



Sophomore Jenny Kenyon, Oregon's lone heptathlete, has her sights set on 5,000 points at the Pac-10 Championships. Kevin Calame Emerald

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know exactly what to expect from this young Oregon team when the season began.

Heinonen said back then, he knew his team had the potential to be successful, but one shouldn't forget young athletes are young athletes. They're bound, by nature, to have their ups and downs.

But going into Saturday's Oregon Twilight, the final meet of the regular season and the final opportunity to earn Pac-10 Championship qualifying marks, the kids — especially the freshmen — have provided quite a few ups.

"Our freshmen have made lots of progress," Heinonen said, "and we've needed them to. Many of them are the backbone of our team for many years to come."

That auspicious freshmen "backbone" includes middle distance runner Eri Macdonald, high jumper Jenny Brogden, versatile thrower Mary Etter and her fellow thrower Jordan McDaniels.

Macdonald currently ranks fifth in the Pac-10 in the 800 (2:08.62) and is .17 seconds from a Pac-10 qualifying mark in the 1,500 (4:40.31).

Etter has qualified for next weekend's conference championships at Hayward Field in both the shot put and the discus — and she's a mere 11 inches away from qualifying in the hammer throw as well.

"I've only got one more chance," Etter said. "I'll just give it my all and hope it happens. 'Cause if it's meant to happen, it'll happen.'"

Brogden is only a 1/2 inch (5-6 1/2) from a Pac-10 height in the high jump and McDaniels is 3 1/2 feet (146-6) from earning a Pac-10 mark in the discus.

McDaniels is "going to hit that," Etter said. "She's so close, I know it."

Others on the bubble include sophomores Endia Abrante and Janette Martin in the 800 (Abrante is .22 seconds away with a season-

al best of 55.66, and Martin's within 1.14 seconds of making the cut). Shannae McNairy is .18 seconds away (14.52) of making it in the 100-meter hurdles.

Freshman Amanda Brown is 3 1/4 inches shy of a Pac-10 mark in the long jump. Senior Hilary Holly has already scored a Pac-10 qualifier (19-2) in the long jump, but she's still in search of the Pac-10 requirement in the 100 meters (.17 seconds away, 12.21).

Teams are guaranteed one entry per Pac-10 event even if they don't have a qualified mark by the right-of-entry rule — though those athletes still count toward the 24-athlete max team-rule limit. Coaches are also allowed three wild card entries, which also count toward the 24-athlete limit.

"We do have some wild card choices to make," Heinonen said. "But we're not making them yet."

No, because beginning with the women's hammer at 5:30 p.m., the Ducks have one last chance to do the qualifying themselves.

Blazers too quick, too good for Jazz

By Tim Korte
The Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Arvydas Sabonis scored 22 points and Steve Smith had 21 as the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Utah Jazz 103-84 Thursday night for a 3-0 lead in the Western Conference semifinals.

Bonzi Wells scored 10 of his 19 points in the fourth quarter to help the Blazers hold off a second-half Utah surge, leaving the Jazz one game from being on the losing end of the first best-of-seven series sweep in franchise history.

Game 4 is here Sunday and the Jazz will try to become the first team in NBA history to rally from a 3-0 deficit.

The Jazz, who played for the NBA title in 1997 and 1998, trailed by 21 points in the second quarter but trimmed the margin to 55-49 at halftime and then tied it three times in the third quarter.

But Utah never led in the second half. And while Karl Malone scored 28 points, he had only two in the fourth quarter and the Jazz were outscored 28-14 in the final period.

Rasheed Wallace scored 17 points for the Blazers, who held

Utah to 40 percent shooting.

Jeff Hornacek, whose 14-year NBA career will end if the Jazz lose Sunday, played like his career was at stake, scoring 24 points on 9-of-17 shooting. Bryon Russell added 18 points for the Jazz.

The Jazz had beaten Portland in 10 of the previous 13 playoff games in Salt Lake City, but the Blazers weren't intimidated.

In fact, the Blazers, who beat the Jazz in six games last year in the Western Conference semifinals, have made it look easy this year.

Portland has started fast in each game, taking advantage of size and speed mismatches throughout the lineup.

On Thursday night, the Blazers posted up Smith on Hornacek and Sabonis on Olden Polynice, following the same script they had used in dominating Game 2, and it helped them build a double-digit lead in the second quarter.

Once again, the Jazz offered little resistance early, and Portland's lead swelled to 53-32 4:50 before halftime on a basket by Schrempf. It seemed the Blazers would put the Jazz away.

Boos echoed across the Delta Center, and the message seemed to invigorate the Jazz. Utah closed the half with a 17-2 run, with Malone and Hornacek each scoring six points, to trail 55-49 at halftime.

The crowd was with the Jazz throughout the second half, but Utah couldn't break through. Leading 75-70 at the end of the third quarter, the Blazers regrouped, opening the fourth with an 11-2 run.

From there, Portland pulled away. Wells came off the bench to burn the Jazz with jumpers and dunks. At one stretch, he scored three straight baskets for the Blazers.

Notes: Pippen is one game from tying Magic Johnson, at 190, for third place on the NBA's list of career playoff appearances. ... By the end of the first quarter, six players had two fouls: Damon Stoudamire, Wallace, Sabonis, Brian Grant, Polynice and John Stockton. ... Portland hasn't swept a best-of-seven series since 1976-77, the year the Blazers won the NBA title. ... Portland came in 0-6 in Game 3 of a best-of-seven series.

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