing is one of the best in the 400, and Nekita Beasley has the top 800 time (2:02.00) in the field.

The best sprinter in the field is probably Texas' Carlette Guidry, last year's 100 meter champ in the Goodwill Games. Guidry has clocked 11.11 in the 100 this season and 22.67 in the 200.

The Ducks are pinning their hopes on four athletes: javelin throwers Paula Berry and Kim Hyatt and distance runners Lucy Nusrala and Stephanie Wessell.

Berry was second and Hyatt sixth last year in the NCAAs, but Berry is clearly the favorite with her PR of 202-1. Hyatt could make it a 1-2 sweep.

Nusrala and Wessell have the third-fastest times in the 5,000 and 10,000, respectively.

Defending individual champs back from last year are Jones, Arizona State's Maicel Malone in the 400, Villanova's Sonia O'Sullivan in the 3,000, UCLA's Janeene Vickers in the 400 hurdles, Millett and USC's Ashley Selman in the javelin.

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Secondly, Washington State is much more familiar with Hayward Field."

The Cougars ran away with the Pepsi Team Invitational at Hayward Field on April 13 and are led by Samuel Kibiri and Tony Li.

Kibiri has the top time in the 1,500 meters (3:40.24) and the 3,000-meter steeplechase (8:32.41). He'll run both so the Cougars can have a shot at Tennessee.

Li was the 55-meter hurdle NCAA indoor champ

and has run the 110 hurdles in 13.52 this season and a wind-aided 13.31.

Two darkhorse teams to watch are Arkansas and Oregon.

The Razorbacks won the Southwest Conference meet with 218 points and have some top talent in triple jumpers Brian Wellman (57-1½ wind-aided) and Gary Johnson (53-11¼) as well as Jimmy French in the 200 meters (20.20).

The Ducks are peaking at the right time and with 11 qualifiers could give Dellinger his second NCAA crown.



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