



NBA Basketball
Chicago at Detroit,
TBS (3) 5 p.m.

SPORTS

Oregon Daily
Emerald

Leaf leads list of Pac-10 draft hopefuls

Ryan Leaf of WSU, Brian Kelly of USC and UCLA's Shawn Williams are all likely to be picked in the NFL draft's first round

By Rob Moseley
Sports Reporter

With Saturday's NFL draft less than three days away, the future prospects of no less than seven players from Pacific-10 Conference schools will be decided in the fifteen-minute margin between selections that could send a fortunate draftee to the glory of the Super Bowl-champion Denver Broncos or banish him to the athletic purgatory of the New Orleans Saints.

The Pac-10 has always done more than its share to supply the professional ranks with worthy talent, including first-round picks Darrell Russell, Tony Gonzalez and Tarik Glenn last year.

Common knowledge has it that three Pac-10 prospects' names will be announced during the first round of the selection meeting.

Undoubtedly the 1998 draft's biggest controversy involves which of the two potential franchise quarterbacks to take, Tennessee's Peyton Manning or Washington State's Ryan Leaf.

The 6-foot-5, 241-pound Leaf has awed scouts with his size, strength and mobility in the weeks leading up to the draft. The Indianapolis Colts hold the No. 1 pick on Saturday, and their top priority is to get a franchise signal caller.

Although Manning entered 1997 as the favorite for the Heisman trophy and the label of best quarterback prospect in the nation, Leaf's 3,968 passing yards, 34 touchdowns and leadership of the Cougars into the 1998 Rose Bowl as a junior surely have scouts scratching their heads. The San Diego Chargers recently traded a wealth of talent to the Arizona Cardinals for the right to choose second, and Leaf is virtually assured of being selected with one of the first two picks.

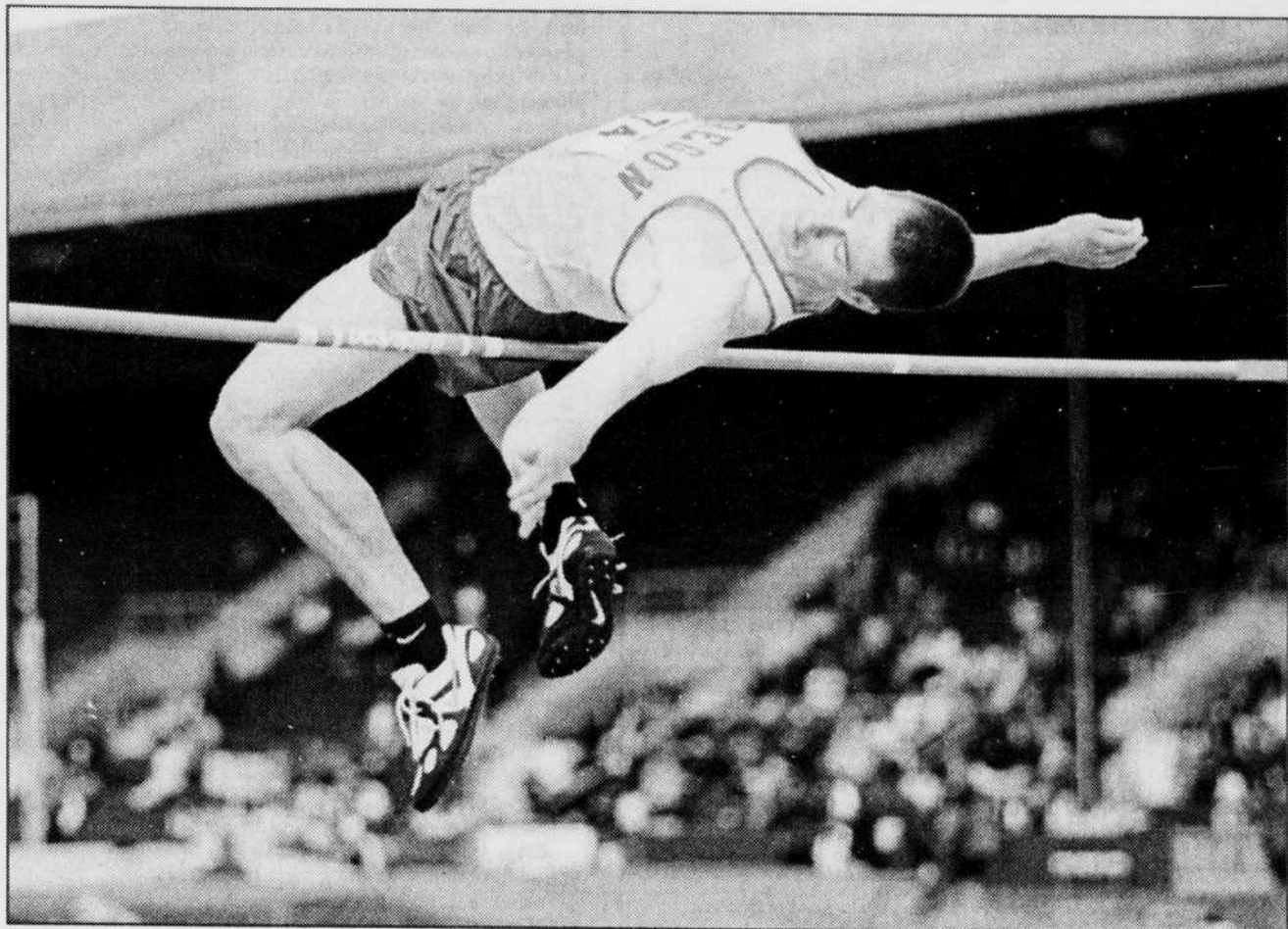
Two defensive backs from Southern California schools are also expected to hear their names called in the first few hours of the draft, UCLA's Shawn Williams and Brian Kelly of Southern California.

