

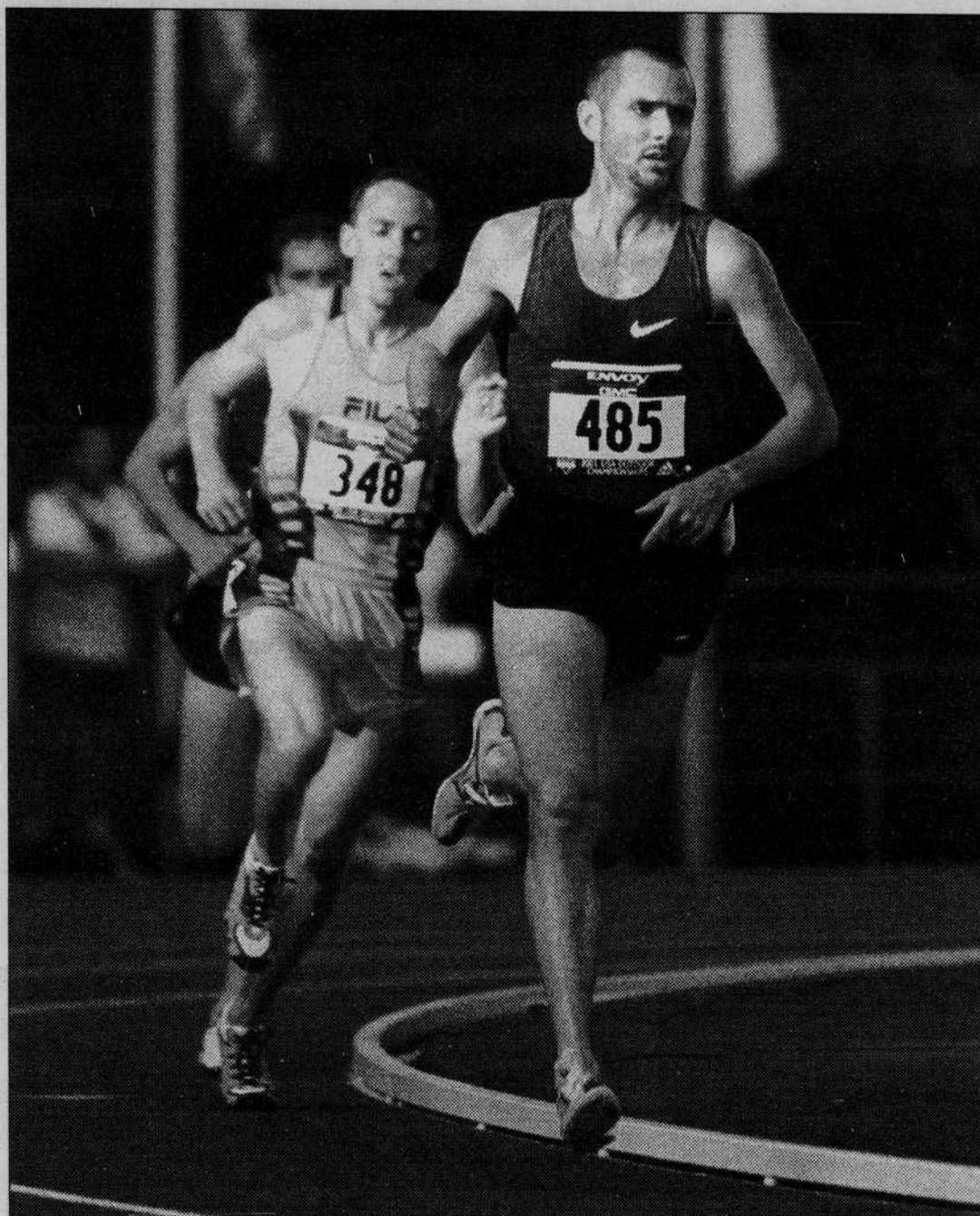
SPORTS

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Best Bet
Wimbledon, 1st and 2nd rounds
4 p.m., TNT



Tuesday, June 26, 2001



R. Ashley Smith Emerald

Bob Kennedy (above, 485) and Regina Jacobs (right) were some of the USA Championships storytellers. Jacobs won both the 800 and 1,500, while Kennedy came back from an injury suffered last season.



R. Ashley Smith Emerald

Track Town hosts story-filled meet

■ Eugene was engulfed in an exciting meet last weekend as America's track stars came to town for the U.S.A. Championships

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

There was a revolution at Hayward Field last weekend.

An American track and field revolution.

