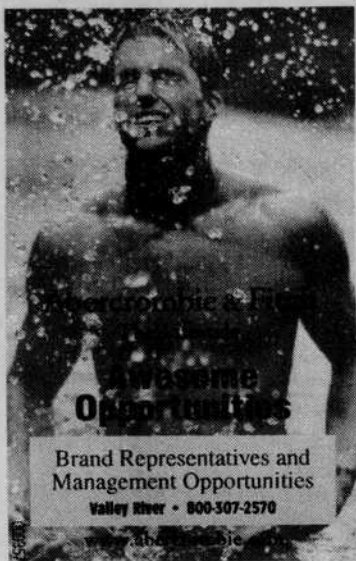


Pac-10s beautified by Hayward Field



Man, that was fun. For those of you who didn't venture out to Hayward Field this past weekend, you missed out.



Jeff Smith

Hayward Field was the site of the Pacific-10 Conference Championships for the first time since 1992, and it was everything it was billed to be.

Sure, both Oregon teams didn't finish as well as they did back in '92. After all, in that year, the Duck women treated their hometown fans to their second straight Pac-10 title, while the men finished a very respectable second.

But even with the men coming in seventh place and the women finishing ninth, the meet delivered high doses of excitement for the thousands of fans on hand.

On Saturday, Stanford pole vaulter Toby Stevenson broke a Pac-10 pole vault record that had stood since 1978. Stevenson broke the record with a vault of 18 feet 9 1/4 inches, which gives him the honor of being the No. 1 collegiate leader in the pole vault this year.

But it was what he did afterwards that had everybody talking. He took the pole vault pole and performed a little bull dance for the enjoyment of the crowd.

"I was having a good time," said Stevenson, who is a three-time All-American. "I knew it was going to take over 18 feet to win, with the great track conditions and the great fans in Eugene."

That last part was repeated often throughout the weekend, and Eugene proved once again why it is so revered and why it deserves the title of Tracktown, U.S.A.

"The competition has been great," said Tatyana Obuchova of USC, who won the women's triple jump competition with a distance of 43 9-75. "This place is great."

"I love it here with the great crowd," said UCLA junior Christina Tolson, who won the title in the hammer. "When I learned the Pac-10s were going to

be at Hayward Field, I was very excited. I knew it was going to be a beautiful day."

"I like this track; it's always been good to me," said USC's Angela Williams, who captured the Pac-10 crowns in both the 100 and 200. "I already know this track so it helped. It's the fastest I've been in my life!"

While Williams doubled in the 100 and 200, Washington's Ja'Warren Hooker did the same on men's side. It was a significant weekend for the multi-sport athlete, who also plays wide receiver for the football team. He captured the double crown as a freshman in '98, but had an up-and-down spring last year after having a stress fracture in his left shin.

Hooker was told that he made it look easy out there.

"Well, that's the key," Hooker said. "You want to make it look easy."

Perhaps nobody made winning look easier than Stanford's flamboyant Gabe Jennings. Moments after running away with the men's 1,500 meter competition, Jennings was happily explaining his key to success.

"The best way to get in the zone

is to have fun," Jennings said. "We don't have to be serious and cold to win. We're having a good time."

As was everybody else who experienced the weekend. The Hayward faithful continued to clap in unison throughout the meets, and even broke out in a "Steve! Steve!" chant, as Oregon's Steve Fein battled Stanford's Brad Heuser in the 5,000 meter run.

The crowd seemed to never want to leave, but eventually did at around 8:05 p.m.

But even with many fans departed, the fun was still going on.

At 8:17, the UCLA women's team were celebrating their Pac-10 team title with a rousing rendition of "We Are the Champions."

The USC men's team was also rejoicing in its win by taking one final lap around Hayward Field. One Trojan was even capturing the moment with a hand held video recorder.

Rightfully so, as this was a weekend that deserves to be remembered fondly.

Jeff Smith is a sports reporter for the Emerald. He can be reached via e-mail at Smittside@aol.com.

