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OREGON TRACK

Men need youth to carry team

By Scott Simonson
Oregon Daily Emerald

The question isn't whether the Oregon men's track team has talent. The question is when it will fulfill its potential.

It could be this year. More likely, it will be next year or the year after. Oregon's roster is dominated by sophomores and freshmen. Thirty of the 51 athletes on Oregon's roster are underclassmen.

Last year's freshman-heavy Oregon squad took fifth place at the Pacific-10 Conference meet. Last season was the first time since 1953 that Oregon sent no athletes to the NCAA championships.

Head coach Bill Dellinger said it is too early in the season to make predictions about what Oregon is capable of achieving at this year's Pac-10 meet May 13-14 and 20-21.

"We've got a lot of weeks to go. It depends a lot on the health of the team," he said. "I would be disappointed if we don't qualify a few people to go to the NCAA's this year. I don't think that we're being considered a contender ... but I think we'll have some guys there. I think a year from now we'll even be better, and a year from that we host it (the NCAA) at home and we'll be pretty tough."

The Ducks' schedule for the 1994 season features the traditional group of meets at Hayward Field (including the Oregon Invitational and the Oregon Twilight) and some atypical opponents. Oregon has a rare meet against Navy this weekend.

The Pepsi Team Invitational on April 23 brings UCLA to Hayward Field for the first time during the regular season since 1985. Dellinger ranks the Bruins as one of the favorites for the conference championship. UCLA finished ninth at last season's NCAA meet.

"That's going to be a real good contest. I think it will be exciting to see UCLA up here for the first time in a long time ... they're real strong in the field events. They always have good sprinters," he said.

Washington State, another of the strongest teams in the conference meet, visits Oregon on May 7. "They don't have the depth we do, but they cover every event with a real good talent," Dellinger said.

Oregon scored 69.5 points at last season's conference meet. Athletes accounting for more than half of those points were expected back in this year.

However, those hopes have taken a beating in recent weeks.



Lamont Woods is one of Oregon's top returnees in the sprints this year.

Heath Howington nearly qualified for the NCAA championships in the shot put and finished fifth in the conference meet last year. Back problems will keep him from competing this spring.

Jamar Williams, who finished fourth in the 110-meter hurdles at the Pac-10 meet as a freshman, left the team and is not enrolled at the University for spring term.

Oregon will have difficulty replacing either athlete but it has plenty of young talent. In the sprints, Dellinger said Oregon is deeper than it has been in most years because of the presence of two football players, Dino Philyaw and LaMont Woods.

The Ducks lost Ronnie Harris, who scored for the Ducks in the 400 meters at the Pac-10 meet and clocked times in the 200 and the 400 that are among the top 10 in Oregon history. Among Oregon's leading returnees is senior LaVon Pierce, who scored in both the 100 and the 200 at the Pac-10

SPRINTERS

100 METERS

Dino Philyaw	10.54
LaMont Woods	10.58
LaVon Pierce	10.64

200 METERS

LaVon Pierce	21.47
Tony Jeremiah	21.84

400 METERS

LaVon Pierce	47.53
Patrick Khoo	47.84

meet.

Oregon is looking for continued contributions from DeWayne Ingram in the 100 and Patrick Khoo in the 400. Newcomer Tony Jeremiah may also make an impact.

Junior college transfer Philyaw has been an early-season success for the Ducks. He won the 100 and finished second in the 200 at Washington last weekend. Philyaw finished as the top collegian in the 100 at the Stanford Track and Field Festival the week before.

Returnees Woods, Pierce and Ingram comprise three-quarters of the 4x100-meter relay team that took fourth place at last year's Pac-10 meet. Pierce and Khoo were half of the Oregon 4x400 team, which finished third in the meet.

In the middle distances, Gordon Johnson and Scott Nicholas lead the way. Johnson is Oregon's top athlete in the 800 meters. The senior took fifth place at the Pac-10 championships last year.

Nicholas finished third in the conference meet in the 1,500