



NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS

Davis up and running

Senior Micah Davis makes his third trip to the NAAs, still looking for his first win

By Allison Ross
Oregon Daily Emerald

The adage is well known — it is the mistakes that we learn from.

Micah Davis is no exception. The two-time All-American has had a challenging season, but as the NCAA Championships begin, he is right where he wants to be.

The road he took to get there, however, was not what the Mead, Wash., native had planned.

On May 1, Davis was expecting to get an automatic NCAA-qualifying time in the steeplechase at the Oregon Invitational. But two laps into the race, Davis hit his knee on a barrier and had to be helped off the track.

"You learn from the little mistakes," Davis said. "Going into a race you don't anticipate hitting the barrier, so it was good that it happened before the NAAs."

Two weeks later, Davis proved that his misstep was, in fact, a learning experience. Davis competed in Portland at the Adidas Classic and not only qualified for the

NAAs, but took three seconds off his personal record, finishing sixth with a time of 8 minutes, 38.15 seconds.

The next step came a week later when Oregon headed to Tempe, Ariz., for the Pac-10 Championships. Davis showed no signs of his previous troubles, winning in 8:54.98.

Now, the two-time Pac-10 champion has one more barrier to clear — the NCAA Championships. Davis is seeded fourth

heading into Thursday's event, his third attempt at a national title. Texas-El Paso's Carlos Suarez-Gonzalez is the favorite.

"The most important thing is to run a personal record," Davis said. "I like to always be progressing forward, and if you want to beat guys, you're going to have to compete at their level."

Two other members of the Oregon men's track and field team make the trip to Boise, Idaho, with Davis — pole vaulter Piotr Bucinski and distance runner Steve Fein. Bucinski and Fein are both ranked fourth in their events, but Oregon is without Davis'

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Women bound for Boise

Marie Davis and Kaarin Knudson finish their careers at the NAAs on Saturday

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

At the season's outset, Oregon women's track and field head coach Tom Heinonen predicted it would be a showcase of the old and new.

Fittingly, the season's conclusion is exactly the same.

The Ducks sent two seasoned veterans and two younger athletes to compete at the NCAA Championships in Boise, Idaho. Competition begins today and ends Saturday.

Among the four qualifiers, All-Ameri-

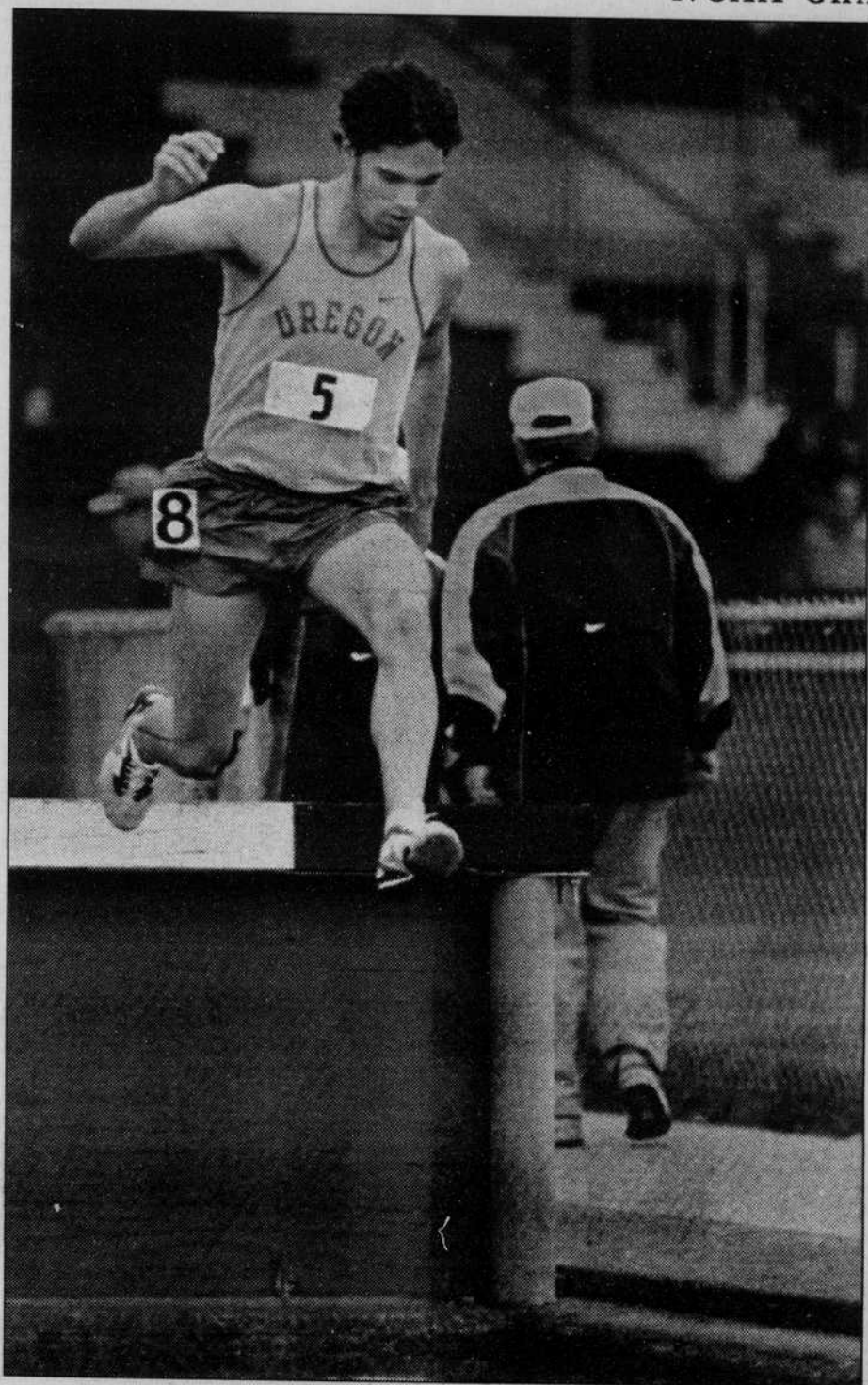
cans Marie Davis and Kaarin Knudson represent the older portion of Oregon's 18 Pacific-10 Conference veterans. The NAAs is the last collegiate competition for the two senior athletes.

