

# One-sport STAR

■ Since discovering the javelin four years ago, Sarah Malone has been on a quick climb to the top of the sport

By Peter Hockaday  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Have you heard of Katy Polansky? A year ago, Katy Polansky was a two-sport star for South Eugene High School. Now, Polansky is having the ride of her life, sitting on the bench for the Oregon women's basketball team and living the controversy surrounding that program.

If it weren't for Katy Polansky, Oregon freshman track and field sensation Sarah Malone wouldn't be a freshman track sensation.

If Polansky hadn't thrown javelin for South, Malone wouldn't be ranked second in the nation in the javelin throw and about to compete in the event of her life, the NCAA Track and Field Championships at Hayward Field.

But Malone is all those things and more. She is Oregon's brightest hope for an individual national championship and the 10 team points that go along with it. She is "the next great javelin thrower," according to Oregon head coach Tom Heinonen, and she hasn't even taken a 200-level class in college yet.

"She'll do well; I have no doubt about it," Heinonen said. "If that means top 10, top five, or winning it — who knows? It only takes one big throw."

Malone wasn't even supposed to be here, in Eugene, throwing the javelin for a national championship.

Four years ago, Malone was a one-sport star for Newberg High School. She was a basketball player, and her parents wanted her to play only one sport to cut down on non-school distractions.

"I've played basketball since I was really young," Malone said. "That's what I was going to do. I was going to be a basketball player."

That all changed in the spring of Malone's freshman year. She went to a Newberg track meet to watch a friend compete, and — how do

these things ever happen? — was coaxed by the friend's brother to pick up a javelin.

It seems that Newberg's coach, Joe Boutin, thought Malone had the build and look of a sensational javelin thrower from down Interstate 5, a javelin thrower named Katy Polansky. After much haranguing, Malone agreed to throw the implement for Boutin.

So Malone picked up the javelin and, after a little coaching, heaved it into the air. She threw it 110 feet.

"I just happened to be in the right place at the right time," Malone said. "It was a total, absolute fluke that I started throwing."

Malone took a javelin home and practiced all summer.

One hundred and 30 feet.

She battled with Polansky at the state championships her sophomore and junior years, finishing second both times.

One hundred and 60 feet.

She finally broke through senior year and won the state title with a massive throw.

One hundred and 72 feet.

Now, Malone is electrifying the Hayward Field crowd as an Oregon Duck. She has thrown well at each home meet this year, and she heaved her mightiest throw yet, a 174-foot toss, at the Oregon Twilight May 12.

That throw moved Malone to second on the national list, where she sits heading into this week's NCAA Championships.

Oregon throws coach Sally Harmon said Malone will only continue her upward trend.

"You have to keep in perspective that she's just a freshman," Harmon said. "I don't want to put enormous pressure on her. She's always done well at big meets in the past."

Malone said it's that kind of looseness that first drew her to Oregon track and field. That and Hayward Field. And the allure of having her family at all those important events.

"Anybody who knows anything about track knows Hayward Field," Malone said. "It's a major adrenaline rush every time I step out there."

"When I chose to come to Oregon, one thing I weighed heavily

was family and friends. When I throw here, I can always look up in the stands and know my family is there."

So how important is it to win the national championship, right now, at Hayward?

"It drives me to work harder," Malone said.

Malone's final barrier, she has said all season, is 180 feet. A 180-foot throw would not only eclipse the current best mark in the nation, but would solidify Malone as one of the best throwers in recent Oregon history.

Malone has a very good chance to do it at Hayward Field Friday in the javelin final.

"She's been in these situations before," Harmon said. "She's always risen to the occasion."

Malone will be joined by another Oregon javelin thrower, sophomore Charyl Weingarten, in the NCAA

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Tom Patterson Emerald

Oregon freshman standout Sarah Malone heads into this week's NCAA Championships ranked second nationally in the javelin, the finals for which will be held Friday.



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