

Meet nets runners two top fives

Both teams hope to finish season by placing well at NCAA Championship

By Scott Peszkecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Ducks showed that they mean business Saturday in their second meet of the season by scoring a pair of top five finishes.

The No. 7 women finished third in the 5K Roy Griak Invitational in St. Paul, Minn., the men clung to 5th place in the 8K Mountain West Invitational in Missoula, Mont.

The women were led by Marie Davis, who finished in third-place at 17 minutes, 10 seconds. Her time was just three seconds shy of her time in the same race last year. Davis went on to finish ninth at the NCAA championships last November.

"(Davis) has been a leader by example for a couple of years, but now as a senior she is one of our emotional leaders and organizational leaders. She has matured and is ready to be a leader in a lot of ways."

Heinonen said Davis isn't in peak condition due to a foot injury she sustained before the Pacific-10 meet last season. He said that although she is not hurting now, she was early in the summer and that slowed her training program.

"Our goal yesterday was for her to run for the win," Heinonen said. "She was in a position to win it, but she just didn't have the fitness to win the whole thing. She

did run to win, and that's the important thing."

Davis said she is healthy and hasn't felt any pain from the injury for the past two to three weeks.

"I've been able to train for the full summer," Davis said. "I'm in good shape. I'm not exactly where I want to be at the end of the season, but I'm doing great."

Heather McMahon finished 11th (17:47), followed by Annie Ebner at 35th (18:16), Liz Howell at 39th (18:23), Kylee Wells at 46th (18:35), Lisa Jansen at 70th (18:57) and Susan Gilbaugh at 85th (19:09).

"We took a nice step from our previous meet," Davis said. "Each of us upped our performance and competed at a higher level.

We're capable of getting a lot better. There is a lot of talent and a lot of desire on this team."

Davis said the key to placing well in the Pre-NCAA Invitational will be the amount of time spent by the team to train together.

"We've only trained together for two weeks," Davis said. "The time we spend together will help a large amount. We have a lot more potential."

Oregon's third-place finish came with a total of 134 points, falling shy of No. 6 Providence's winning total of 90. Northern Arizona finished second with 98 points. The women's individual champion was Minnesota's Rasa Michiniovaite, who finished with

a time of 17:08.

Heinonen said that Saturday's meet was an important step toward competing in the nationals.

"It was an important step for us," he said. "We got a lot of what we wanted, but not everything. The Pre-NCAA will be the second meet where we need to beat a lot of teams."

The men's team was led by Matthew Davis, who led the Ducks for the second time in two meets. He finished 19th overall with a time of 25:23.40.

Following Davis five seconds later was Rob Aubrey, who finished 25th overall (25:28.40), and Lincoln Nehring, who finished 27th overall with a time of 25:33.90. Nehring's time was his best as a Duck, finishing third on the team after only his second race at Oregon.

Also finishing for the men were Greg James in 31st (25:43.0), Michah Davis in 34th (25:44.60), Konrad Knutsen in 37th (25:48.40), Jon Wybar in 46th, Oliver Wirz in 56th (26:16.70) and Andrew Bliss in 67th (26:34.80).

Oregon finished with 121 points, 62 points behind champion Arizona and 14 points behind fourth place Brigham Young. Washington State's Bernard Lagat opened his season by winning the individual title in a time of 24:24.50.

Both teams will run in the Pre-NCAA Invitational on Oct. 10 in Lawrence, Kansas, which is also the site of the NCAA Championships on Nov. 23.



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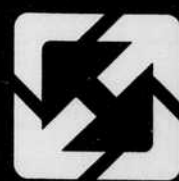
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