

# Ducks turn in surprises at NCAAs

By Jake Berg  
Emerald Sports Reporter

Oregon athletes turned in some surprising performances this week at the NCAA Track and Field Championships.

Good and bad surprises. Stephanie Wessell had the third-best time of the 10,000-meter field, but the Oregon senior was forced to make an early exit from the race when a collision injured her right knee. Wessell hung in the race after the collision but walked off the track 200 meters later.

Lucy Nusrala's time in the 5,000 was the second-best of the field, but she finished only 10th despite a strong start in the race.

"It wasn't real comfortable like it has been," the Oregon junior said. "It's kind of hard to end it like that."

It was hard for javelin thrower Kim Hyatt, too, who had the third-best javelin throw but failed to make the finals on a subpar series of throws. Saturday marked the first time Hyatt did not score in her three years at Oregon.

"It could have been a lot better — we just didn't score what we thought we could do," Ore-

gon Coach Tom Heinonen said. Kelly Blair's sixth-place heptathlon finish on Thursday was a good surprise, giving Oregon three points it did not expect. Blair was the final athlete to qualify for the NCAA heptathlon.

And no surprise at all was Paula Berry's national championship in the javelin. Berry led the nation coming into the NCAAs, and her throw of 188-5 was good enough to top defending national champion Ashley Selman of USC. Berry finished second to Selman last year at the NCAAs.

"I just couldn't hit the big one today," said Berry, who threw twice over 190 feet during Thursday's qualifying throws. "I wanted to do big things here for the last collegiate meet. I was kind of nervous, but it was a good kind of nervous."

Blair and Berry finished as Oregon's only scorers in the meet, totaling all of the Ducks' 13 points for a 15th-place tie with Providence.

"Thank goodness for Paula," Heinonen said. "We were dead in the water everywhere else."

Oregon senior Rosie Williams ran at Hayward for the points for the Longhorns.

Nebraska's Ximena Restrepo won the 400 in a Hayward record time of 51.01, upsetting defending national champion Maicel Malone of Arizona State, who finished only third. Restrepo's points in the 400 and her anchor in the 4x400 relay carried the Cornhuskers to a third-place overall finish.

After three years of NCAA runner-up status, UCLA finished fourth this season. The

last time Friday afternoon in the 100 semifinals, finishing in a wind-aided 11.58 for sixth-place in her heat. Williams' time did not get her a spot in Saturday's finals.

"To run faster ... I would have had to eat my Wheaties or something," said Williams, the school record holder in the 100 and 200. "This year could have been a lot better, but it could have been a lot worse too."

Next season could be much better for the Ducks. The Ducks do lose Williams, Wessell and Berry, but Hyatt, Nusrala, Blair, distance runner Nicole Woodward, high jumper Laorel Roberts and sprinter Camara Jones all gained NCAA experience this season and will return next year.

Berry said she will technically be a collegian through the summer, giving her a shot at the collegiate javelin record of 211-5. Berry's personal record 202-1 throw is the fifth-best collegiate mark of all time.

"It took me four years to get a big throw in high school. It took me four years to get a big throw in college," Berry said. "Who knows what'll happen in four more years?"

Bruins' Janeene Vickers ran to her third straight championship in the 400 hurdles, winning in 55.65.

Arizona freshman Tanya Hughes won the high jump, tying the NCAA meet record and breaking the national junior record with her winning 6-4 1/4 leap.

Villanova's Sonia O'Sullivan defended her national championship in the 3,000, cruising to an easy win in 8:56.74.

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"I was a little behind (Jones)," Guidry said of the 4x100 anchor race. "But I wasn't in any jeopardy."

Yet Guidry was only part of a great Saturday for Texas athletes. Eileen Vanisi's final throw of 57-9 won the shot put competition and set a meet record, and Sandie Richards' second-place, 51.06 time in the 400 gained an additional eight

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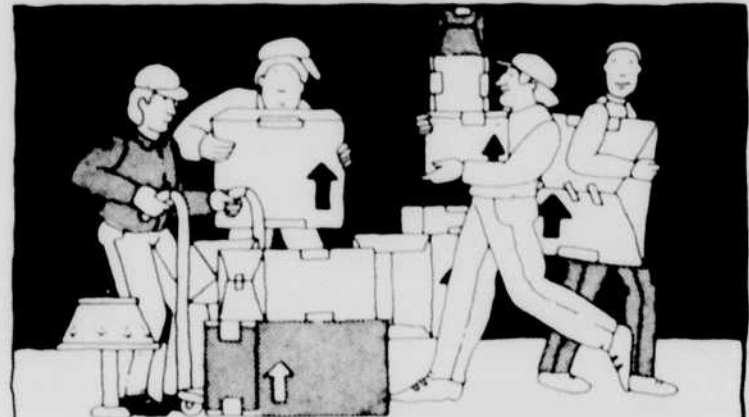
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