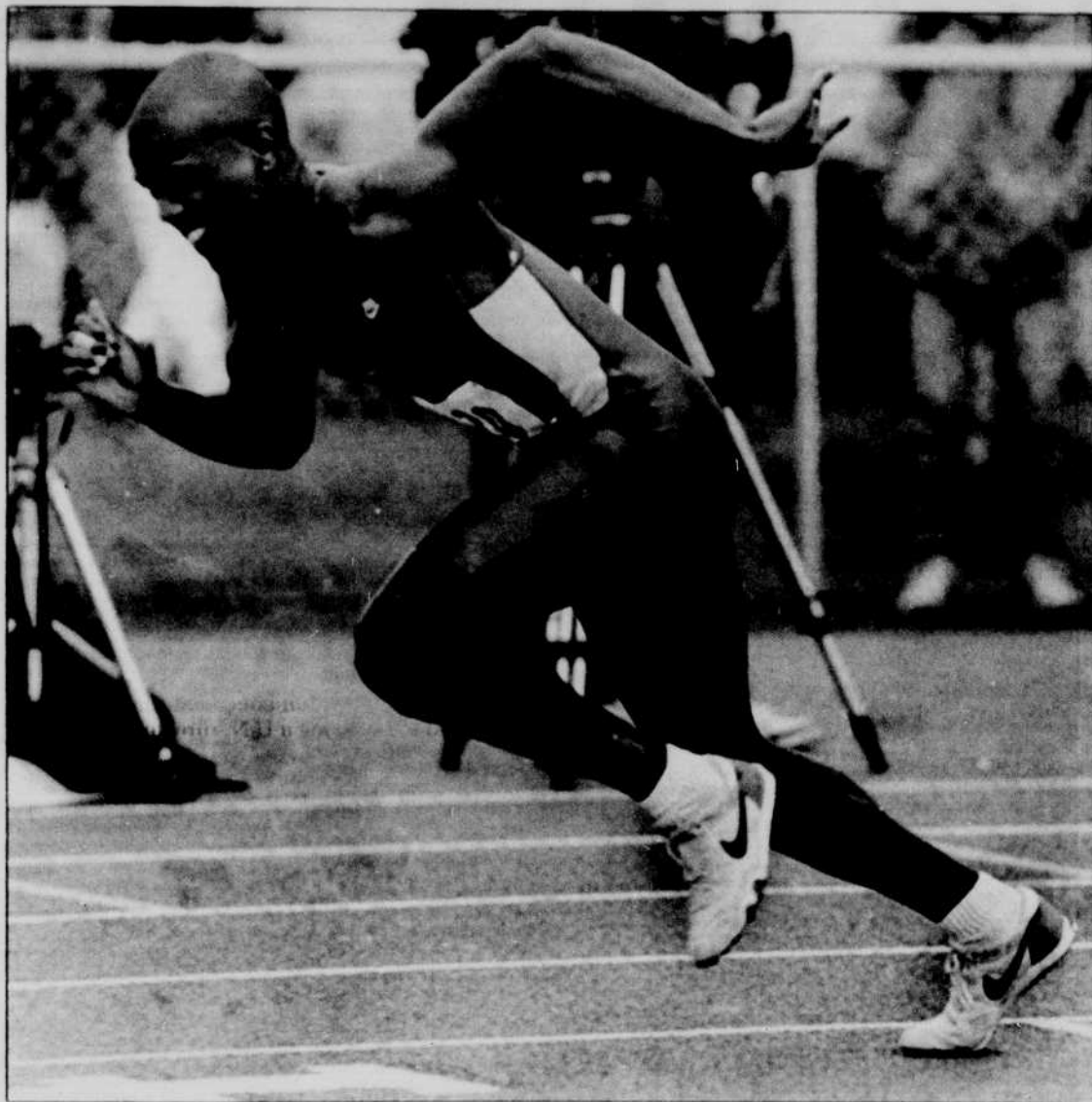




LaVon Pierce owns Oregon's best time in the 400 meters this season. He is scheduled to run the 400 and the anchor leg of the 4x400 relay against Washington State and Boise State on Saturday.

Men's track renews rivalry

By Scott Simonson
Oregon Daily Emerald

The biggest and best rivalry in Oregon men's track will be renewed Saturday when the Ducks meet Washington State as part of a triangular meet at Hayward Field.

After 21 years of intense competition, Oregon head coach Bill Dellinger and Washington State head coach John Chaplin will meet in the regular season for the final time. The 57-year-old Chaplin is resigning at the end of this season.

Saturday's competition isn't a dual meet, the format that provided some spectacular performances over the years. The spectacular performances haven't always been relegated to the athletes.

As if a meeting of two perennial powerhouses isn't enough to make things interesting, Chaplin's stormy relationship with Oregon's fans and with the press has spawned endless stories.

"I'd rather have 10,000 fans out there booing me than one fan cheering," Chaplin said. "I like Eugene. They're very supportive of their team."

Dellinger and Chaplin are longtime friends, but when the competition begins, so does the rivalry. "I don't know whether that's felt more by the coaches or by the teams," Dellinger said.

"I'm sure he'd like to leave here with a victory, and I'm sure he has a team that can do that, so we're looking for a good track meet."

"Bill and I have an agreement that we don't talk to each other during the meet," Chaplin said. "I go to his house when we go to Eugene, and he'll probably come to my house when they come up here (for the Pacific-10 Conference meet)."

This week is a return to team competition for the Ducks. Members of the Oregon team spent time at the Drake Relays in Iowa and at the Penn Relays in Philadelphia last weekend.

Dellinger was pleased with his team's efforts in last weekend's competitions. He named Rick Cantwell, Karl Keska, Gordon Johnson and Scott Nicholas' effort in winning the 4x1,600 relay as a highlight.

This week, the competition in the distance events gets even tougher. Washington State brings Josephat Kapkory to town. "Kapkory is the best in the nation right now," Dellinger said. "He'll be favored in whatever he runs."

Kapkory has the best collegiate time in the country in the 3,000-meter steeplechase and in the 10,000 meters. He also has one of the fastest 5,000-meter times in the country. Kapkory is scheduled to run the 1,500 and the 5,000.

Oregon has an edge in depth, but the Ducks will be hard-pressed to keep up with the Cougars in first-place points and may need some upsets.

Oregon has at least one Pac-10 qualifier in every

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