

X-country prepares for regionals

By Dave Charbonneau

Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon men's and women's cross country teams will either redeem themselves or end their seasons at Saturday's District VIII Championships in Woodland, Wash.

Both teams were upset at the Pacific-10 Conference Championships two weeks ago when the men finished third and the women took fourth. Both came into the meet as favorites and the women missed winning the title for only the second time in eight years.

However, the Pac-10 meet was not nearly as important as Saturday's meet. The Pac-10 meet was mostly for bragging rights, but a trip to the NCAA Championships is at stake in the District VIII meet.

The top two teams from both the men's and the women's race will advance to the NCAA. Both women's coach Tom Heinonen and men's coach Bill Dellinger believe their teams can bounce back after the disappointing performances two weeks ago.

"Our task is pretty clear," Heinonen said. "We have to return to the level we've been in all of our previous races before the Pac-10 meet, and I think we're capable of that."

Dellinger said his team also needs to step it up.

"Our team has yet to do what it's capable of," he said. "This is their NCAA Championships, and they have to go about it with that attitude. If they do that, they're capable of qualifying."

The 16th-ranked men's team has suffered greatly by the fact that no one has taken over as the leader. In the Ducks' four races, only John Dimoff and Goss Lindsey have cracked the top 10, and they did it in the same race—the Willamette Invitational.

Karl Keska and Tracy Hollis-



Oregon's John Dimoff is one of two Duck runners to crack the top 10 at a men's meet this year.

ter have been the most consistent of the Ducks, but Keska's highest finish was 13th at the Pac-10 meet and Hollister's best was 16th at the Drenth Memorial.

Oregon's stiffest competition will come from Portland, which crushed the Ducks at the Drenth race, and the Washington schools, which finished 1-2 at the Pac-10s.

"We need someone brave enough to set a good pace for the team and then dare people to run with him," Dellinger said. "They are going to have to grind it out if they're going to (qualify)."

For the women, the strength of the team has been the performance of Milena Glusac this season. Glusac has finished in the top four in all of Oregon's meets this year.

Melody Fairchild has also pleased Heinonen by progressively getting better this season. In the Pac-10s, Fairchild ran her best race of the season, taking fifth.

The Ducks struggled at the conference meet because the three, four and five scorers didn't do as well as expected.

Jenna Carlson, who finished in the top eight in Oregon's three previous races, settled for 22nd, and Niamh Zwagerman also had her worst finish of the season at 16th.

"We need our top four to run well," Heinonen said. "At least better than they did, and get a significant improvement from our number five runner."

Stanford, UCLA and Arizona will be the biggest challenges for the Duck women Saturday.

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