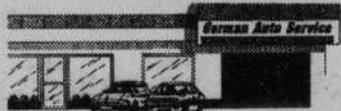


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011416

Track travels south to Texas

■ A small contingent of Oregon men's track and field athletes heads for the 74th annual Texas Relays

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

The quest for Pacific-10 Conference and NCAA qualifying marks continues this weekend for the Oregon men's track and field team.



A 19-man contingent of mostly field event specialists and a relay team heads to Austin, Texas, today and Saturday for the 74th annual Clyde Littlefield Texas Relays. More than 5,000 amateur, collegiate and prep athletes will compete in 120 events in the four-day meet.

"[The Relays] are a wonderful track meet," Oregon head coach Martin Smith said. "It's a good meet for getting exposure with many events. So an athlete can get a lot of experience."

Seven Ducks have already earned Pac-10 qualifying marks and are looking to take the next step toward an NCAA bid. Several other Ducks came close to Pac-10 marks at Oregon's last appearance, the Stanford Invitational, but fell just short. They will attempt to achieve those qualifying marks this weekend.

"We're looking for continued improvement and a measurement of where we are at," Smith said. "This



Emerald

Junior John Bello will make his first appearance of the season this weekend in Texas.

is just another opportunity to compete against a high level of competition in a good setting."

Making their season debut this weekend will be sophomore sprinter/football player Samie Parker in the 100-meter dash, junior John Bello in the shot put and discus and sophomore Nick Bakke in the javelin.

Another anticipated debut will be in the 800 meters, where junior transfer Simon Kimata will compete for the first time since 1999, when he attended South Plains junior college. The Nyeri, Kenya, native owns a personal best of 1 minute, 47 seconds in the half-mile race.

Junior All-American Jason Boness will need to clear seven feet, four-and-a-half inches in the high jump for an automatic NCAA berth. Other NCAA contenders include freshman Adam Jenkins in the javelin and junior transfer Micah Harris in the 110 hurdles.

Looking to increase an NCAA qualifying mark is sophomore John Stiegeler in the javelin. Stiegeler, who tossed the javelin 238-9 at the Oregon Preview on March 17, is currently second in the Oregon record books and ranks fourth nationally. The Coos Bay native trails only former NCAA champion Art Skipper on the all-time list.

"John's mark was a pleasant surprise," Smith said. "That was a good step for the team. We're hoping for some additional NCAA automatic and provisional marks this weekend."

Among those competing today include Parker in the 100-meter preliminaries, and juniors Harris, Terry Ellis and Tim Overfield in the 110-hurdle preliminaries. Other Ducks in action today include Bello in the shot put and sophomore Fofuso Akniradewo in the triple jump.

The remaining athletes will compete on Saturday.

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