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Women: Thomas wins long, high jumps

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echoed the teamwork preached by Heinonen.

"Everybody did so well," Henes said. "Personally, I'm not so happy with my times, but I won my races, which was the team goal."

According to Oregon's Jennifer Thomas, the congealing of so many individual athletes into a cohesive unit was no accident.

Thomas, who defeated rival Francesca Green in both the long jump and high jump and also finished third in the 100 hurdles, said Heinonen made it very clear early in the week as to the team's goals come Saturday.

"Tom gave us a big pep talk in the [team] meeting this week," Thomas said. "We're capable of beating this

team every time out. We have the last 23 years, and [losing last year] was a big disappointment for the history of the team. We just decided we weren't going to let that happen, and definitely not at home."

Indeed, several Oregon women rose to the occasion against the Cougars, including Nonglack Somsanith, who recorded two personal bests during the meet.

The first came in the high jump: She leapt 5 feet, 7 inches to tie Thomas for first place. Somsanith followed that performance with a 39-5 7/10 triple jump to finish second in that event behind Washington State's Kirsten Koch.

Other Duck winners on the day included Chris Cvitanich, who led

an Oregon sweep in the shotput with a heave of 46-4 3/4, Heidi Fisk, who threw the discus 160-10, as well as Elstrom in the pole vault.

The Oregon women capped off a victorious day by winning the 4x400-meter relay in a time of 3:50.73. The team consisted of Aisha Wallace, Katie Crabb, who earlier finished second in the 800, Robyn Sutherland and Nicole Commissiong.

Commissiong's absence from the meet in Pullman last year due to injury was a large factor in the Oregon loss, but she returned in style on Saturday, finishing second to Henes in the 400 and third in the 200 meters in 24.32, behind the Cougars' Tamika Brown and Sharika Higgins.

Men: Davis gets win in first steeplechase

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men and a dog — my dad, my brother and my dog.

"It's almost cool to be a runner here. Where I come from we're freaks."

Some athletes combined the expected with the unexpected.

Piotr Buciarski's win in the pole vault — with an outdoor personal-best mark of 17-10 1/2 — was expected. But his second-place finishes in the long jump (24-3 3/4) and 100-meter dash (10.94 seconds) came as a pleasant surprise for the Ducks.

It was a rare multiple-event performance for Buciarski, who usually focuses solely on the pole vault.

"I did it for the team," the junior from Poland said. "It's definitely a team meet, and I like the team atmosphere. It felt good that I had a good team performance."

Like last year, there was also some controversy that played a key role in the outcome of the meet.

Oregon's victorious 400-meter relay team was originally disqualified following the event because the Ducks' third runner, Jason Mayo, was lined up outside of the designated handoff area.

The decision, though, was later appealed by Oregon and reversed.

"By letter of the rule, it was wrong," Washington State head coach Rick Sloan said. "But what happened did not affect the outcome of the race. Unfortunately, it did affect the outcome of the team scoring."

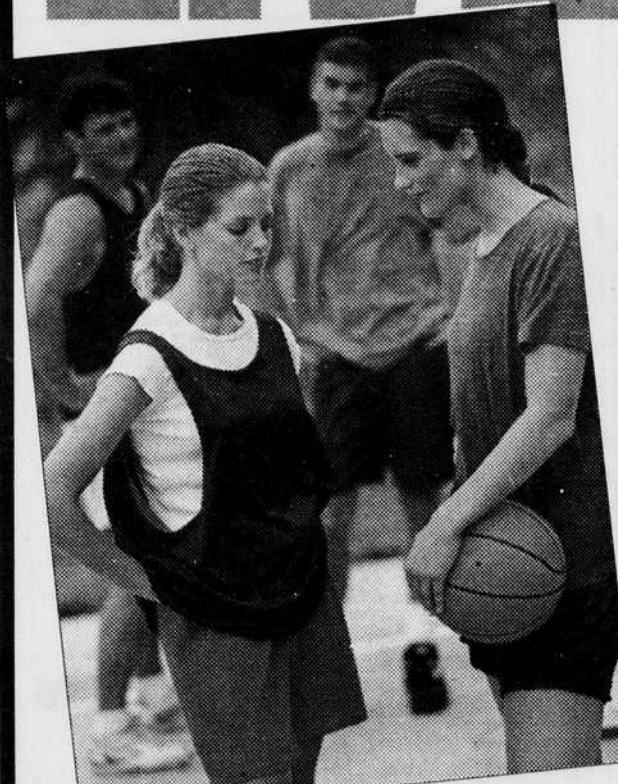
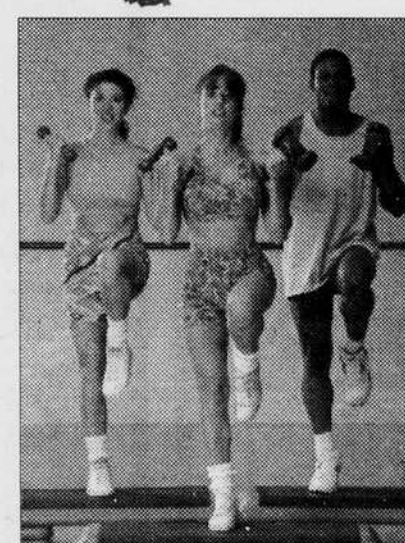
It was a 10-point swing — the relay winners get five points — and seemed to be the turning point of the meet. The ruling came at the same time Girvan was winning the 800, and all the momentum seemed to belong to the Ducks.

In addition to Buciarski's iron-man performance, several others had busy days. Sophomore Nat Johnson capped off a tiring day with a win in the 200 (21.61 seconds), a second-place finish in the 400 meters and wins while competing on both relay teams.

In his first steeplechase of the season, Micah Davis won with a personal best and NCAA provisional qualifying mark of 8:46.95 while pulling off a draining double with a third-place finish in the 5,000.

Other highlights for the Ducks included Gregg Bleakney's win in the triple jump — a win he pulled out with a season-best leap of 52-6 1/2 on his final attempt to overtake the Cougars' Hilary Mawindi — and Jody Mortimore's win in the long jump with a personal best of 25-2 3/4.

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