

Oregon may duck Sun Devils

□ Ducks seem to be favorites after ASU's Malone drops out

By Jake Berg
Emerald Sports Editor

A week ago, someone knowledgeable about Pacific-10 Conference track and field would have named Arizona State as the favorite to win the women's championship this weekend at Hayward Field.

Ask that same person today, and the answer would likely be different: Oregon.

The solution to that change in favorites can be found in two words: Maicel Malone.

The Arizona State sprinter, a five-time NCAA champion and 10-time Pac-10 titlist, was forced to drop out of the conference meet because of a back injury. Malone would have been the difference between the possibility of winning or conceding the conference title, said Tom Jones, the Sun Devil head coach.

"You can't replace Malone," Jones said. "You've got to be kidding."

In all seriousness, though, Jones said that with the loss of Malone and Tricia Melfy, who was the leading contender in the heptathlon until she withdrew because of an injury, his team is short at least 30 points that he had counted on previously.

Jones said Oregon should definitely be the favorite now, but he felt that a meet with the high-profile image of the Pac-10 Championships would bring out the best in all competitors.

"Cream rises to the top in this kind of meet," he said. "Oregon will probably win."

The women's meet begins Friday at 3:15 p.m., and the second half starts up at 2:10 Saturday.

Oregon seems to have a number of things going for it this weekend. Not only will the defending conference champs be hosting their first conference meet ever, they also have what looks to be the most solid team from top to bottom.

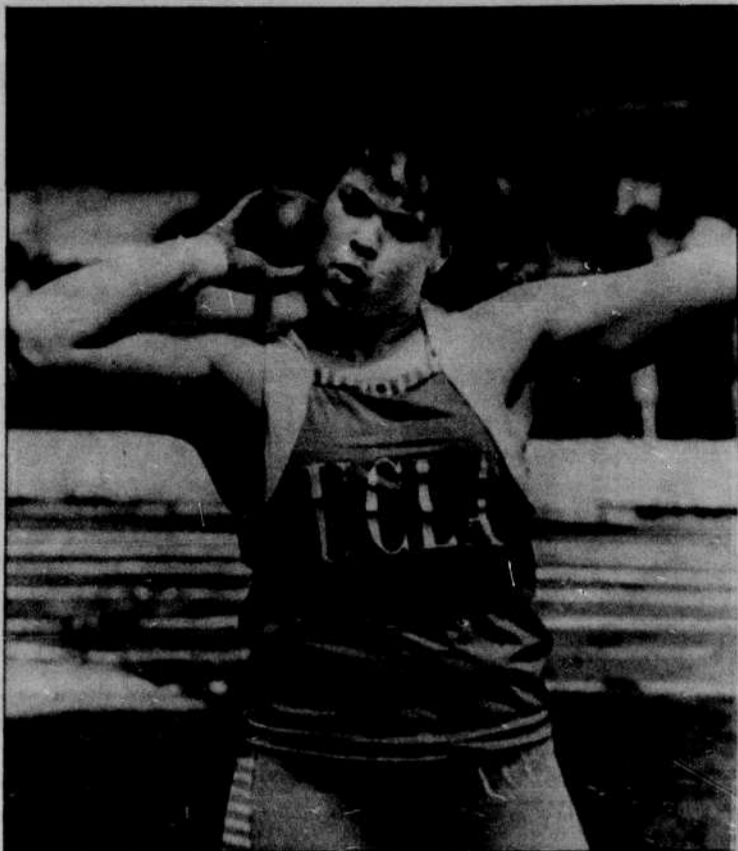
"Oregon would be the clear-cut favorites," said Washington coach Orin Richburg. "There aren't any easy points against Oregon."

Duck coach Tom Heinonen said he entered the maximum amount of 24 athletes, the only school with that many competitors.

In the sprints, Camara Jones has the top time in the 400-meter race, and LaReina Woods should contend in the 100 and 200 and Lisa Bedwell in the 400. All three are also part of the two relay teams, which are near the best in the conference.

Oregon's strengths, though, have traditionally rested in the distance events, and this weekend should be no different.

Seniors Nicole Woodward and Lucy Nusrala will both double in the 3,000 and the 5,000, and both own the top two times in each event. Only five runners will compete in



Dawn Dumble seeks to defend her Pac-10 shot put and discus titles at Hayward Field this weekend. Courtesy photo

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