

SPORTS

Triple jumper sets high goals

By Jake Berg
Emerald Sports Editor

Kim Carlisle is a standout in the triple jump, but she is not a superstar.

However, the Oregon senior has been as good as just about anyone to ever do the triple jump in a Duck uniform. Her best jump — a 40-6 she set last weekend at a New Mexico meet — ranks second on the school's all-time list.

Phyllis McKinney, a former teammate of Carlisle's at South Eugene High School, established the school record in 1989 with a 41-4 1/4 jump. Three years ago, that mark contended on a national scale, but now, the NCAA provisional requirement is equal to Oregon's best mark ever — 41-4 1/4.

Carlisle said she has the potential to make the provisional list — and break the school record — but has set a higher goal of surpassing the automatic mark of 42-11 1/4 and placing high at the Pacific-10 Conference Championships in two weeks at Hayward Field.

"I think I've got a good shot at second or third if I can stay consistent," said Carlisle, who finished fifth last year, "and I think 41 (feet) is really realistic if I can get everything together."

Mark Stream, Oregon's hurdles, jumps and sprints coach for 15 years, said he can see Carlisle leaving Oregon with the school record in hand.

"Since she just jumped her personal best, it seems the next logical step to do that," Stream said. "I think she can get that."

The triple jump has only been recognized as a collegiate women's track and field event since 1984, making it the last event to be added to collegiate women's track, said Tom Heinonen, Oregon's head coach.

The triple jump was not even available at the prep level until Carlisle was a senior at South Eugene High School, she said. And even then, competition was only held as high as the district meet level and ignored as an event at the state meet.

Carlisle won the district title in the triple jump and said she would have likely earned a state title too, had it been there. Either way, her abilities gained her enough attention to become a "recruited walk-on" at Oregon, she said.

After life at Oregon and the collegiate level, though, the triple jump seems to fade away.

No triple jump competition exists at the Olympics, and this summer at Barcelona features only an exhibition of the event. The World Championships will first make the triple jump legitimate internationally in 1993 by instituting it as an event, and the Olympics will follow suit in 1996 by doing the same, Stream said.

Carlisle said it is "frustrating" to hear her teammates talk about going after the gold in the Olympics when her event is not yet recognized. She said it has always been her dream to be an Olympian, but that's just what it remains for her today.

Stream said the triple jump may be new to U.S. women's collegiate programs, but comparatively, the NCAA is at least farther ahead than the international circuit.

"I think it's just the history of track and field," Stream said. "Women still do not compete in all the events. Slowly on the international level they're catching up. The wheels just kind of turn slowly."

As examples, Stream said that at the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal, the longest distance running event offered to women athletes was the 800-meter run.

Heinonen agreed with Stream and said that the 5,000 is still not an Olympic event and is not competed in at the World Championships, either.

"When you're talking international track and field, you're talking international politics," Heinonen said. "You have to remember that there are countries where women are so subordinate that they can't go jogging on the streets, much less compete in the triple jump."

Heinonen, who has been Oregon's head coach for 16 years, said the triple jump seemed like the "logical" addition for women's collegiate track and field in 1984. But he said the jumpers of today are far different than those who competed when the event was originally tacked on to the women's curriculum at meets.

"When nobody knew how to do it," Heinonen said, "it was long jumpers and javelin throwers."

Heinonen said a thrower who can also do the triple jump is a rarity these days, but he said a Texas-El Paso athlete he saw at the New Mexico invitational last weekend surprised him. He said she threw 48-10 in the shot put, tossed the javelin 163 feet, and then leaped more than 40 feet in the triple jump.

The likelihood of seeing Carlisle competing in any of the throws is probably slim, but she is out on the golf course nearly everyday. Carlisle — who's only played golf four times — is the personnel manager at Laurelwood Golf Course, where her father is the head manager.

The economics major is not sure what the future holds for her — "God, I have to go out in the real world," she said — but she does know that any shot at being in the triple jump at the Olympics is four years down the line for her and the rest of women's track and field.



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