

Buciarski: Hopes to compete in the Olympics some day

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I'm certainly not one to put limits on him."

Buciarski doesn't know exactly when he got started in the pole vault but said the event has been a part of his life as long as he can remember.

And for good reason.

Buciarski's father, Wozciech Buciarski, was a world-class pole vaulter at one time, finishing fifth at the 1976 Montreal Olympics, and has undoubtedly been very influential in Piotr's development.

"He never made me do it," the younger Buciarski said. "But because I saw him do it, I kind of imitated my dad."

Wozciech Buciarski, who was Denmark's national coach for all jumping events, has been Piotr's primary coach throughout his life.

So how did this young star find his way from Europe to the Oregon track and field team?

He didn't take the traditional route of most recruits but rather seemed to stumble into it.

"I was here for a month last year in March training with [An-

drzej Kresinski], who was my dad's coach.

"Kory Tarpenning [Oregon's all-time record holder in the pole vault] was here at the same time so we worked out and Kory talked to me about trying to ask the coaches if I could jump for Oregon. At the end of my stay I did and they said 'yeah, no problem.'"

Buciarski said he didn't know very much about the University, other than the track and field program, before deciding to enroll but has enjoyed it here overall.

"I like it," he said. "The University itself is a lot different than universities in Europe. We have quite fewer classes, just concentrate on our major and that's all we do. So, that's totally different, but otherwise, it's fun."

Buciarski credits much of his enjoyment here in Eugene to his roommates, former Duck decathlete Ray Livingston and current fellow pole vaulter Eric Abel.

"I have the best roommates," he said. "They're making my stay here a lot of fun."

However, his ability to soar to great heights has to add to the fun

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He's a good team man. He's willing to long jump. He's willing to run the 100-meter dash, and he's been running anchor man for us on our short relay, so he's just a good athlete.

— Bill Dellinger
UO Men's Track Coach

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he's having at the University.

In fact, the chance to get high in the sky is why he has such a passion for the pole vault.

"I love the height," Buciarski said. "I mean, when we do jump, we don't actually think. You don't have time to relax and think about the fact that you're flying up there, but it's just a lot of fun."

"I get a kick out of going high. The higher you go the more fun it is."

Just as he likes height, Buciarski likes to set high goals for himself.

Eventually he hopes to compete in the Olympics, but more

immediately he would like to qualify for the World Championships in Athens later this year. He said he would like to vault about 18-6 this year and hopes to be able to improve by at least three inches from year to year.

While Buciarski's focus is the pole vault, he also has the ability to compete in other events.

"He's a good team man," Dellinger said. "He's willing to long jump. He's willing to run the 100-meter dash, and he's been running anchor man for us on our short relay, so he's just a good athlete."

A good athlete and a great pole vaulter whom Dellinger said he is very glad to have on his team. Although he seemed a bit amused by the way the Ducks landed Buciarski.

"He came here a year ago to do some work under [Kresinski]," Dellinger said. "He liked this area and wanted to go to school here so it worked out really good for us."

With Buciarski's track record and potential, that seems to be an understatement.

PIOTR BUCIARSKI



- **EVENT:** Pole vault
- **YEAR:** Sophomore
- **PERSONAL BEST:** 18-0 1/2
- **1997:** Season best 17-4 1/2 at Stanford triangular March 29. Provisionally qualified for NCAA Championships. Placed 11th at NCAA Indoor Championships in March
- **PRIOR TO OREGON:** Won Danish national indoor title in 1996. Has competed for both Denmark's and Poland's national teams
- **GOALS:** To compete in 1997 World Championships in Athens. To compete in the Olympics

Kwasney: Seattle and Atlanta should meet in Fall Classic

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NL MVP: Gary Sheffield. If the Marlins have the kind of year I'm anticipating, the reason will be Sheffield not getting hurt. He is the only player right now capable of matching Barry Bonds' overall skills.

AL Cy Young: Roger Clemens. He's going to find his old stuff in the move to Toronto. Any pitcher who can keep his ERA below four will be strongly considered.

NL Cy Young: Kevin Brown. He is going to be dominating with the Marlins and beat out John Smoltz and Greg Maddux in a close race.

AL batting champ: Derek Jeter. The second-year player will come off a strong rookie campaign with the help of teammate and former AL batting champ Wade Boggs.

NL batting champ: Tony Gwynn. This guy would still hit over .300 if he played another ten years. He has some solid hitters behind him that can only help.

AL home run king: Ken Griffey, Jr. They'll be watching a lot of deep fly balls into the upper deck in right field at the Kingdome this season.

NL home run king: Just pick one of the Colorado Rockies. Last year it was Andres

Galaraga, and this year it might be Larry Walker.

Team Races

AL East: New York. The Yankees have the talent and experience needed to repeat as champions. The addition of David Wells to the pitching staff should boost an already solid rotation. Derek Jeter is good enough to be the AL's representative at shortstop, but the other young kid in Seattle, Alex Rodriguez, is just a little better.

AL Central: Cleveland. The trade with the Braves to acquire David Justice and Marquis Grissom will make them one of the most feared lineups in the game. Acquiring Matt Williams from San Francisco was a smart move, especially if he stays healthy.

AL West: Seattle. The Mariners have the run production to scare any opposing pitcher. Their pitching staff will be the question mark. A solid closer to replace Norm Charlton could be enough to put them over the top.

Wildcard: Chicago. Frank Thomas and Albert Belle in any lineup is worth noting. The White Sox have decent pitching, which is crucial in the offensive-minded AL. They have the firepower to give Cleve-

land a run at the division.

NL East: Florida. This could be the surprise pick because Atlanta has owned the division and still has all the pieces to be a World Series favorite. The Marlins lineup featuring Sheffield, Bobby Bonilla, Moises Alou and Jeff Conine is intimidating. The pitching staff of Brown, Al Leiter, Alex Fernandez and closer Robb Nen is almost as good as Atlanta. Jim Leyland has the experience and knowledge to put together a division winner.

NL Central: St. Louis. The Cardinals are looking to repeat as division champs and have the ammunition to do it. The question will be whether or not aging veterans Dennis Eckersley and Gary Gaetti can have good years. Any team managed by Tony LaRussa has to be considered a threat.

NL West: Los Angeles. The Dodgers certainly have the pitching to contend with anybody, but their big problem has been scoring runs. If outfielder Todd Hollandsworth can prove his worth with the bat, the Dodgers will have four solid hitters in Mike Piazza, Raul Mondesi and Eric Karros.

Wildcard: Atlanta. After saying they

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The Mariners have the run production to scare any opposing pitcher. Their pitching staff will be the question mark.

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wouldn't win the division, there's no way I can count out perhaps the most talented team in baseball. Their pitching staff is second to none. Kenny Lofton is the best lead-off hitter in the game and that should make the Braves tough to beat.

AL Champ: Seattle

NL Champ: Atlanta

World Series Champ: Atlanta. They blew it last year against New York, so now it's time for redemption.

Kwasney: Seattle and Atlanta should meet in the Fall Classic

Ben Kwasney is a sports reporter for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper. Ben can be reached at bkwasney@gladstone

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