



Oregon's Lisa Bedwell (middle) will look for victory without teammates LaReina Woods (right) and Camara Jones (left), who are redshirting this year.

Bedwell hopes to continue her success alone

By Dave Charbonneau
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When sprinters LeReina Woods and Camara Jones decided to redshirt this season, the Oregon women's track program lost two reigning Pacific-10 Conference champions.

And Lisa Bedwell lost her relay team. In the previous two seasons, Bedwell teamed with Jones and Woods to form three-fourths of one of the top sprint relay teams in the Pac-10.

In 1992, Bedwell, Jones and Woods were members of the relay teams that took first in the 4x400, and second in the 4x100 at the Pac-10 championships.

Last season, the trio led the Ducks to first place in the 4x100 — setting a school record in the process — and third in the 4x400 at Pac-10s with both teams qualifying for the NCAAAs.

With Woods and Jones skipping this season, Bedwell, who is in her final year with Oregon, has lost her chance to be part of a relay team that likely would have been the best in the Pac-10, and possibly made some noise at the NCAAAs.

Now, Bedwell finds herself in a totally different role for the Ducks.

No longer in the shadows of Woods and Jones, Bedwell is now the veteran leader of a largely inexperienced and untested

Oregon sprint crew.

"I've definitely moved from the playing the depth role which I've done for the last two years," Bedwell said. "The other people in the sprints need to step up right now, and I'm willing to do that. I feel like I have to somehow pull everybody together so we can find the continuity and trust we need to do well this year."

More than the record-setting times and the Pac-10 Championships, Bedwell misses having that continuity and trust she developed with Jones and Woods, whom she has become good friends with over the last two years.

"I'm a little disappointed because they're two of my really good friends," she said. "More than anything, I've noticed their absence because we were so close. We still are, but on the track, they aren't with me every day."

All three came to Oregon in 1992, and since that time has turned the Duck program — which was renowned as a distance runner team — into a deadly sprint force as well.

"When I got here, Oregon was basically known as a distance school," Bedwell said. "I feel things pulled together for a reason. The three of us came in at the same time. I look back at that and I think I was so lucky to fall into a program at the same

time as Camara and LaReina."

But as Bedwell sees it, she doesn't have time to dwell on the past because she's got work to do this year. She's a senior who comes into this season as the top returning women sprinter, and with all the troubles the women's team is having in the distance races, the sprinters, and Bedwell in particular, are going to be looked upon to provide big points.

"There's no point in looking at what could've or should've been," Bedwell said. "The bottom line is this is my senior year and I've got to give it everything I've got."

That starts with trying to improve her performances in the individual events.

Despite Bedwell's successes last season in the relays, her individual performances were not up to her own expectations. After finishing third in the 400 at Pac-10s her sophomore year, Bedwell failed to score at last year's meet.

"I need to concentrate on my individual races this season," she said. "Last year, nothing was ever good enough so I always had this negative energy. Now, I'm focusing on positive energy and I think I can get very far doing that. There's a lot of potential for me in the 400."

Although Bedwell has specialized in the 400 during her college career, the departure of Woods has given Bedwell the

opportunity to run the shorter sprints on a regular basis.

Last weekend, she set a personal record in the 200, and expects to do the same in the 100 before the season is over.

"I've never run the 100 this well in college and hopefully I'll PR in that too since I'm getting the chance to run so much more," she said. "I was a 200 runner in high school and the shorter sprints can only help me in the 400. I think my calling in college is the 400. To get to nationals, it's going to be in the 400."

Bedwell came to Oregon as a transfer after spending her freshman year at Colorado. Bedwell went to high school in Colorado, and said that was part of the reason she opted to go to Colorado in the first place.

After a year at the school, which is not particularly strong in track, Bedwell was more or less told to go somewhere else.

"They were a little afraid of me wanting to be good-great rather than just good," she said. "So they basically told me to go somewhere else where I'd be better off."

Bedwell wouldn't have minded having another year to compete after this one, but says she's ready to get on with her life.

"I feel like things are coming to a close for me as far track is concerned," she said.



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