Over four days last week, hundreds of athletes — all with aspirations to make the American team for the World Championships in Canada later this summer — competed at the U.S.A. Championships. In this normally dull post-Olympic year, the Eugene crowd saw a most exciting four days of track.

"We've got a revolution on our hands, mark my words," said Gabe Jennings, Stanford's enigmatic star, after he lost a breathtaking 1,500-meter race Saturday. "This is just a preview of blowout races to come."

The revolution started Thursday, when Maurice Green ran the fastest time in the world this year in the 100-meter dash — and then quit. Green protested a decision by U.S.A. Track and Field to force athletes to compete in the U.S.A. Championships, even if the athletes already had exemptions for the

World Championships.

Some athletes protested Green's protest.

"People don't realize that if we show our faces, that's a benefit for us," said Gail Devers, who won the 100-meter hurdles. "We don't have a lot of meets in this state. We need to come out here for our fans."

"Our nationals are the biggest meet in America all year," said Marion Jones after she won the 200 by a typical large margin. "We should all want to compete here."

But Green's controversial decision to sit out the semi-finals and finals of the 100 didn't affect his running. He ran the preliminary race in 9.9 seconds, tying the meet record and smashing the Hayward Field record.

Saturday saw two hotly contested 1,500-meter races. In the men's version, Jennings squared off with this year's NCAA Champion, Bryan Berryhill, and high-school phenom Alan Webb. All three of the elite runners lost out to Andy Downin, Seneca Lassiter and Paul McMullen, the top three finishers who made the American World Championships team.

The men's 1,500 was one of a handful of races from the meet that were televised nationally. ESPN broke into Sportscenter to broadcast Saturday's race, while CBS broadcasted for an hour Sunday, and

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Duncan falls from spotlight as Greer, others take over

■ While many compelling stories grab Eugene's attention, Oscar Duncan's is one of fallen hopes

By Peter Hoffmeister
for the Emerald

A chiropractor spent an hour Thursday and another Saturday making sure that Oscar Duncan's separated shoulder was in place.

For the 26-year-old javelin thrower, the U.S.A. Championships would become a terrible disappointment.

Duncan finished 14th with a throw of 208-7 as Breaux Greer set new meet and field records with his first-place throw of 279-7. Duncan had injured his throwing shoulder only 11 days before coming to Eugene, but he said he felt it was important to come and give his best effort.

"At this level everybody has injuries, so I can't fall back on it," Duncan said, as if all the throwers were launching spears

with their shoulders out of their sockets.

Two years ago, Duncan's first trip to Eugene was a breaking-out party, taking him from the relative obscurity of a career at Idaho State to his first berth on the American national team. His return was a story of what could have been.

Even an average throw for him Saturday would have secured a top-three finish, but Duncan did not feel bitter toward those who did qualify for this year's national team.

"Those guys have been working hard all year, and they deserve it," said Duncan, his disappointment evident. "Plus, that's the way this whole year has been."

Last September, Duncan lost his mother to a long battle with cancer right at the beginning of his new training year.

"That changed things for me," Duncan said. "I used the javelin more to be

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Emeralds open season with flourish, despite mediocre record

Eugene's minor league baseball team opens the home season with a pair of losses, but fans turn out all the same

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

Old Eugene Emeralds caps were taken out of the closet across the city Sunday. The Civic Stadium stands had to be dusted off. The scoreboard was checked to make sure it was working.

The Ems opened their home season, albeit with a whimper on the field itself. The Eugene minor-league baseball club, an affiliate of the San Diego Padres, lost its home opener to the

Vancouver Canadians, 7-1.

The blowout didn't stop a large portion of the 4,886 fans from staying the entire game for various opening-day promotions and fanfare.

The Emeralds entered Sunday's home opener with a 2-3 record after an up-and-down first series with the Yakima Bears. The Ems continued their erratic ways in two home-opening losses to the Vancouver Canadians. The Ems lost Monday's game by a score of 9-8.

Ems manager Jeff Gardner was optimistic about his season, despite Eugene's 2-5 record.

"We'll win our share of games," Gardner said. "Of course I'm disappointed we didn't win, but there were a lot of good things that happened out there."

Sunday's home opener was an ominous start to the series with the Canadians. Geoff Jones, who received a no decision in his first start at Yakima, pitched four strong innings starting

for the Ems. Jones struck out eight, walked three and gave up only two runs. He left the game with the score tied 1-1.

That tie wouldn't last for long. Darwin Soto pitched two strong innings, John Herbert pitched one more, and then Juan Mejia got picked apart by the Canadians' bats. Mejia would end up walking three batters, giving up two hits and earning five runs. The Ems would not recover.

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