

Blair captures NCAA title

By Erick Studenicka
Oregon Daily Emerald

Oregon track athlete Kelly Blair recorded the eighth best collegiate heptathlon score of all-time Thursday night as she won the NCAA title in New Orleans.

Blair was in third place going into the final three events. But after winning the javelin (140-8) and taking third in the long jump (20-5), Blair found herself with a slim 46 point lead over Louisiana State's Sharon Jaklofsky with only the 800 meter run remaining.

Blair then recorded a personal record 2:19.80 in the 800, giving her 826 points for the event and a total of 6,038. Jaklofsky finished 11th in the field of 12 runners, scoring only 726 points

and thereby securing Blair's national title.

"Things really went well today," Blair said. "The turning point was the long jump. I felt then I could score 6,000 points, and I knew 6,000 could win. It's probably the biggest win of my career, and it's a relief it's over."

During the two days of competition, Blair established new personal records in four of the seven heptathlon events. In addition to her 800 meter personal record, she ran the 200 meters in 24.14, put the shot 39-8, and ran the 100 hurdles in 13.78.

Blair's win marks the first time in history an Oregon athlete has won the heptathlon at the NCAA meet, and her score easily broke the school record which she had established in

winning the event at the Pacific-10 Conference meet.

Blair wasn't the only Oregon athlete to have a good day. **Camara Jones** qualified for the final in the 400 meters on Saturday by placing third in her heat with the time of 52.61. 1,500 meter runner **Erika Klein** also qualified for Saturday's final by placing fourth in her heat with a personal record 4:22.02.

In the other final involving an Oregon athlete Thursday, **Julie Beck** took 11th place in the discus with a toss of 155-3.

TODAY'S ACTION — The Ducks will have two excellent opportunities for team points today as **Ashley Selman** goes for her second national title in the javelin and **Nicole Woodward** runs in the 3,000 meter final.

Nike sticks up for its poster boy

PORTLAND (AP) — Nike, the company Michael Jordan helped make famous, lashed out Thursday at critics of the basketball superstar.

"I don't think we should have to be in a position to defend Michael Jordan to anybody," Nike public relations manager Dusty Kidd said. "I think Michael Jordan defends himself, day in and day out, both on the court and off it."

Kidd questioned the motives of Richard Esquinas, co-author of *Michael & Me: Our Gambling Addiction ... My Cry For Help!* Among other things, Esquinas says Jordan's obsession with gambling resulted in a \$1.25 million debt over a 10-day period in 1991.

Although Jordan isn't talking to reporters, Kidd mounted a spirited argument on behalf of the man who has been Nike's major voice since 1984.

"He is a great athlete and a great human being

who is being attacked by people who are using him to get publicity for whatever reason," Kidd said.

He said Nike wasn't worried about the possibility that Jordan's image might be tarnished by his highly publicized penchant for gambling.

"We are, as a company, proud to be associated with Michael Jordan," Kidd said. "We think this has been a great mutual relationship and will continue to be."

"We'll let Michael speak for Michael as to what Michael does when he's not playing basketball. But, as far as Nike is concerned, look at the last 11 years that Michael has been in the spotlight, he's done everything he's been asked to do and more."

Jordan reportedly makes about \$40 million annually from his basketball earnings and range of sponsors.

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