

Prefontaine prepares athletes for Olympic Trials

By Dave Charbonneau
Emerald Sports Reporter

Track fans will get a chance to see some of the United States' top Olympic contenders Saturday in The Prefontaine Classic at Hayward Field.

With the Olympic Trials only two weeks away, many athletes are using the 18th annual Prefontaine as a tune-up for the Trials.

Among those scheduled to compete on Saturday are decathlete Dan O'Brien, runners Mary Slaney, Annette Peters and Mozambique's Maria Mutola, and last year's three top pole vaulters in the country.

O'Brien, who is one-half of Reebok's "Dan and Dave" commercials, is the favorite to win the Olympic gold medal. He will compete in three events at the Prefontaine — the pole vault, long jump and high jump.

Slaney will jump at Hayward for the second time this season, in the 2,000-meter event. Her first appearance was at the Oregon Invitational when she finished second in the 5,000 to Peters, a former Oregon track star.

Peters was added to the event when Vicki Huber had to pull out of the race with a bad back.

Mutola was the winner of the 1,500 at the

Bruce Jenner meet two weeks ago and will run her specialty, the 800, at the Prefontaine against the top-ranked American, Meredith Rainey.

Kory Tarpenning, Scott Huffman and Tim Bright were ranked 1-2-3, respectively, last year among U.S. pole vaulters, and all three will compete on Saturday.

In the men's 1,500, Joe Falcon will try and win his third straight race after winning at the Modesto and Jenner meets. He will be challenged by a late-entry, Jeff Atkinson, who holds the second-fastest American time behind Falcon.

The high jump and long jump are also loaded events. Thomas McCants, Mark Reed and Leo Williams are the top competitors in the high jump, and world-ranked Joe Greene and Andre Ester are the favorites in the long jump.

Tom Jordan, the meet's director, said Saturday's meet will be the best in years.

"This is the strongest field we've had since 1984," Jordan said. "The athletes are pumped. Because it's an Olympic year, most of them are in peak physical condition."

The meet begins at 6 p.m. with the hammer and winds up with the men's 5,000 at 8:30. Tickets are \$11 reserved, \$7 general admission and \$5 for children and seniors.



Joe Falcon will be just one of the United States' top Olympic contenders competing in the Prefontaine Classic.

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