

Men's track team attempts to fill sprint hole

■ The Oregon men will have to shuffle around athletes and football players to shore up the sprinting events

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

This could be the best Oregon track and field team in over a decade. The 2001 squad is deep across the board and has a legitimate NCAA contender in almost every event — except in the sprints.



The Ducks' weakness in the sprints was evident in their 87-75 dual meet win over Washington last Saturday. While Oregon disposed of the Huskies with dominance in the throws, jumps and hurdles, Washington won the 100-, 200- and 400-meters.

"We've recognized the 100 and 200 meters as an area we need to improve on," Oregon head coach Martin Smith said. "It hasn't been so much of a worry as an area that we'll need to work on this season and in the future."

Granted, Washington did have the services of Olympian Ja'Warren Hooker in the sprints on Saturday, but the nearest Oregon finisher to Hooker was just under a second, an eternity in sprinting.

With a third of the season already passed, the Ducks have no Pacific-10 qualifiers in the 100-, 200-, 400-meters or the long jump, an event closely tied to the sprints.

Luckily, this year's team is versatile enough that the sprinting hole shouldn't be that big a problem come the Pacific-10 Conference Championships.

On Saturday, Smith gained the services of two football players,

senior Wesly Mallard and sophomore A.K. Keyes, in the 100-meters. Keyes placed third in a time of 11.08 seconds while Mallard came in fifth in 11.47.

Keyes and Mallard aren't the first football players to hit the oval for Oregon. Last season, freshmen receivers Samie Parker and Ric Cottengim were key sprinters for the Ducks.

"We work closely with coach Bellotti to make sure his players stay healthy and focused on football," Smith said. "Sprinting is very beneficial for speed and conditioning for football players."

Cottengim has since left Oregon and Parker has been hampered this spring by nagging injuries, although he did participate in the 4x100 hurdles Saturday.

A definite option for Smith is the use of hurdlers and decathletes in the sprinting events. Junior transfer Micah Harris, an NCAA qualifier in the 110 hurdles, has competed several times this season in the 200-meters. Freshman Jake Garlick was the Utah state champion in the 110 hurdles and 200-meters in high school.

Oregon decathletes, whose Pac-10 meet is a week earlier than the rest of the team, may compete in sprinting events at the multi-event portion of the Pac-10s. Juniors Santiago Lorenzo, Billy Pappas and sophomore Jason Slye all compete in the 100, 400 and long jump as part of the decathlon and may do the same events at the Pac-10 meet.

A healthy prognosis

Junior transfer Simon Kimata passed his first test of the season Saturday in the 800-meters. The Nyeri, Kenya, native competed for the first time in two years fol-



Oregon's Santiago Lorenzo (left) races next to the Huskies' Brad Goodrich at Saturday's Washington Dual at Hayward Field.

Tom Patterson Emerald

lowing a stress fracture injury and an NCAA transfer period.

Kimata, who owns a 1 minute, 47 second personal best in the 800-meters, won the half-mile race against Washington in a "satisfactory" 1:50.7.

"I didn't want to push too hard on Saturday," Kimata said. "I can't say I ran my fastest — I was just out there to win. The most important thing right now is to stay healthy."

If Kimata remains healthy and

returns to his old form, he could make an already-strong middle distance corps very formidable. He joins junior Ross Krempsey, a Pac-10 finalist last season, Merritt McDole, Sean Gross and Jake Horner.

Fastest person to run the mile enters 2001 Pre Classic

■ Mile king Hicham El Guerrouj will grace Hayward Field this May at the 2001 Prefontaine Classic

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

Just when you thought the Prefontaine Classic couldn't get any better, it did.

Loaded with three world record holders, the 2000 Pre Classic was one of the

biggest track and field meets on American soil. This year's Classic looks to be even bigger with world record holder Hicham El Guerrouj entered in the Bill Bowerman Mile.

The world record holder in the mile, 1,500- and 2000-meters, will compete on American soil for only the second time ever, May 27 at Hayward Field. His race in the U.S. came in 1996 at the Olympic Games in Atlanta.

The Morocco native owns a personal best of 3 minutes, 43.1 seconds in the mile and a 3:26.0 in the 1,500-meters. The Hayward Field and Prefontaine Classic meet record in the mile is 3:50.9, set by Kenya's Daniel Komen in 1998.

His only losses in the past five years were in Atlanta, when he fell at the bell lap of the mile in Atlanta to finish a disappointing 12th, and in Sydney last summer, where he was edged by

Kenyan Noah Ngeny in the mile.

El Guerrouj will remain in Ifrane, Morocco, a high-altitude training facility in the Atlas Mountains, until late May, when he will come to Eugene. The mile will be his first outdoor competition of the season.

El Guerrouj is the first entrant into the 2001 marquee meet. World record holders Maurice Greene, Michael Johnson and Marion Jones are perennial Classic participants.



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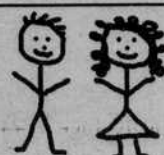
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