

Experience helps the Ducks win track meet

By Dave Charbonneau
Emerald Sports Reporter

The Oregon men's track team rode the backs of its talented seniors to victory at the Pepsi Team Invitational on Saturday at Hayward Field.

The Ducks went into the meet as slight underdogs to Nebraska, but experience paid off in the end as Oregon defeated the Cornhuskers 194-179 in the four-team meet.

Washington finished third with 171, and Northern Arizona placed a distant fourth with 125.

The highlight for the more than 3,000 fans in attendance came courtesy of senior Art Skipper. Skipper, Oregon's standout javelin thrower, set the tone for the afternoon by launching his final throw 251-8, breaking his own school record and qualifying for the NCAA Championships.

Skipper, who struggled last year with an ankle injury that prevented him from competing to his full potential, said the throw was a long time coming.

"All I can say is that it's about time," he said. "I've been throwing that distance in practice, and I've just been waiting it out."

Skipper was quick to add he's not about to be satisfied. "I want to throw farther," he said. "I'm never satisfied."

At the beginning of the event, Skipper was just satisfied to make a legal throw.

After fouling on his first two throws, Skipper was forced to make a standing throw of 166 feet just to get to the next round.

"If he would have fouled on the third throw," Oregon coach Bill Dellinger said, "we would've been in trouble."

Once Skipper set his mark, the rest of the afternoon just seemed to fall into place for the Ducks.

Senior Alan Foster ran his best race in over a year, taking first in the 1,500. Foster took over the lead with only a few laps remaining and held off a charging Tom Banks from Nebraska for the victory.

"It was good to see Alan back," Dellinger said. "It (taking over the lead) was a real brave move on his part. I thought he made his move

a little early, but I guess he knew what he was doing."

Oregon was unable to capture a victory in the sprint races, but junior Ronnie Harris gained valuable points for the Ducks with a second and third place in the 100-meter and 200-meter races, respectively.

Senior Shannon Lemora gave the Ducks important points with a victory in the 800-meter race, and so did junior Jason Walton, who was a surprise first in the high jump.

Senior Tye Van Schoiack easily won the 3,000 steeplechase, but Dellinger was more impressed with senior Rick Mestler's grueling charge to overtake Nebraska's Kevin Miller for second.

"Mestler had a gutsy performance," Dellinger said. "He's been sick and missed practice on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Then he races today and takes second."

In one of the most anticipated matchups of the day, senior Bob Gray used a late surge to pass Nebraska's Stephen Golding in the 110 hurdles. Golding got out of the blocks fast, but Gray gradually pulled up even and beat him to the tape.

"Stephen got out great, but I expected him to get out," Gray said. "I knew if I stayed with him early, I could win. After the last hurdle, I just outsprinted him."

Senior Pat Haller improved his season-best time with a first-place 14:03.62 during an easy victory in the 5,000.

There was no decathlon event at the meet, but that didn't stop Oregon's two decathletes, seniors Pedro daSilva and Muhammad Oliver, from contributing to the Ducks' cause.

Oliver took third in the long jump and 110 hurdles and seventh in the high jump. daSilva was second in the long jump, seventh in the discus and eighth in the shot put.

Despite all these seniors, some younger Ducks also had strong performances, most notably sophomore Heath Howington, who took third in the discus and shot put and fifth in the hammer, and Todd Bleakney, who won the triple jump.

Ducks and Jones surprise meet

By Jake Berg
Emerald Sports Editor

One surprise was the highlight of a surprising win for the Oregon women's track team Saturday in the Pepsi Team Invitational at Hayward Field.

The Ducks' 182 points won the sixth annual event for the sixth time, two points more than favored Nebraska, the defending NCAA dual meet champions. Washington was third with 116, and Northern Arizona took fourth with 111.

"It was an upset," Oregon coach Tom Heinonen said. "There's no question about that. Our kids competed really hard."

And none worked harder than Camara Jones.

Jones gave Oregon its biggest highlight of the meet with a brilliant win in the 400-meter race. Not only did the Duck sophomore beat favored Shanelle Porter of Nebraska, Jones did it in a school record of 52.73, also an automatic NCAA qualifying time.

Jones' run eclipsed the previous Oregon record of 53.3, set by Grace Bakari in 1981.

"I don't know how I did it, but I did it," an out-of-breath Jones said. "I surprised myself."