Williams, rated the No. 1 safety available by Pro Football Weekly, is projected by

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"They're always asking me, 'When are you going to jump 7-5?'"

Damian Olson, UO high jumper



NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

By clearing 7-3 1/2 in high school, Olson faces tremendous expectations and pressure to replace all-American Chris Nelson.

the next GENERATION

After two high school state titles and a national title, freshman Damian Olson tries to live up to high expectations

By Alex Pond
Sports Editor

Perhaps Damian Olson's biography in the 1998 Oregon track and field media guide best sums up the expectations for the freshman high jumper from Bend.

"Immediately fills void left by graduation of all-American Chris Nelson."

Those are some mighty large shoes to fill.

Nelson completed his Oregon career last season as the school record holder in the high jump (7 feet, 4 1/2 inches), was a

two-time Pacific-10 Conference champion and earned all-American honors with a fourth-place finish at the 1996 NCAA Championships.

Fans expected Nelson to clear 7 feet every time, and for the most part, he obliged.

Now, those same expectations seem to stand for Olson, who is just four outdoor meets into his Oregon career.

And he realizes those expectations. "Everybody expects me to jump high all the time," he says. "They're always asking me 'When are you going to jump 7-5?'"

So much for that year most freshmen athletes, particularly in track and field, get to learn the system and ease into things.

But it's not as if Olson hasn't earned at least some of the high expectations.

He literally did it all at Bend High School, where he won the state 4A high jump title his junior and senior seasons and won the National Scholastic meet with a jump of 7-1 3/4 that beat top-ranked Kenny Evans of Arkansas. His personal best of 7-3 1/2 gave him the

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EMERALD

Midfielder Sierra Marsh returns as the Oregon women's soccer team's leading scorer this fall.

Ducks excited about start of 3rd season

Oregon returns nine of 11 players from last season and is eagerly awaiting its season opener against Tennessee on its new field Sept. 4

By Tim Pyle
Sports Reporter

Spring offers a time for new beginnings, renewed hope and ... soccer?

With its third season as a varsity program just around the corner, the Oregon women's soccer team has been taking those first two seasonal offerings to heart during its practices and scrimmages this spring.

Following a 5-14-1 1997 season (2-7 in the Pacific-10 Conference), the Ducks are hoping to welcome their new field — adjacent to the Casanova Center — next fall with a more up-tempo style and improved consistency, Oregon head coach Bill Steffen said.

"When we are consistent and when we're at the top of our game," Steffen said, "we've shown that we're very

competitive with just about any program in the country. Our problem is that we go through stretches where we make horrible mistakes, and they cost us."

Steffen said he has been pleased with how the Ducks have been able to incorporate what they have been addressing in practice into spring games thus far.

"We're looking really good," said Amanda Fox, who has started in goal for Oregon's first two seasons of existence. "A lot of people have been working really hard to work on their touch and speed. We're starting to really pull it together."

Oregon is 2-2 this spring. The Ducks lost 2-1 to Washington and to a women's team in Seattle, before they defeated NAIA school Concordia 8-0 and Oregon State 4-0 in Eugene.

Sierra Marsh, who led the team in scoring with 16

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