

# Decathlete champ O'Brien settles it at Hayward

By Jake Berg  
Emerald Sports Editor

Every Superman has his kryptonite, but Dan O'Brien's may be a bit more subtle.

As he sat back with his arms outstretched against the second row of seats in a Hayward Field grandstand last week, O'Brien scoffed at the recurring downpour of rain as if he were the Wicked Witch of the West instead of the world's best decathlete.

"We were hoping to get out of here without getting rained on again," said O'Brien, extending his finger toward a long, wrapped pole near the vault. "That's mine out there."

It is the human side one often doesn't see beyond the medals and Reebok commercials of O'Brien. Eugene got a taste of the world champion's wide smile and full-day workouts in each event at Hayward last week while he prepared for the Oregon International track and field meet last Saturday in Portland.

O'Brien said he doesn't really mind the rain; after all, the 1984 Henley High School graduate is a native Oregonian.

"This is Oregon weather," he laughed, "and rain's not an oddity in track and field."

And O'Brien is not really a new face at Hayward, either. He competed in several events at the Oregon Invitational last month and will be at the Prefontaine Classic June 6 at Hayward.

**'I always wanted to be a Duck.'**

— Dan O'Brien,  
American decathlon record-holder

O'Brien said he's always liked working out in Eugene because it is similar to his home of Moscow, Idaho, and of Pullman, Wash., where his coach, Rick Sloan, is an assistant under Washington State men's coach John Chaplin.

Oregon was his first choice of colleges, too, when he came out of Klamath Falls, but the school wasn't offering scholarships to freshman then, he said.

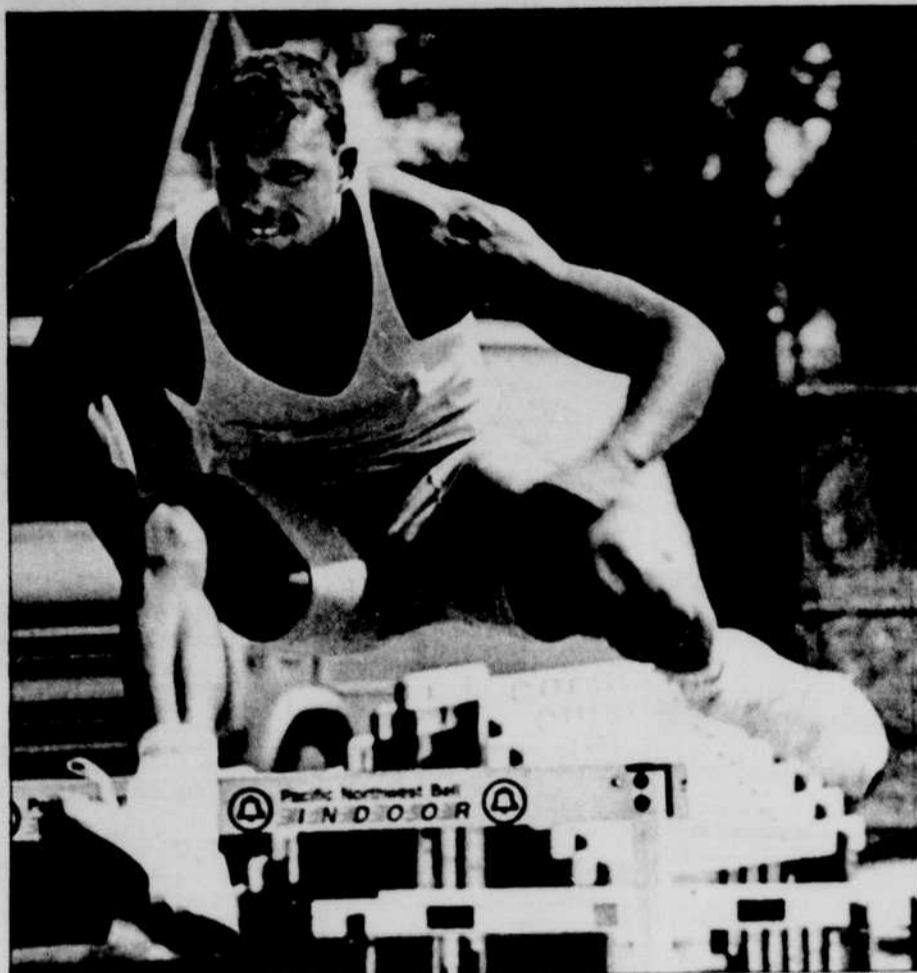
"I always wanted to be a Duck," said O'Brien, who attended Idaho instead.

