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Track: UCLA women favorite for title

Continued from Page 7
 ference title since 1978 with a narrow 145-138 victory over crosstown rival UCLA in Seattle's Husky Stadium last season, a win that snapped UCLA's five-year reign as conference champion.

The Bruins and Trojans will again be the favorites, with Arizona likely to contend as well.

"I think it will be pretty tightly contested between UCLA, USC and maybe Arizona," Oregon men's head coach Bill Dellinger said. "USC's got some big points coming in the sprints. UCLA's got more balance to their scoring, and Arizona has the leading [800-meter runner], they score big in the javelin, they score big in the shot and discus ... so Arizona will be right in there too."

Going into the meet, USC's Charles Lee and Marques Holiday rank 2-3 in the 100-meter dash, while the Trojans have the top two 200-meter runners in Jerome Davis and Charles Lee. Davis adds to the Trojans' power in the sprints by ranking No. 1 in the 400 meters, an event he won last season.

While UCLA doesn't figure to

dominate one area, the Bruins can be expected to score in nearly every event.

The same can be said on the women's side, where Oregon head coach Tom Heinonen said UCLA could approach or even break the meet record for total points.

The Bruins won the title last season with 189 1/2 points, but Heinonen's unofficial form chart has them notching 213 points in Palo Alto.

Last year UCLA women took individual titles in the 200- and 400-meter sprints, the 100- and 400-meter hurdles, both relays, the high jump, the javelin and swept the top two spots in the discus and the top three places in the shotput.

This season should be no different, as the Bruins have the third-ranked woman in the 100 and 200, the top 100-meter hurdler, the top 4X100-meter relay and the second-ranked 4X400-meter relay, the top two long jumpers, the top three in the shotput, the second-ranked discus thrower and the No. 1 women in both the hammer and javelin.

Southern California finished

second at last year's meet and should fair well again this weekend. The Trojans' Torri Edwards is ranked first in the conference at 200 meters and second in the 100, while Natasha Danvers leads the 400 hurdles entrants and is second in the 100 hurdles. Polish-native Penc leads the Pac-10 in both the 800 and 1,500 meters, where she is the three-time defending champion.

Arizona could be able to improve on its fourth-place finish of last year on the heels of Skieresz, who is ranked No. 1 in the Pac-10 at 3,000, 5,000 and 10,000 meters. The Wildcats also have the top-ranked athletes in the 400 meters and pole vault.

Arizona State should recover after missing the championships last season, with Dawnyell Linder ranked first in the conference at 100 meters. Top-ranked high jumper Fiona Daly can also be expected to score for the Sun Devils.

Finally, Washington will again struggle to be a factor in the team competition, but former Olympian Aretha Hill should battle Powell for the league discus title.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Griffey says he'll skip home-run contest

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Ken Griffey Jr., says he won't take part in the annual home run derby the day before the All-Star game at Coors Field.

"They don't know it yet, but I'm not doing it this year," Griffey told the Eastside Journal of Bellevue, Wash.

Griffey, who also told The

Denver Post he will not participate, has been in the contest five times, missing 1995 and 1996 because of injuries. He won it four years ago in Pittsburgh.

Griffey and teammate Alex Rodriguez are tied for the American League home run lead this season with 16 apiece.

"I talked about it yesterday, and I don't want to talk about it today," Griffey said Wednesday. "I don't want to have to

keep repeating myself."

This would be the second straight year he would have to play a night game (at Texas) the day before the contest. Griffey also said that home run derbies, especially in a homer-friendly ballpark like Coors, can mess up a player's swing.

Griffey said he tried to back out of last year's event. But he said Gene Orza, the No. 2 official of the players' union, told him, "This is bigger than you."

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