

To each her own at Saturday's Oregon Invitational

After last Saturday's team win against Washington, the Ducks go for individual marks this weekend

By Mirjam Swanson
Oregon Daily Emerald

Take some 350 athletes from 37 schools such as Washington, Weber State and Seattle Pacific, Simon Fraser and Lane Community College.

Invite them to come run, jump and throw with you at historic Hayward Field. What you'll get is some serious competition.



And that's just fine with the Oregon women's track and field team — which goes into this Saturday's Oregon Invitational significantly more self-centered than it did last at weekend's dual team meet victory against the Huskies.

"[The Invitational] is what it's always been: a service to the Northwest track community," head coach Tom Heinonen said.

"A lot of people can run at Hayward Field in a meet, which is good for a lot of people.

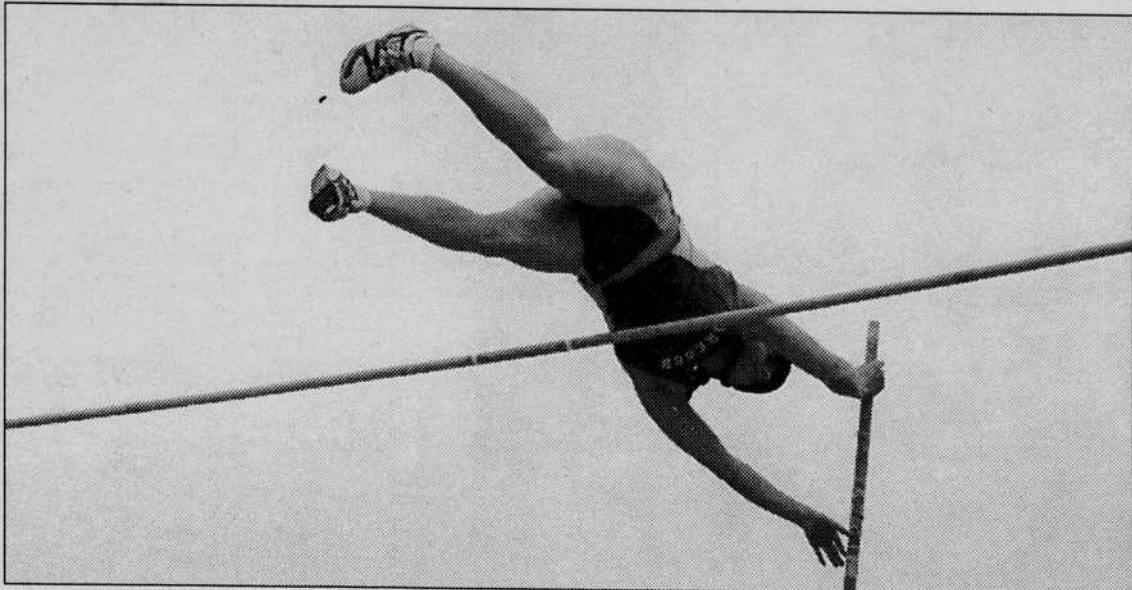
"We're doing what we think is right for each individual athlete. This is a good time for seasonal bests and PRs and maybe some more Pacific-10 Conference Championships qualifiers.

"We're gonna get plenty of competition. People look at this meet, and say 'Man, this is small potatoes.' But really, if it's the Oregon team against 700 [total] athletes there's plenty of competition."

For sure. One need only check the pole vault lineup.

The Ducks' Niki Reed, currently ranked third in the Pac-10 (13 feet, 5 1/4 inches) isn't even favored Saturday. Utah State's Shae Bair is.

Oregon's Karina Elstrom and Holly Speight also hope to capitalize on the competitive situation to improve their marks. If it happens, it would be the second straight weekend for Speight, who PR'd with an NCAA provisional height of 12-3 1/2 at the Washington Dual.



Redshirt junior Holly Speight earned a personal record with a vault of 12-3 1/2 in last weekend's Washington Dual. Azle Malinao-Alvarez Emerald

“We're doing what we think is right for each individual athlete.”

Tom Heinonen
head coach

"It was the first time Holly vaulted in a helmet after her 20 stitches when the bar fell on her the previous weekend," Heinonen said.

And Maureen Morrison, Oregon's all-time leader in the hammer throw, is seeded fifth going in. Morrison and freshman Mary Etter are ranked second and first in the discus, respectively.

Otherwise expect some Ducks to try their hands, so to speak, at events other than their specialties.

Hilary Holly, usually Oregon's optimum long jump threat, plans to tone things down a bit after

competing in four events at the dual. She'll focus on the triple jump and run a leg on the constantly improving 4x100 relay team.

"We've been improving every week," Holly said. "That's what happens with relays, something has to come together in order to run fast, and we're starting to come together."

Katie Crabb, the Pac-10's top 1,500-meter runner (4:19.88) will instead run the 800.

"Katie is moving down to the 800 to see what she can do with it and as a preparation for a fast 1,500 next week."

Besides any PRs, there will be other Duck firsts as well.

Long jumper/sprinter/hoops guard Amanda Brown will sprint her first 100 in an Oregon uniform Saturday morning.

Chrissy Ruitter partakes in her first career 10,000 Friday night.

On tap
What: track and field
Who: 700-plus West Coast athletes
When: morning events 9:45 — 2:10 p.m., evening events 3:30 — 7:50 p.m.
Where: Hayward Field





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