

Ducks head to Pac-10 Championships with slight lead

■ **MEN'S TRACK:** The Ducks' decathletes gave them a slight lead in the point total last year

By Pete Schneider
Sports Reporter

Oregon will take aim at winning its first Pacific-10 Conference track and field title since 1992, this weekend at the Pac-10 league championships in Los Angeles.

Actually, the Ducks already have the lead in the eight-team competition, thanks to the performances last weekend by senior Ray Livingston and junior Paul Pappas in the decathlon events. When the meet resumes this weekend, Oregon will start off holding an 11-10 lead ahead of Washington State.

But the Ducks won't have an easy time holding that advantage, Oregon head coach Bill Dellinger said.

"Right now, we have a really solid opportunity to be in the top three," Dellinger said. "If UCLA or one of the other top teams stumbles a bit and we get hot, then there's an opportunity to win it."

The defending Pac-10 champion Bruins are the favorite going into the meet and look to defend their title on their home turf this weekend. Last season,

the Ducks ended up finishing a distant second to UCLA by a count of 163 1/2 to 142 1/2.

"UCLA is the team to beat this year for sure," Dellinger said.

According to Dellinger, Oregon's strategy at the Pac-10 meet will be to rely on the team's overall depth. The Ducks boast only four league leaders in the 17 events that will be run this weekend.

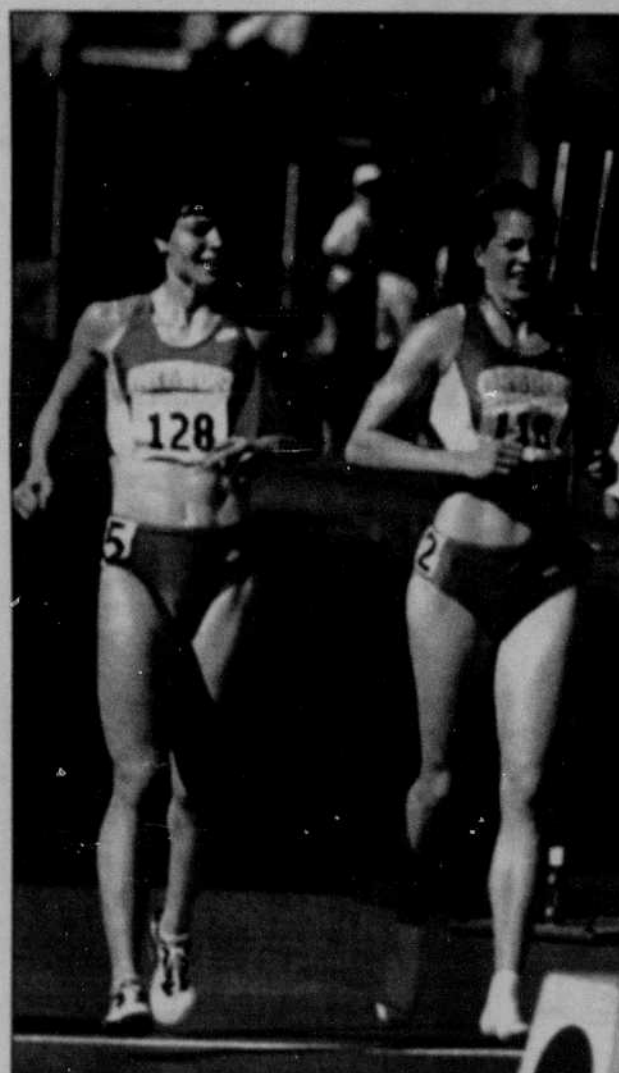
Livingston, although he suffered a semi-severe back injury midway through the season, posted the best mark in the long jump at 25-5 1/2. He also only missed automatically qualifying for the NCAA championships in the decathlon last weekend by seven points. Oregon's other leaders include sophomore Matt Davis in the 10,000-meter run, junior Daniel Das Neves in the 3,000-meter steeplechase and junior Chris Nelson in the high jump.

