

All in a (two) day's work

Junior decathlete Santiago Lorenzo takes us step-by-step through a standard decathlon

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

Santiago Lorenzo ambled across the Hayward Field facilities on a laid-back Monday practice earlier this month.

After completing practice with his starting blocks, Lorenzo headed from the start of the 1,500 meters toward the northwest corner of the track, avoiding the long jump pit and crossing the pole vault and javelin runways.

He briefly listened to coach Bill Lawson giving advice to some high jumpers, then got some advice on his release from thrower James March in the shot put ring.

Lorenzo then got down to business, setting up three hurdles at their highest setting, 45 inches.

In 30 seconds, Lorenzo touched upon each of the 10 events used in the decathlon.

The junior All-American competes Wednesday and Thursday in the NCAA Championship decathlon. Lorenzo takes us through a standard two-day decathlon, event by event as they unfold.

1 p.m. - 100 meters.

"Each decathlon begins with the 100 meters," Lorenzo said. "You run fast. That's about it. There's not

a whole lot you can do with it."

Lorenzo owns a personal best of 10.99 seconds in the event, good enough for 860 points.

"Once you are done with the 100, you're done," Lorenzo said. "You can't dwell on it. Once the event is over, you just have to think about the next one. That's a typical error that most athletes do. They think, 'I ran an 11.5 and I should have ran a 10.9.' They start thinking about how many points they lost instead of thinking about the next event."

2 p.m. - Long Jump

"It's the same sort of thing — jump far," he said. "It's important to be focused on the event you are doing. When you go to the 100, you think, 'I'm a sprinter.' When you go to the long jump, 'I'm a jumper.'"

Twenty-three feet, five-and-a-half inches is Lorenzo's top mark for 850 points.

3:15 p.m. - Shot Put

"The shot put takes a lot of weight workouts, but you need to be extremely explosive," Lorenzo said. "It's equal to the first eight meters of the 100. You need to be strong, but if you're so big you can't even move, then the shot won't go very far."

Lorenzo has thrown the shot 45-1/4 feet for 711 points. The shot is a 16-pound iron ball that is 4 3/8 inches in diameter and must be thrown starting from the neck.

4:30 p.m. - High Jump

"There isn't any break in the decathlon," Lorenzo said. "Some people think that the shot put and high jump aren't demanding, but you'd be surprised. Especially when you get to a certain level. The high jump is not as demanding, but you have to be in the event, focused, and you cannot screw up every movement."

Lorenzo has leapt 6-7 in this event for 808 points.

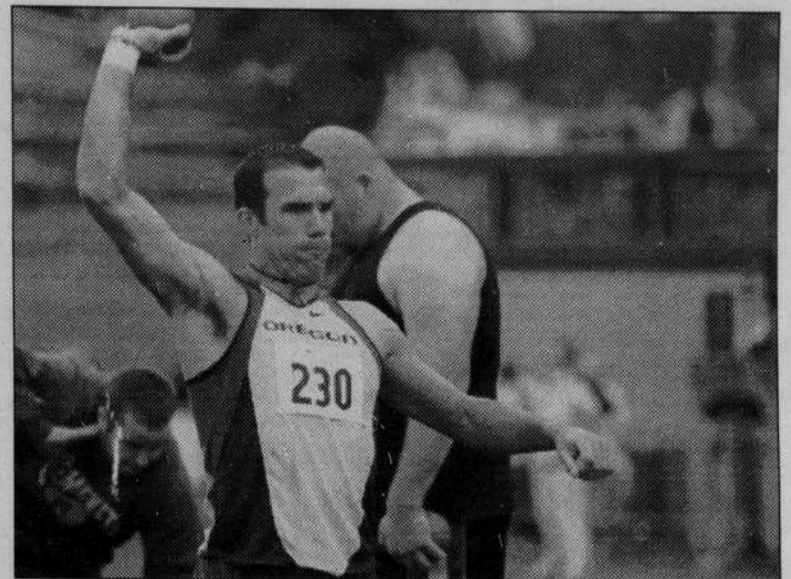
"The high jump is one of the events I've improved the most this year," Lorenzo said. "I wasn't extremely confident coming into this year. Now I have been having a great high jump year, and my confidence is soaring."

7:30 p.m. - 400 meters

"The 400 is one of the toughest events," Lorenzo said. "It takes a lot of guts. You need to be strongly prepared for it — both physically and mentally — because it's such a tough race."

Lorenzo's best mark in the 400 meters is 48.16 seconds, good enough for 898 points. The 400 meters is one lap around the track and is exactly one-quarter of a mile. It's the final event of the first day of competition.

"Even though it's only 47, 48, 49 seconds, it just goes by so fast, you can't even think," Lorenzo said.



Adam Amato Emerald

Junior Santiago Lorenzo goes after his second straight All-American performance this week in the decathlon competition. His personal best in the event is 7,726 points.

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With 16 hours between the final event of day one and the first event of day two, and nearly an hour between each event during the day, the decathlon offers track and field athletes and coaches a rare opportunity — the chance to give and take advice during competition.

"After the first day, seconds after the 400, I feel extremely relieved," Lorenzo said. "Even if I didn't do well on the first day, I'm relieved."

After an hour or so, you can see what you did, where you are in the standings, what you did right and wrong, what you're going to do.

"Then you go home, take a bath and go to bed," he said.

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"We say, 'The first day is for the athletes, the second day is for the decathletes,'" Lorenzo said. "The second day is where the decath-

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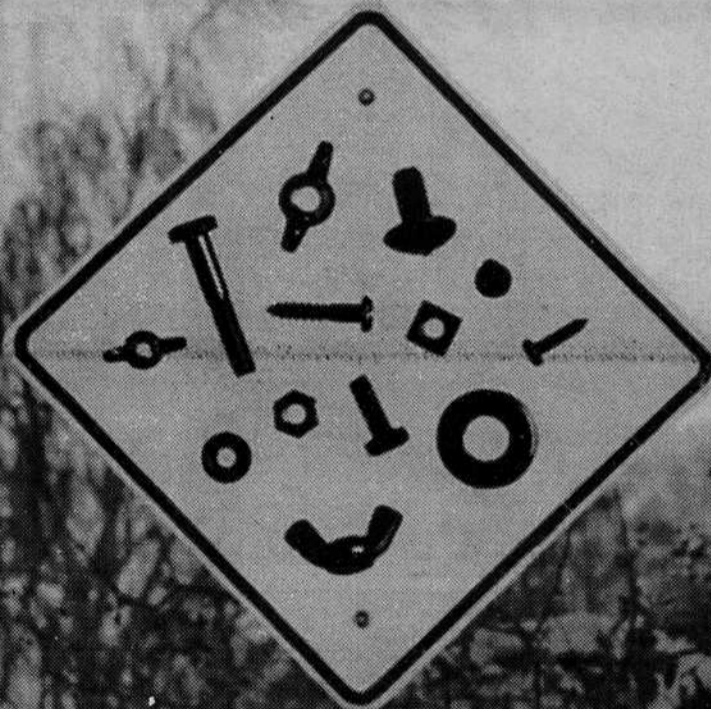
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