"Didn't surprise me," said teammate Lisa Bedwell, who finished third in the race.

Heinonen was elated by Jones' day on the track.

"In terms of quality," Heinonen said, "Camara was our best."

Jones and Bedwell were also part of Oregon's 4X100-relay team — which ran a provisional NCAA time — and the 4X400-relay team that wrapped up the meet win.

When all events except for the 4X400 relay were finished, Oregon led Nebraska 176-171 and needed either a first or second in the relay to win the meet. The Ducks easily got second for six points and the win.

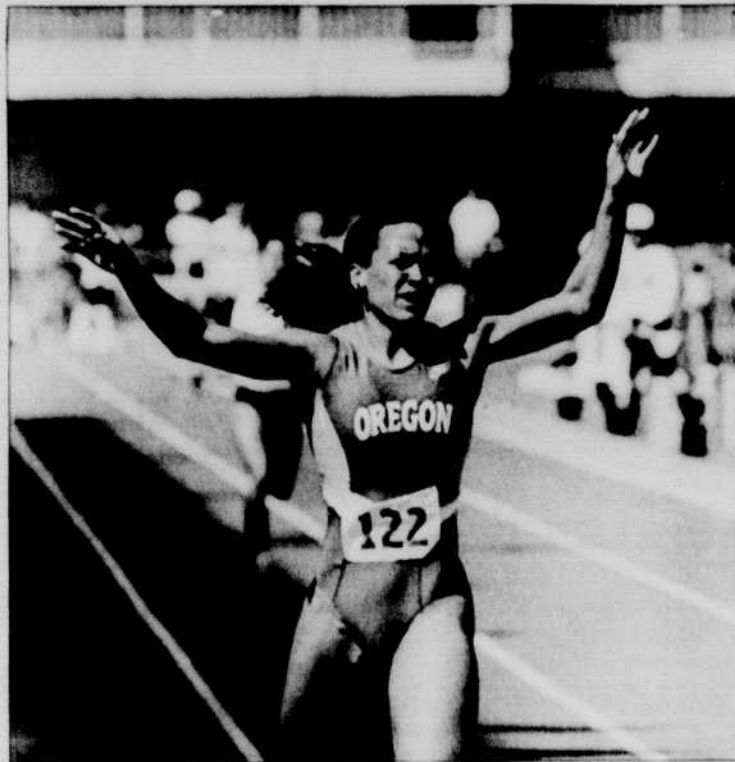


Photo by Jeff Paslay
Duck sophomore Camara Jones wins the 400-meter race with a time of 52.73, an automatic NCAA qualifying time and a new school record.

The Oregon upset, though, involved much more than the sprints.

"We really performed as a team," said senior Nicole Woodward, who won the 3,000 easily in a personal record of 9:32.59.

Fellow distance runner Lucy Nusrata also made it look easy, cruising to a meet record and NCAA provisional 16:21.68 in the 5,000.

Perhaps the most ironic twist of events Saturday came in the 400 hurdles and the discus, where the Cornhuskers and Ducks were counting on big points, respectively.

At the same time that Nebraska's Susan Hendrick Rehm — who had the best time in the 400 hurdles — fouled out, Oregon's Julie Beck failed to make the finals in the discus on the other side of the field.

Earlier, though, Beck did win the shot put, and teammate Molly Duggan was second for Oregon in the event.

Laurel Roberts also overcame adversity for points. After taking second in the long jump, Roberts cleared the bar high enough for third place in the high jump, despite injuring an ankle on her final try.

No surprise was Kim Hyatt's win in the javelin. The Oregon senior was the class of the field, and she showed it.

Hyatt bettered her previous season best on four different throws. Her winning toss of 172-08 was just 15 inches off the NCAA automatic qualifying mark.

Oregon freshman Keri Esterbrook's 149-05 was distantly off her teammate's mark, but it was still good enough for second-place points for the Ducks.

Oscar the Freshman



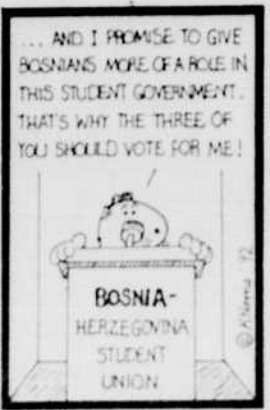
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