

Track

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But Johnson said he might not compete in the Twilight meet so he can prepare for a strong showing at the Pac-10 meet.

"It's the meet we've been preparing for all year," Johnson said. "It's not any extra pressure to say that I'm going for an NCAA mark. I just feel like, 'This is the opportunity. It's going to be the day. I can go do it. I should go do it.'"

To qualify for the NCAA long jump, Johnson needs to clear 25-1 1/4. So far this season, he has cleared 24- 1/4.

A Fein battle plan

"Fast times" is the slogan that the athletic department opted to splash across the men's and women's promotional team posters.

The men's poster shows Steve Fein, Oregon's distance phenom who came from Wisconsin with head coach Martin Smith.

Only problem is, Fein hasn't been running any "fast times." In fact, because of nasal problems and training complications, he hasn't even been running.

All season long, Tracktown fans have been thirsting to see more of Fein. All season long, his name has appeared on the heat sheets before track meets. Despite that, Fein has spent all but two of the outdoor season meets off the track.

Going into the season, Fein seemed to be the Ducks' sure thing to make the NCAA Championships.

But going into this weekend,

the answer is more like a question.

Fein has no Pac-10 mark. No NCAA mark. If he doesn't run this weekend, his incredible collegiate career is over with no postseason.

Because the senior has been off of the track for so long, it seems unlikely that he'll run his mar-

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Nat Johnson
senior jumper



quee event, the 5,000. He ran the 800 in the Oregon Preview and the 1,500 in the Oregon-Washington Dual. He finished second in both races.

Under different circumstances, he could have ran the 5,000 regardless of his time on the track, because he's probably good enough.

However, Fein has his eyes set on July's 2000 Olympic Trials in Sacramento, Calif., and to risk overtraining this late in the year would damage his gold-medal dreams.

Which leaves the Oregon Twilight mile. Word is that Fein will be at the start line in that event when the gun sounds, as opposed to just having his name on the heat sheet.

If Fein is on the line when the race begins, Tracktown fans



Azle Malinao-Alvarez Emerald

Senior Nat Johnson might not compete in the Oregon Twilight Saturday in order to save his energy for the Pac-10 Championships.

should be ready for a fast mile. A Pac-10 mark is easily within his reach, but if he wants to go to one more NCAA competition, he'll probably have to pop a mark at the Twilight meet.

According to the schedule, he'd have another shot at an NCAA mark at the Pac-10 meet, but conference-title races are often slower and more tactical.

Recruiting Trail

The already young pole vaulting corps just got a depth charge. Two major recruits from Oregon's south coast signed letters of intent

last month. Marshfield's Trevor Woods and Myrtle Point's Caleb Krantz will vault for Oregon next season.

Woods is the defending 4A state champion with a vault of 16-1 while Krantz has a lifetime-best 16-0.

The vaulting corps, which consists of redshirt sophomores Cody Howell and Billy Pappas and freshman Jason Slye, should be very strong next year.

"We are very pleased to sign Caleb and Trevor who will make our program better down the

road," Oregon head coach Martin Smith said in a released statement.

"They rank among the nations top prep pole vaulters, and are still developing.

"We're building this team gradually and getting this duo is an important step for us because we need to keep bringing in top in-state kids."

Distance runner Aaron Emery, of Beaver River Central High School in Croghan, New York, also signed with Oregon last month.

What do all of these people have in common? They all read **Pulse**

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