

SPORTS

Oregon sears Pac-10 at meet

By Jake Berg
Emerald Sports Editor

The Oregon sun was just too hot for Arizona State.

The Sun Devils were picked to finish second in the Pacific-10 Conference Track Field Championships behind the Ducks over the weekend at Hayward Field, but they didn't quite do that.

Oregon, on the other hand, did just what was predicted. And more.

The Duck women's team won its second-straight Pac-10 team title Saturday with 122 points, far better than second-place Arizona with 90, USC in third at 87, and Arizona State's 69.

Oregon head coach Tom Heinonen was obviously happy about his team's championship, but he was more pleased with the overall dominance his team showed during the weekend. He said the difference between this and last year's Pac-10 champions was that the Ducks were confident they could win.

"Last year, we hadn't won before, and we didn't know if we could," he said. "This year, we knew that an Oregon team could win."

And the Ducks let everyone else know, too.

"We lost a little but got a lot," Heinonen said.

A whole lot.

Things started off on the right webbed foot when the first event of the weekend went to Oregon — as expected. Senior Kim Hyatt, a three-time All-American javelin thrower, won her first Pac-10 title, keeping the championship in Duck hands after Paula Berry won last year.

"It's great to keep the Pac-10 championship here at Oregon," said Hyatt, who won by more than six feet, "and I think it will stay here for a long time."

The reasoning behind Hyatt's prediction was her two freshmen teammates, Kelsey Stellick and Keri Esterbrook. Both were entered as wild cards into the Pac-10 meet but performed impressively, especially Stellick.

Stellick, who competed in the conference heptathlon the week before, set a personal record with a 155-06 throw, good for fourth place.

"I would've been mad if I didn't throw somewhere around there," said Stellick, who had been throwing consistently in practice all week. "I just wanted to keep going."

The meet went on for the rest of the Oregon squad, however, as the distance events began to put space between the Ducks and their competitors.

Freshman Jill Callero ran the first 10,000-meter run of her life Friday night and got third-place points for her team.

"I didn't know what to expect," Callero said. "I was just



Oregon teammates Nicole Woodward (right) and Lucy Nusrala were 1-2 in the 3,000- and the 5,000-meter runs in the Pacific-10 Conference Track Field Championships this weekend.

Photo by Jeff Paslay

excited for the opportunity to try this distance. As for scoring, I thought that would come my sophomore or junior year."

Teammates Nicole Woodward and Lucy Nusrala followed with a brilliant performance in the 3,000-meter run, an act they nearly duplicated Saturday in the 5,000. Nusrala ran to first in the 3,000, with Woodward second, and then the two pulled a switch in the 5,000 the next night.

"Nicole and I had 1-2 pretty much in the bank," Nusrala said after the 3,000.

The 5,000 saw the Duck runners make a final-lap surge to race by the rest of the pack. Oregon made some major ground in the event, as Woodward's first-place points, Nusrala's second and Jenna Carlson's fourth place gave the Ducks a boost.

"Coming off the final turn, I thought Lucy was going to win," Woodward said. "It was kind of neat that we got to flip-flop today."

Oregon perhaps got its quickest shot in the arm with its sprinters, though.

Camara Jones ran like the favorite she was in the 400. The sophomore finished just a hundredth of a second off of her PR in the race.

Lisa Bedwell finished a strong third in the race, and the two combined with teammates LaReina Woods and Regina Warren to finish second in the 4x100 relay in a school record 44.87.

"We should have done that a long time ago," said Woods, who also finished third in the 100 and 200. "We were looking for that time."

Anchor leg Warren said that by the time the baton had reached her, the race between the Ducks and USC was equal. But a bad handoff prevented Oregon from finishing closer to the first-place Trojans, she said.

Bedwell and Jones returned for the 4x400 relay — the final event. The group won the race mostly on Jones' final leg, unofficially clocked in at 51.3.

In the 800, Erika Klein took runner-up honors for the second-straight year to Arizona State's Kim Toney.

"I kind of feel like I'm always a bridesmaid and never a bride," Klein said.

The Ducks got other points in the triple jump with Kim Carlisle's fourth place, Molly Duggan's surprising sixth in the shot put and Karen Wiedmann's fifth in the 400 hurdles.

For other schools, Arizona's Tanya Hughes broke the collegiate record in the high jump, clearing 6-5 1/2 on her first attempt.

UCLA sophomore Dawn Dumble repeated as Pac-10 winner in the discus and the shot put.

Stanford's Chryste Gaines won her third-straight Pac-10 title in the 100.

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