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Duck runners miss last shot at NCAAs

By Erick Studenicka
Oregon Daily Emerald

Scott Nicolas gave it everything he had Wednesday night, including his lunch, at the Ed Moeller Open track meet in one final attempt to qualify for the NCAA 1,500 meter championship.

Unfortunately for Nicolas, his winning time of 3:45 left him about two seconds short of the time necessary to earn a trip to New Orleans next week.

"I felt really good after three laps, but then all of a sudden I got hit by a wind, and that was the end of it," said Nicolas.

Nicolas was paced by former Oregon 800 meter runner Shannon Lemora through 1,200 meters. Lemora was running with a cast on his wrist due to a recent bicycle accident, but the cast didn't slow Lemora as he cruised through the first lap in 56 seconds.

"That was five seconds faster than I had ever gone out before," said Nicolas. "I would have liked someone to run like that the whole way."

Oregon coach Bill Dellinger said Nicolas used the correct strategy in his attempt for the NCAA qualifying mark.

"Scott did exactly what he had to do; he went out at 3:41 pace and he was there for three laps. He's just not quite strong enough yet to handle that pace and finish up the last 300 meters," Dellinger said. "He went for it and I admire his bravery. A year

from now, you'll see him running 3:41 when he's stronger and able to handle the finish."

Steeplechaser Jason Humble also made an impressive attempt at the NCAA qualifying mark. Running by himself from the start, Humble ran 8:57, only three seconds off the NCAA standard.

"I thought I had a chance on the last lap. I needed to run a 66 second lap, and I knew I could do that because I did it last year," said Humble. "There was a pretty good wind down at the water jump, though. I was just tired, and with 200 meters to go I was a lot slower than I wanted to be."

Dellinger was impressed with Humble's solo steeple effort.

"For being by himself, I think Jason ran a fine steeple," Dellinger said. "He got a little over anxious and ran his first lap in 65 seconds; if he would have run the lap in 67, I think he might have qualified."

For a moment, there was a stir near the discus ring when it was announced that Julie Beck had thrown 169 feet, a mark which would have been a two foot improvement on her seasonal best. Beck's true mark, however, was 159 feet, a throw good enough for the win but far short of her previous distance of 167 feet.

Beck said that although she will not qualify for the discus at the NCAA meet, she does hold the 13th and final qualifying spot in the shot put.

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