

Women: Athletes enjoy competing at Hayward Field

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dropping out after one lap.

Another face familiar to Duck fans showed up in the 1,500 meters, in which Oregon junior Robyn Sutherland ran about a lap before giving way to the field.

Regina Jacobs then took the lead for most of the race before Hamilton turned on the jets with just under a lap to go.

"The race started out very strategic, and I had a good feeling that it was going to be like this," Hamilton said. "In a race like this, nobody wants to take the lead because the leader has to do all the work for the rest of the pack, so I purposely tried not to lead. It came to 300, and that's the point where you better get going right now, because everybody can kick."

But nobody could kick like Hamilton on Sunday, as she ran away from the pack with 100 meters left to win in 4:10.11.

"These races fall into my hands because I love speed and I love sprinting," Hamilton said. "I'm always excited when a race starts out slow like that. I'm very confident in my kick right now because I train with an 800-meter runner. She's got tremendous speed, and just being able to train with her has made my speed so much better than it's ever been."

One woman who was not as pleased with her effort was Slaney, who had talked about taking on the American record in the 5,000 meters in the days leading up to the Prefontaine Classic. That was not to be, as Slaney won in 15:23.72, almost 30 seconds off the national best.

"It was OK. This was a good

step," Slaney said. "On one hand it's a little disappointing, but on the other hand, it's really fun. I felt a little bit sluggish, and I think I've been training a little too hard, but the crowd was great. It was an absolutely fantastic meet. This is what track and field is all about."

Slaney's sentiments were echoed by her fellow competitors.

"Winning in front of this crowd is the greatest feeling," Hamilton said. "These people are so wonderful here, I think we should always have all of our track meets in Eugene. I don't know why we don't, because we don't get this kind of support anywhere else."

Even Jones, who hadn't competed at Hayward Field since she was 12, more than 10 years ago, was impressed with the fan support.

"It's great when we get a chance to compete in front of a crowd like this in the U.S.," Jones said. "The top athletes don't get a chance to compete in front of a knowledgeable crowd like this while at home."

One event that the Hayward Field crowd was particularly vocal for was the long jump, in which Jones took just two jumps.

She broke the meet record on her second attempt, passed on her third, then took one more attempt before passing up the final two rounds.

The abbreviated jumping schedule is something Jones said will help her in the future.

"My intention is to only take two or three jumps at nationals," Jones said. "I'm going to try and



NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

Dionne Rose (left) battles Cheryl Dickey in the 100-meter hurdles, which Rose won in 12.74 seconds.

triple up in the 100, 200 and long jump, so I'm not going to have much energy to get all six jumps in."

But there was energy to spare for the winner of the 400-meter dash, Australia's Cathy Freeman, who said she was surprised by her recovery time after winning the event in a meet and track record 50.02.

"I really wasn't quite sure what sort of shape I was in," Freeman said. "But I felt confident. I was just running really optimistic."

The final victor of the day was Jamaica's Dionne Rose, who won the 100-meter high hurdles in 12.74, albeit with a 4.1 mps wind.



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Suzy Hamilton celebrates with the Hayward Field faithful after winning the 1,500 meters.



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