

CROSS COUNTRY

Veteran Ducks look for success

■ CROSS COUNTRY:

Experienced runners lead two strong Oregon teams into action this year

By Pete Schneider
and Trevor Kearney
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon men's and women's cross country teams have several outstanding runners and lots of experience, forecasting a bright and successful 1995 campaign for the two teams.

Both teams, which are rich in successful history, are once again back in the hunt for Pacific-10 Conference titles and both hold potential for individual titles as well.

With two returning All-Americans and a seven member squad back from a year ago, the women's cross country team appears to be the team to beat going into the 1995 season.

"Right down the line, every runner we've got looks stronger than last year," said head coach Tom Heinonen. "We believe that we've got enough talent to win back the Pac-10 title and then be a major player at the NCAA Championship."

The talented squad is led by junior All-American Milena Glusac, the Ducks' top runner during her first two years at Oregon. Last year, she finished second behind Karen Hecox at the Pac-10 Championship and went on to win the District VIII title two weeks later. Glusac completed her 1994 campaign with a 33rd place finish at the NCAA Championship meet.

"Milena is our top returner and our number one runner," Heinonen said. "She's our top gun, no doubt about it."

Senior All-American Jenna Carlson will combine with Glusac to form one of the most fearsome tandems in the nation. Carlson was a redshirt a year ago, but turned in a strong 1995 track season for the Ducks. She placed ninth in the 3,000 meters at this year's NCAA Track and Field Championship and looks ready to build on that performance this fall.

Senior Niamh Zwaggerman (the second Duck to cross the finish line at last year's NCAA meet), sophomore Rosy Gardner

UPCOMING MEETS

■ **Women:** Saturday, September 23 at Lincoln Park in Seattle, Wash.

■ **Men:** Saturday, September 30 Mountain West Classic at the University Golf Course in Missoula, Mont. Northwest Classic at Lane Community College

KEY RETURNERS

■ **Women:** Milena Glusac, junior; Jenna Carlson, senior

■ **Men:** Karl Keska, junior Matt Davis, sophomore

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(third among Oregon runners at the NCAAs) and senior Melody Fairchild will join Glusac and Carlson to form the top five positions for Oregon.

Sophomore Kaarin Knudson and junior Christie Engesser will most likely round out the rest of the squad with newcomers Marie Davis and Robyn Sutherland challenging for spots. Davis, who won three straight Oregon state high school titles, was one of the most highly recruited prep runners in the country.

"Marie is clearly our top newcomer," said Heinonen. "She will no doubt make an impact this year."

Fairchild is currently nursing a sprained ankle, the only major injury on the squad thus far. Heinonen looks to Fairchild as the team's emotional leader.

"Melody is the heart and soul of our team," he said. "We'll look to her down the stretch as a team leader."

After cruising to an almost perfect victory at the Pier Park Invitational in Portland last Saturday — a race that saw three Oregon runners cross the finish line at the same time — the team looks tuned and ready for next Saturday's meet against Washington, Minnesota and Brigham Young in Seattle.

"Pier Park was very low-key

for us," said Heinonen. "For some of our people, it was little more than a training run. That is exactly what we wanted because we are going to get plenty of competition this weekend."

The men return six of their top runners from last year's squad, including a trio of runners that can run with the Pac-10's best.

Junior Karl Keska, sophomore Matt Davis and senior Tracy Hollister head up a roster that looks to build on last year's experience and regain the Pac-10 title that has eluded the Ducks since 1992.

Davis was Oregon's most successful runner last season, finishing fifth at the Pac-10 meet and seventh at the district meet. That district performance qualified Davis for the sole Oregon spot at the NCAA Championship meet last season, where he finished 31st in just his first collegiate year.

Hollister also had a strong outing last fall, finishing eighth at the Pac-10 meet but falling short of an NCAA berth. Hollister did, however, finish atop the 1993 Oregon finishers at the NCAA meet with a 59th placing.

Possibly the most positive aspect for the men is that Keska, who redshirted last year after sustaining an ankle injury in the preseason, is healthy and coming off of a strong track season, in which he won the Pac-10 outdoor 10,000-meter title.

Juniors Rick Cantwell and Scott Nicholas and sophomore Rob Aubrey round out the top six runners, with sophomores Greg James and Konrad Knutson close behind.

The men also have sophomore Daniel Das Neves, a transfer from Sao Paulo, Brazil. Das Neves turned in some impressive performances at the distance races last spring for the track and field team, but is yet untested on the cross country course.

Head coach Bill Dellinger also landed three transfers that have the potential of making an immediate impact in senior David Gurry and juniors Darin Steen and Ken Woodward. In addition, Dellinger has sixteen freshman to work with, lead by Micah Davis — brother of Oregon runner Matt — and Todd Humcke.



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