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Fein does it again, leads UO to third

Two-time All-American Steve Fein leads the No. 12 Ducks, setting a record and winning his third title this fall

By Jeff Smith Oregon Daily Emerald

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Records are made to be broken - or as in Steve Fein's case, smashed.

The senior co-captain of the Oregon men's cross country team captured the individual title at the Pacific-10 Conference Championships in course-record time. leading the Ducks to a strong third-place finish at El Dorado Regional Park in Long Beach, Calif.

Fein's 8,000-meter run in 23 minutes, 37 seconds was 39 seconds faster than the previous record, held by California's Bolota Asmerom, who finished seventh on Saturday. With the win, Fein became the third Oregon harrier of the decade to claim a conference title. Colin Dalton took the crown in 1991 and Karl Keska did the same in 1995.

Fein beat Arizona's premier runner, Micheil Jones (second, 23:48), by a full 11 seconds, with Stanford senior Jake Maas (third, 23:58) and Arizona State sophomore Fasil Bizuneh (fourth, 24:00) close behind.

The victory was Fein's third straight individual title in as many races. He improved six places from his finish at last season's Pac-10s.

Fein paced himself throughout the race and maintained his All-American stride as other runners fell back.

"I was happy with my race,"

Fein said. "It was a fairly quick pace up front early, then at the 5K mark Micheil and I opened up a little gap on the rest of the front pack. At the 4-mile mark, I started to make a move and was able to put 15 yards on him right away. From there things went well until



the finish. This gives me another confidence boost since the Pac-10 is one of the strong conferences.

Fein had plenty of help, as his fellow co-captain Andrew Bliss finished with a ninth-place time of 24:32. Also finishing in the top 20 were freshman Jason Hartmann (15th, 24:46) and junior Michael Kasahun (19th, 24:59).

For Kasahun, a junior-college transfer from Fresno City College, the performance at the conference championships gives a sense of belonging in big-time college running.

"I came in with top 20 as my goal, so I started out hard to be in that position early and try to hang on," Kasahun said. "This is my first year against the big schools so I have some things to learn about racing and training since this is a totally different system. I think I can still do better, and I'm still' coming along.'

Other Duck finishers included juniors Sam Hill (32nd, 25:41) and Lincoln Nehring (43rd, 26:06) and freshman Kris Martin (50th, 27:31).

In the overall team race, No. 2 Stanford was upset in its bid for a fourth consecutive title, losing to No. 6 Arizona, with No. 12 Oregon right behind in third.

Ducks run into heat, take sixth at Pac-10s

Freshman Amy Nickerson leads the way for No. 23 Oregon in high temperatures

By Jeff Smith

Oregon Daily Emerald

The Northwest schools were at

a severe disadvantage Saturday. In near 90-degree heat, the No. 23 Oregon women's cross country team placed sixth overall with 135 points at the Pacific-10 Conference Championships in Long Beach, Calif.

With top runner Katie Crabb out nursing an Achilles injury, the Ducks relied on a lineup featuring six runners without conference championship experience.

Leading the way once again for the Ducks was freshman Amy Nickerson, who finished 18th overall in the 5,000-meter race with a time of 18 minutes, 3 seconds. Nickerson has fully recovered from an Achilles injury and is showing immense maturity for someone in her first year of college running. "Even though it was my first Pac-10 race, I really wasn't surprised by anything today," Nickerson said. "It was nice that it was a lot smaller than other races we've already run, so it was a relief to an extent.'

much as hard as I could, but it was pretty hot, which was hard for me."

The heat seemed to be a strong factor for teams not accustomed to such temperatures. No. 9 Washington finished behind two sunny schools, No. 1 Stanford and No. 11 Arizona State. Also ahead of the Ducks were No. 14 UCLA and Arizona

"All of our bodies felt good be-



fore," Glenn said. "Then we got in the race and a lot of us seemed to be affected by the heat. Both Amy

and I agreed that we felt unusually bad, and with the dusty and dry conditions, it just wasn't out turf."

Finishing behind Nickerson, Struyk and Glenn for Oregon were freshmen Erinn Gulbrandsen (31st, 18:40) and Eri Macdonald (44th, 19:19) and juniors Kylee Wells (49th, 20:07) and Chrissy Ruiter (50th, 20:31). Head coach Tom Heinonen was aiming for a fourth-place finish heading into the race, but he came away pleased with the amount of effort his runners showed in notso-friendly conditions. "This was a step for us, regard-less of how it goes," Heinonen said. "Our runners competed hard in awful conditions. It's disappointing to be sixth, but the hotweather teams beat the coolweather teams they were battling around. It will be our turn in Portland [at the Western Regionals on Nov. 13], and it will be something we have to take advantage of."

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Helping Nickerson in leading the team was fellow freshman Tara Struyk (20th, 18:05) and junior Rhiannon Glenn (22nd, 18:10).

"I felt after pre-nationals I needed to get out faster," said Struyk, who was the team's early leader. "I run a little better if I get out and hold my place early. I ran pretty