

Davis

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even knowing that I've had a tough day or [been] up late studying, he can just sit there and say 'What's wrong?' He knows me that well."

Heinonen knew that Davis wasn't feeling well in mid-February, ironically just one day after posting a strong second-place finish at the Cannon IV Classic in Indianapolis.

Surely enough, Davis was diagnosed with a sinus infection and bronchitis, and has been on antibiotics since the beginning of last week. At first, no improvement seemed to be



DAVIS

taking place. However, as Heinonen watched his star athlete leave the track to take a quick breather, he knew the medicine was beginning to work.

And, to her relief, so did Davis.

"Since I've got on antibiotics, I've felt so much better. I went for about two weeks not feeling any better, just feeling crappy all the time. I've been much better, I don't have to use a roll of toilet paper every day to blow my nose."

Davis ran hard in the off season to put distance between herself and what happened last

June. She'd always planned to use her final season of eligibility in indoor track, but she probably never thought it would be so important.

Because in her career, Davis has done it all.

She's a five-time All-American in track and cross country. She's a fan favorite, and soon will be one of the most-missed seniors in recent track and field history. Last season, she even won the 3,000-meter Pac-10 title.

When looking at the broad scope of her career, Davis' final NCAA outdoor appearance is nothing more than a speed bump.

"A good athlete has to be able to put it behind and move on to what's next," Heinonen said. "That seems like a long time ago now."

"You can't always control what happens," Davis said. "You've just got to go with the punches."

Yet one can't help but wish that last season would have ended differently, because the one thing that Davis didn't have in her outdoor career was what all people — regardless of occupation — hope for: A happy ending.

The final lap

But the story is not finished. Never again will Davis run outdoors for Oregon, but this Saturday, she has one more 3,000-meter go-round at the elite NCAAs. She just has to do it inside.

Everything is falling into place, too. Davis scored an NCAA-qualifying time of 9 min-

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Marie Davis
Oregon track

utes, 26.57 seconds at the Terrier Classic in Boston on Jan. 30, and current health problems aside, is on pace for her strongest indoor showing yet.

And this time, when it's over, Davis should be able to walk away with her head held high.

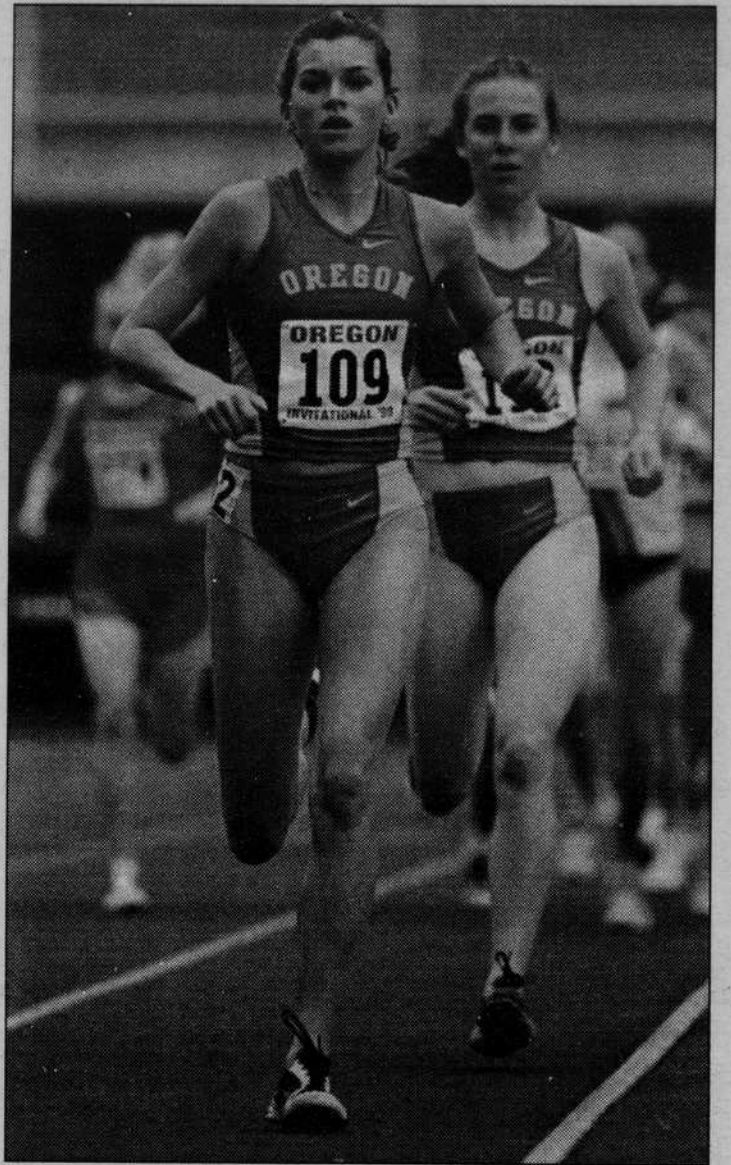
"Coming into Oregon, there's such high expectations to be a Ducks, because of all the history and everything that goes along with it," Davis said. "I'm very pleasantly surprised that all the expectations I had for Oregon have completely been accomplished."

Davis has never quit a race. After her career, she won't quit racing, either. She plans on attending Oregon again next year to complete her education and will continue to train with the Ducks and be trained by Heinonen.

Even in Boise, Davis was victorious. It would have been more than easy to take one step off the track.

But winners never quit.

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Davis, a five-time All-American, won the 3,000-meter Pac-10 title last year.

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