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Golf

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tied with two-over 218s.

Byers had the Ducks' most impressive round of the tournament, a three-under par 69 in the final round.

The surprise for Oregon came from their top player, 41st-ranked senior Ryan Lavoie. The Pasco, Wash., native and Oregon co-captain finished 104th of 141 golfers

with an 11-over par 227. Lavoie's was the worst Duck score, so was not factored into the team's score as is customary in college golf.

No. 8 Arizona won the West Regionals by four strokes over No. 11 UNLV. The other teams to qualify for the NCAA Championships were No. 5 Arizona State, No. 6 Fresno State, No. 9 Brigham Young, No. 13 New Mexico, No. 21 Washington, No. 33 Southern California, No. 43 Pepperdine and No. 35 California.

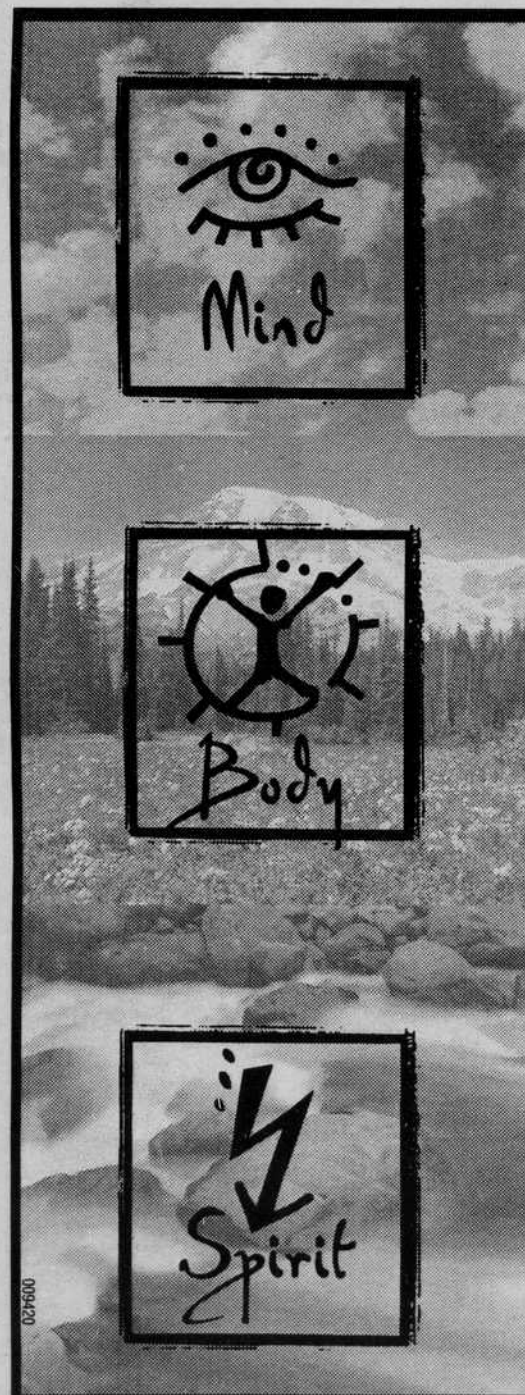
Pepperdine, the lowest-ranked team to place at the regionals, did so largely because of the course record set by sophomore Michael Beard. 61st-ranked Beard made five birdies and an eagle on his way to a final round, seven-under par 65, a Riverbend Golf Course record.

"I was in a pretty good frame of mind," Beard said. "We feel like we belong."

The Ducks missed their chance at a third straight NCAA Championships, and their 12th ever. This

year marked the second time the Ducks have had an all Pacific-10 Conference player (Ryan Lavoie) and missed the cut at the West Regionals. In 1994, Ted Snavely won a spot on the all Pac-10 team and the Ducks did not make the NCAA Championships.

Oregon has not made three consecutive trips to the NCAA Championships since 1975-1978, when a young man by the name of Peter Jacobsen, now a successful PGA Tour pro, led the Ducks.



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