

Northwest teams to meet indoors

By Erick Studenicka
Emerald Sports Reporter

As anyone who witnessed the Trail Blazer home stand will attest, there hasn't been much running going on in the Portland coliseum recently.

That is scheduled to change, however, as Oregon, Washington and Washington State meet in the coliseum tonight for the inaugural Northwest Team Challenge indoor track meet.

Although the Portland Indoor meet is an annual event on the track calendar, promoters added the team competition in hopes of drawing more spectators to the coliseum. Attendance at the meet sank to a record low of 1,600 last year.

Indoor track is not an official sport within the Pacific-10 Conference, but coaches have found indoor meets to be beneficial in preparing for the outdoor season.

"We use the indoor meets primarily as a gauge to see how our training is going," said assistant women's track coach Mark Stream. "But when you're up against your Northwest rivals, you have added incentives to

compete well."

The meet is tailor-made for spectators, as every team is limited to only two competitors in each event, which eliminates the need for qualifying heats. The meet has also been streamlined to 15 events so the entire meet will be finished in less than three hours.

Stream said several athletes, including high jumper Kelly Blair and sprinter Camara Jones, would have a good shot at qualifying for the NCAA indoor meet tonight.

"I'm not expecting them to qualify, but I wouldn't be surprised if it happened," Stream said. "In fact, in addition to the high jump, Kelly could just as easily qualify in the long jump and hurdles."

Pole vaulter Ray Livingston, a freshman who cleared 16'6" at the Eugene indoor meet two weeks ago, said there were both advantages and disadvantages to vaulting indoors.

"I get more tense indoors because of the feeling that everyone is so close to you," said Livingston. "But you don't have to deal with the elements like the wind."

Livingston said he is looking forward to getting a chance to compete against the Ducks' longtime rival, Washington State.

"All the new guys are excited about our first meet against Washington State," Livingston said. "It's an important meet, but we don't want to peak too soon."

Another "new guy" who is expected to impact the meet is LaMont Woods, a freshman making his Oregon debut in the 55-meter dash.

The Ducks have three all-conference runners returning to the squad this year, including Ronnie Harris in the 400-meter run, Todd Bleakney in the triple jump and Jason Walton in the high jump.

The longest distance on the schedule is only 800 meters, and it would seem the Oregon men would be at a disadvantage because of their relative strength in the distance events.

Stream said the Oregon women would not be affected by a lack of distance events.

"I'd say the sprinters are just as strong as the distance runners this year," Stream said.

WIN

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utes left, but the Huskies scored five straight points to cut the lead to 50-45. The Ducks held a six-point lead with 10 minutes remaining, and pulled ahead 63-52 after a Williams hit another three-pointer and Andre Collier made two free throws.

Back-to-back three-pointers by Washington guard Brett Pagett cut Oregon's lead to 68-60 with six minutes left, but the Huskies failed to score a single point in the ensuing four-and-a-half minutes, as the Ducks built an 18-point lead, 78-60 with 1:30 remaining in the game.

Johnson led Oregon in scoring, rebounds (eight) and assists (five), as his play made up for below-par nights for Williams and Antoine Stoudamire. Williams scored 17 and Stoudamire had 13, but the two combined for a six of 22 night from the field.

"If someone told me tonight where Antoine was with his shooting percentage and Orlando with his shooting percentage, I would have asked, 'how can we win,'" Green said. "And then I look at our post players and I think we did a heck of a job."

Forward Jeff Potter teamed with Johnson to lead Oregon to a 43-32 rebound advantage.

FIFE

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from Fife since Sunday.

"Since we came home from California, Bob hasn't been seen," Johnson said. "His locker's been cleaned out."

Fife, however, said late Thursday night that he believed he was still on the team but had yet to talk with Green since Sunday.

"As far as I know, I'm still on the team," he said. "It was just one of those situations where it was better to talk to my parents than it was to talk with the coach."

When Fife was told of Green's comments after the game, Fife said, "I couldn't see him turn on a player like that. I think that

would be wrong."

Green was asked if Fife had any chance of remaining with the team.

"The circumstances would have to be pretty extreme for that to happen," he said. "No one has even talked to him. That's why we have phones."

Fife said he had originally planned on making it home in time for Thursday's game but got stuck in a snowstorm for six hours on his way home Thursday.

Fife had seen his playing time slowly diminish as the season progressed. He played only three minutes Sunday against the Bruins.

Women commit 35 turnovers in loss

The Oregon women's basketball team committed 35 turnovers and lost 59-51 to Washington in Seattle.

The loss came on the heels

of the Ducks' first Pacific-10 Conference victory of the season Saturday against UCLA. Oregon is now 1-11 in the Pac-10 and 7-14 overall.

Debbie Sporcich led the Ducks with 13 points. Rhonda Smith led three players in double-figures with 20 for Washington.

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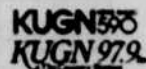
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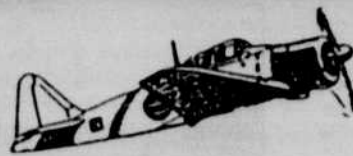
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