



Kevin Calame Emerald



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Always on the

■ Katie Crabb, the Pac-10's leading 1,500 meter runner, hopes to end her career as a champion

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

Odds are you've seen her running around campus.

Maybe you saw the 5-foot-10 senior running in place at the stoplight by Burger King, waiting to cross the street.

Or perhaps you noticed her as she cruised by the 7-11 store on 13th and Alder.

You might have seen her blonde ponytail whiz by you as you walked in the direction of McArthur Court.

It is likely you've seen the Oregon women's track team's most experienced member somewhere, because she's constantly out there running.

"Oh yeah, I'm always running around," said Crabb, as she stretches on the floor of the Bowerman Lounge. "Everyone is always like, 'Oh I saw you running!' And I'm like, 'Yeah, I run... a lot.'

"And I live just around here, so on all of my runs, it seems like I see at least five people I know."

Of course there is a motive behind her daily jogs. The Chico, Calif., native wants to be the best runner possible. It is this discipline that has positioned her as the favorite to capture the Pacific-10 Conference Championship in the 1,500 meters this weekend at Hayward Field.

"I can't wait for this weekend," Crabb said. "You can't beat having the Pac-10 Championships at home at Hayward Field. And I have a shot at the title, so we'll see."

But before we go on and on about her chance to win that Pac-10 title, let's rewind a bit back to the fall. All the way back to the Oregon women cross country's season opening race on Sept. 25.

It was during that race, the Clackamas Open, that Crabb first began to notice a serious problem with her Achilles tendon. Near the two-mile mark she stepped off the course because of the aggravation in her heel. She did not finish the race.

This was not the way she envisioned the beginning of her year. Especially not after being the team's top returnee from the previous year's NCAA Cross Country Championships.

"That first race, I was halfway through, and was like, 'This is not OK. I'm not going to ruin my season for this race,'" Crabb said.

The next week Crabb admitted she was "very stubborn" in attempting to run at the Notre

Dame Invitational on Oct. 1. With one mile to go in the race, she was in line for fifth place before her taped ankle cut off her blood circulation. She was forced to slow down and finished 46th.

Running had always come so naturally to her and then suddenly, she was being restrained from doing what she loved. She had two full weeks

to rest and prepare for the Pre-NCAAs.

She gutted it out through the opening parts of the race with the Achilles problem coming into effect. But then came the incident that shows the bond Crabb has with her veteran coach Tom Heinonen.

As Heinonen said back in October:

"Katie somehow saw me in the crowd and mouthed, 'It hurts a lot.' I hadn't seen her until that point, and I pulled her out of the race when I did."

Crabb certainly didn't want to drop out of another race, but she respected Heinonen. The two share a common respect for each other. It is evident listening to them speak.

"She's very determined," Heinonen said. "She knows what she has to do, and she works hard to achieve her goals."

"Tom knows the ins and outs of running," Crabb said. "He knows everything. There's not a better coach in my mind. I trust that the workouts he gives me will help me."

Which is why she didn't mind as much going through the intensive rehabilitation water workouts in the fall. But that doesn't mean that she enjoyed it.

"With my Achilles in the tank, that put me in the water," said Crabb, emphasizing the word "water" with a backward rolling of her eyes. "Anyone who has been injured and had to go in the water can relate to how miserable it is."

Crabb proceeds to describe this "12-by-eight-foot square water hole" that she ran in every day for a full month.

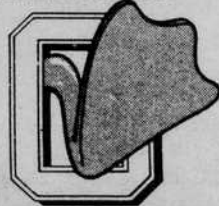
"It's really hard to stay positive, and you just have to make a huge effort and say, 'OK, I'm going to get through this,'" Crabb said. "It's not much for kicks and giggles."

"Overall, it was a bummer of a fall. But now it's track season and I'm making up for it."

And she most certainly is. During the course of the spring she won the 800 at the Washington Dual and picked up her personal



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