



Karis Howell, a freshman, leads the Oregon javelin throwers into today's NCAA competition after throwing a personal best 164-11 at the Pac-10s.

## NCAA: Das Neves confident going into finals

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In the heptathlon, Jennifer Thomas said she hopes things are different this year at the NCAA meet. Last year, Thomas finished 17th in the NCAA heptathlon after a disappointing start in the 100-meter hurdles.

"Last year was a terrible experience; it can't get any worse than that," Thomas said.

Thomas took the wrong number of steps on the way to the first hurdle, throwing her steps off for the rest of the race.

"And it went downhill from there," Thomas said. "It was a really ugly meet."

Thomas said she doesn't feel the pressure she felt last year in front of the home crowd.

"I feel like I can relax and do what I know how to do," she said, adding that her marks in the hur-

dles, long jump and 200-meter dash could improve this week.

With last year's NCAA meet in Eugene, Thomas said there were distractions that made it difficult to concentrate on track.

"We were going to school and running back [from class] in time to warm up for the meet," she said. "It will be easier to focus in on what we're doing."

Today's heptathlon action will include the 100 hurdles, high jump, shot put and 200. The competition will conclude Saturday with the long jump, javelin and 800.

Also competing for the Oregon women today will be javelin throwers Karis Howell and Katie Pearmine, who are ranked 14th and 15th in the nation, respectively.

Marie Davis will run in today's 3,000-meter run final after coming

up with the fifth fastest time in semifinal action Wednesday.

For the men, Daniel Das Neves will look to score the Ducks' first points of the meet in the steeplechase final after running the fourth fastest time in Wednesday's semifinal.

Das Neves, who was 10th at the NCAAAs a year ago, said he is confident, after Wednesday's performance, that he can be among the leaders today.

"I'm shooting for the top three for sure," he said. "I think they're going to take it out hard. My plan is just to stay back and have a good race from the back, then move in. If it doesn't go fast, then it can be anybody's race at the end."

Two Ducks will close out the meet Saturday; Piotr Buciarski in the pole vault and Gregg Bleakney in the triple jump.

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