Along with the Oregon International and Prefontaine, O'Brien will compete in the Bruce Jenner meet the following weekend. All three meets are in preparation for the June 19-28 Olympic Trials in New Orleans.

O'Brien, the favorite to win the gold in the Olympic decathlon, said he is focusing on the Trials more than looking ahead to the Summer Olympics in Barcelona.

"That's a long way off," said O'Brien, who set the American record of 8,812 points in the decathlon last year.

But O'Brien will likely be right near the top, rain or no rain.



Decathlete Dan O'Brien clears a hurdle at Hayward Field as he prepares for the June 19-28 Olympic Trials in New Orleans. Photo by Jeff Paslay

## BASEBALL

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as and Philadelphia as a utility man. He never became the outstanding player he was supposed to be due to a heart murmur that robbed him of his endurance.

The last team to win the Northern Division was because of 1974 club that featured Don Reynolds, the older brother of Seattle Mariner second baseman Harold Reynolds.

In the late 1970s the Ducks fell on some tough times. Going into its final season in the spring of 1981, Oregon had a streak of four straight losing seasons.

At the same time, the athletic department was also having problems. It had a deficit of about \$375,000 in 1981 and was on a pace to go further into debt by about \$1 million the next year.

The deficit was attributed to inflation, loss in revenue and the University's struggle to meet the Title IX requirements.

Title IX was a ruling adopted in 1972 by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare that required athletic departments to divide their resources equally between men and women's programs.

The State Board of Higher Education ordered the athletic department to do whatever necessary to balance its budget for the next year.

In the spring of 1981, athletic Director John Caine resigned under pressure from the administration, leaving University President Paul Olum and Vice President for Administration Ray Hawk with the decision of what sports to cut.

Hawk said baseball was cut because it was not widely followed in the Northwest and brought in no significant revenue.

A week later, the baseball team played its last game, the second game of a doubleheader with Washington. The Ducks lost the first game 5-4 and the second 5-1, finishing the season with a 16-21-1 record.

Crum said the feeling in the dugout that day was positive despite the fact it was the last Oregon game.

"I think we all felt like we would be back the next season," Crum said. "We really didn't believe that it was over."

Oregon baseball fans tried to bring back the team the next season. The Save Oregon Baseball Committee raised more than \$100,000 in 1981, but it was not enough for athletic director Rick Bay to reinstate the program.

"We would have to have had at least \$500,000 to think about bringing baseball back," Bay said. "We needed enough money to run the program for more than a year."

Coach Krause and some of his former players said they still hurt when they think about Oregon baseball.

"It is a tragedy that kids don't have the chance to come to Oregon and play baseball," Krause said. "This is a great baseball state, and for Oregon not to have a program is wrong."

Mike Richey, an All-Northern Division outfielder for Oregon in 1979 and 1980, said he has good memories of his time at Oregon, but it pains him to think about the University not having a program.

Given the current athletic department's situation, baseball will probably remain just a memory at Oregon.

Sports information director Steve Hellyer said the department is working to fund the programs it already has and would not think about adding programs anytime soon.

## Player's relief will cost him money

BILBAO, Spain (AP) — A player who urinated on the goalpost at a Spanish first-division soccer match will be fined for his "lack of respect for fans," news reports said Wednesday.

Officials of Athletic de Bilbao, one of 20 teams in the first division, announced

the fine in a statement but did not specify the amount. In addition to a lack of fan respect, the statement said the act also disgraced the game.

Team officials said they learned of the incident only after a photograph was published Monday in a Spanish

newspaper showing 22-year-old David Billabona urinating on the upright between halves of the match.

The incident occurred Sunday in the southwestern Spanish city of Cadiz in a game between Athletic de Bilbao and Cadiz. Cadiz won 1-0.

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