

Track

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have in her abilities into good — and consistently improving — times on the track.

At last weekend's invitational, Larkin ran her second-fastest wind-legal time of the season (14.46). That one week after she

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Katie Crabb
track and field

ran a season best and two personal bests in one day, beating her first mark with a wind-aided time of 14.29 at the Oregon Invitational.

“It was frustrating to not be running the times I’ve been capable of,” Larkin said last week. “But then PR-ing, it means everything to me. And I was more happy for my coach, Mark Stream, than I was for me.”

“Because he believed in me, you know? He knew I could do it. So when I was done, he wasn’t really surprised, just happy. Like ‘I knew you could do it.’”

And now, so does Larkin.

“I’ve kind of shown all the other schools who I am,” she said. “That I can run with them. I honestly feel like a different person.”

Senior Katie Crabb, one of the few veteran athletes on the young Oregon women’s squad, knows what one great performance can do for an athlete. The Pacific-10’s leading 1,500-meter runner (4:19.88) also knows what one poor race can do.

And she completely comprehends the that the best thing to do is sometimes just forget about it. Although that doesn’t make doing so easy.

“Confidence is definitely one of the hardest things,” Crabb said. “After you’re let down in a race and you run considerably slower than you had in the weekend before, it can clearly put the brakes on how you feel about your running.”

“The physical part of running is probably 30 percent, and mentally, the other 70 you need to be confident. So sometimes you just have to put a race in the bag, you just have to put it away.”

“But understanding that and being able to do it are two different things. It’s easy to doubt yourself — but personally, I’m feeling pretty good about myself.”

As are Larkin and Elstrom these days, having seemingly shed a good deal of doubt.

Elstrom, for one, said she’s ready to turn an impressive weekend into an impressive streak this Saturday.

“I felt really good at the meet this weekend, and I feel like I can do even better at the Twilight,” Elstrom said.

Like, NCAA-automatic qualifying time better?

“Yeah,” said Elstrom, without even the slightest hesitation. “Yeah.”

Additional Smith Invite stars

Sophomore sprinter Endia Abrante won her section of the 200 with a season best of 25.13. Her teammates Heather Murtaugh, Jenny Kenyon and Janette Martin, who finished third (25.41), fifth (25.70) and sixth (25.85), respectively, in the same section.

Kenyon also continued to pre-

pare for this weekend’s Pac-10 heptathlon competition, claiming PRs in the long jump (18-9 3/4) and the 100 hurdles (14.82).

Also in the hurdle competition, sophomore Shannae McNairy rank a wind-legal season best of 25.76.

Back on track?

Saturday’s marquee event, without question, is the men’s mile, a.k.a. the Twilight Mile. It offers top finishers incentive beyond respect and bragging rights.

The winner takes home \$1,000, the runner-up gets \$500, and \$300 is offered for third — if the times are less than four minutes.

The field includes the No. 2- and 3-ranked milers in the nation Seneca Lassiter and David Krumenacker.

And it could also include a certain Duck who has been sidelined because of illness for almost the entire season.

“There’s a rumor,” Crabb said. “That [All-American] Steve Fein is going to be in the race.”

“Because that’s kind of what the meet is set up for, to get an Oregon guy a race where he can run a sub-4 minute mile.”

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