While the Ducks have only four league leaders, they are returning 14 athletes who scored points for the team in last year's Pac-10 meet. While the meet represents the final opportunity for the 24 Oregon participants to set NCAA qualifying marks, Dellinger will stress the team competition this weekend.

"Since this is the Pac-10 Championships, we put the emphasis on the team title," he said. "We are competing with almost a completely healthy squad for the first time in a long time, and that should translate into success this weekend."



Senior Ray Livingston had a strong outing at the Pacific-10 multi-events last weekend, giving the Ducks a slight edge going into this weekend's conference meet.



Sophomore Kaarin Knudson (left) and junior Vicky Fleschner are scheduled to compete in the 800-meter run at the Pacific-10 Conference Championships.

Season culminates in championship

■ **WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD:** The sprinting crew may be the key to a conference title

By Andrea De Young
Assistant Sports Editor

The best track and field athletes in the Pacific-10 Conference are gathering this weekend at UCLA to fight it out for the conference title, and Oregon will be well represented.

The host Bruins are the defending champions and still have a strong squad. USC will be a challenger, and the Ducks are definitely in contention for the title if they can pull it out. Arizona, California and Stanford all have teams that are not far behind, so despite UCLA's dominance with three-straight Pac-10 titles, the meet may be wide open.

Each team is allowed to take 24 athletes to the Championships, even if more have the numbers needed to qualify for the meet. The Ducks will be taking several athletes who usually compete in more than one event in other meets, but they will be concentrating on placing well in a single event.

The distance crew will be spreading themselves between three events — the 3,000-meter run, the 5,000-meter run and the 10,000-meter run. Oregon will go unrepresented in the 1,500-meter run as the five Ducks who qualified for the event are running in other races that they are considered to be stronger in.

There is also some uncertainty with the distance races on the second day. Senior Melody Fairchild will compete in the 10,000-meters and sophomore Milena Glusac is scheduled to run in the 3,000-meters on Saturday. They are both expected to compete in the 5,000-meters on Sunday, but that may change if either of them are not feeling ready to run the second race.

The other Ducks competing in the distance events are freshman Marie Davis and sophomore Rosy Gardner in the 3,000-meters, senior Jenna Carlson in the 3,000- and 5,000-meters and senior Niamh Zwagerman in the

5,000- and 10,000-meters.

The 800-meter run will feature freshman Robyn Sutherland, sophomore Kaarin Knudson and junior Vicky Fleschner. After blowing out much of the competition all year long, assistant coach Mark Stream says that it will be an interesting race at the Pac-10s.

"In the 800, there will be people to chase instead of being chased," Stream said. "We're going to see what they can do when they're not doing all the work."

The sprinting crew will be a key if the Ducks hope to contend for the Pac-10 title. Senior LaReina Woods will be concentrating on the 100-meter dash and the 200-meter dash, senior Jamila Godfrey will run with Woods in the 100-meters, and junior Nicole Commissiong and freshman Sue Morris are scheduled to compete in the 400-meter dash.

According to Stream, the sprints will be a big part of the meet.

"Sprinting is critical to our team's chances," Stream said. "LaReina, Nicole, and Jamila in particular are capable of being what we would call 'impact sprinters.' We need them to finish in the top three in their events and score the big points. That's a tall order. We're asking them to step it up a notch."

The relay teams will also be competing in hopes of not only being the best in the Pac-10, but also a chance to make it to the NCAA Championships. Freshman Aisha Wallace, Godfrey, Woods and Commissiong will be combining for the 4X100-meter relay, and Morris, freshman Tish Henes, Godfrey and Commissiong will be competing in the 4X400-meter relay.

Henes was down at UCLA last weekend along with sophomore Jennifer Thomas to compete in the heptathlon. Both will be competing this weekend in individual events. In addition to the long relay, Henes is entered in the 400-meter hurdles along with junior Tamara Schürch, while Thomas is competing in the 100-meter hurdles, the long jump and the javelin throw.

Turn to **WOMEN**, Page 12A