

Grad student to make a run at Olympics

□ Bob Stoltz will run the marathon at the U.S. Olympic Trials Saturday

By Erick Studenicka
Emerald Contributor

University graduate student Bob Stoltz's life-long dream of making the United States Olympic team could soon become reality if he can finish in the top three at the U.S. Olympic Trials marathon Saturday in Columbus, Ohio.

The task will not be easy, however, as Stoltz will be competing among 115 of the nation's top marathoners for an Olympic berth. Experts predict that the top three times for the 26.2-mile race will be under 2:12:30; Stoltz's best time to date is 2:18:56.

"Right now I feel I can run a 2:15 marathon, so realistically, I'm not expected to be among the top three," Stoltz said. "But if the weather is bad and slows the pace, I might have a chance of being with the leaders at the finish."

In order to qualify for the Olympic Trials, a runner must have posted a sub-2:20 marathon time in the previous year, been a national road race champion, or been a previous Olympian. Stoltz's qualifying time came last December in the California International Marathon in Sacramento, Calif.

Although Stoltz would like to make the team this year, he doesn't see this race as a "do-or-die" situation for his Olympic career.

"At age 27, I'm one of the youngest competitors, so I'm looking at this race as an opportunity to gain some experience," Stoltz said. "Most marathoners peak in their early thirties, so I'll have a better chance of making the team in 1996."

"But a top-20 finish is a realistic goal; I'd

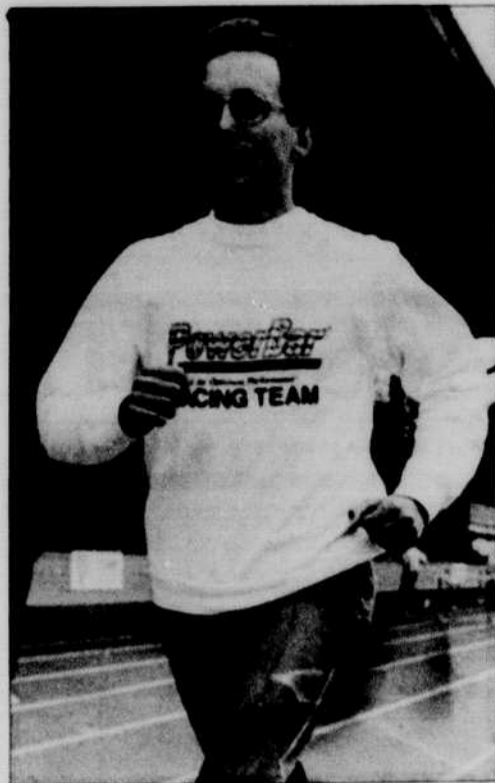


Photo by Michael Shindler

University graduate student Bob Stoltz is preparing to run the marathon at the Olympic Trials Saturday in Columbus, Ohio.

be pretty satisfied with any place within the top 20."

Stoltz began running in high school and continued on to Purdue, where he was a cross country All-American. After his graduation in 1988, he packed up his car and drove to Eugene, the distance runner's "mecca."

"I didn't have a job, I didn't have any contacts, I just moved out here," Stoltz said. "I liked Eugene's atmosphere and the fact that distance runners are respected here."

People are as enthusiastic here for distance running as they are for basketball in Indiana."

Stoltz soon hooked up with coach Mike Manley and an elite group of training partners that included past collegiate stars such as Dan Nelson and Greg Whitely. Success in road races led to support for Stoltz from Nike/Oregon International Track Club and PowerBar.

Stoltz remains busy these days attending classes in the M.B.A. program and working as the youth director at a local church. Running remains a high priority though, as Stoltz still finds time to run between 90 and 100 miles a week.

Several other prominent runners with Oregon ties will also be competing in Columbus this weekend.

Former Duck steeplechaser Ken Martin, the only American to run a sub-2:10 marathon since 1983, will be one of the favorites if he is healthy. Brad Hudson, the former Oregon cross country star, has also qualified, but injuries have hampered his training and it is questionable if he will race.

Then, of course, there is the living legend, Alberto Salazar. In 1981, Salazar ran a world record 2:08:13 while still a University student. He went on to make the Olympic team in 1984 but since then has been plagued with injuries and blood chemistry problems.

The 1984 Olympic marathon, when he finished 15th, was Salazar's last marathon. However, Salazar now feels healthy and thinks he can run the 2:12 necessary to make the team.

Contrary to Stoltz, though, Salazar does feel the Olympic Trials are a "do-or-die" situation. He recently said he will retire from the sport if he does not make the Olympic team.

TENNIS

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who is nursing an ailing back.

In other action, freshman Josh Prager controlled his No. 4 singles match, winning 6-2, 6-2.

Sophomore Christian Oelke had even less trouble with his No. 5 singles match, winning a 6-2, 6-1 win.

Oelke found no need to shift

gears for doubles either, as he teamed up with Kirner for a 6-0, 6-2 rout in the No. 3 match. The No. 2 doubles team of Nick Smith and Ryan Marasigan closed out the match with a 6-1, 6-0 win.

Next for the Ducks, 10-10 on the year, are matches against Washington State and Washington April 10-11 in Seattle.

ASSISTANT

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interviewed for an unrestricted job at Oregon.

Turgeon has been an assistant at Kansas since 1988 and has coached the Kansas junior varsity team during

his tenure.

Green, previously an assistant at Kansas, was named as head coach last week.

Jamie Klund, an assistant sports information director at Oregon, said he had received no word about either of the hirings as of Wednesday night.

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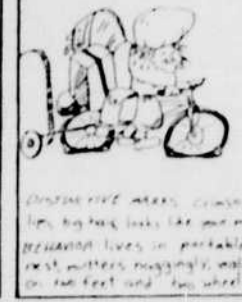
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