"I've got the heart and the desire to do it," Davis said, "so hopefully my fitness will be there and I'll be ready to go."

Davis leads the action for the Ducks today in the 3,000-meter qualifying run. The finals in that event are Friday, then Davis races in the 5,000 on Saturday.

"I'm extremely excited," Davis said. "It's an exciting feeling to know that everything

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Fourth-ranked Micah Davis makes his third attempt for the national title in Thursday's steeplechase.

Nick Medley/Emerald

Determined Ducks putt to prove they are on par with elite

The No. 15 Oregon men's golf team begins play in the NCAA Championships today in Minnesota

By Brett Williams
for the Emerald

The time has finally arrived.

From the first day of practice this season, Oregon men's golf has had one goal: making it to nationals.

Now, the No. 15 Ducks have their chance to prove they belong, beginning today at the NCAA Championships in Chaska, Minn.

Just appearing at the tournament does not satisfy the Ducks, according to head coach Steve Nosler.

"We're not going back there just to put another name on the board," said Nosler, who is taking his second straight Oregon team to the NAAs. "We're going back to win."

The field is stacked with the best college teams in the nation, including Arizona State, which is coming off big wins at the Pacific-10 Conference Tournament and NCAA West Regionals.

Oregon has had many tournaments with Arizona State, and the Ducks believe the Sun Devils are the team to beat.

"ASU is close to number one in the country and we've seen them quite a few times this season," said senior Adrian Burtner, who was recently voted a second-team Pac-10 selection. "If we are leading them the

first few days, we will be in good shape for the final round."

One of Oregon's strengths all season has been its depth.

"Across the board, there is so much parity," Nosler said. "We are very well balanced, and all five guys represent us very well."

The Ducks believe they will not succumb to the pressure at nationals. It is hard to argue after the comeback at regionals, where Oregon fell to 10th place during the first round before regaining its composure and finishing fifth.

"I think that (regionals) showed tremendous character and our maturity level," Nosler said. "We needed to produce and we did."

Junior Ryan Lavoie agreed. "We're a team that is never going to quit," said Lavoie, who set a course record in Tempe, Ariz., earlier this season at the ASU Thunderbird Invitational. "We're going to give it all we can; there is a lot of character on this team."

The Ducks are banking on character, as well as experience, to translate into success

at nationals. Four of Oregon's five participants played at nationals last season, when the Ducks finished 27th.

"The more you play, the more you get used to certain situations," Lavoie said. "We deserve to be there, and we feel we can play with anyone."

Burtner is the only Oregon player who didn't participate in nationals last season, but he doesn't expect that to affect his play.

"There's always the first-hole jitters," Burtner said. "But once I'm in the round and I'm thinking about what I'm doing and not the outcome, there is more excitement than fear and anxiety."

The Ducks have used the layoff between regionals and nationals to polish their game.

"We have been over at the practice green putting, and we went to Tokatee [Public Golf Course] to play at a different course and get a feel for different shots," Nosler said. "Each person has been working on individual things they need to improve on."

From Nosler on down, Oregon believes in itself.

"We have a lot of confidence and we're all winners," Burtner said. "We are competitors, whether it is golf or anything else."



"We're a team that is never going to quit. We're going to give it all we can."

Ryan Lavoie
Junior