

Downin wins thrilling 1,500

■ Andy Downin, the 1,500's biggest underdog, beat the toughest field at the U.S.A. Championships

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

In a four-day track and field meet that was filled with compelling story lines, the men's 1,500 was filled with so many that it became a story within itself.

12-pound babies, underdogs, prep sensations, NCAA Champions, ESPN and brain power all factor into this novel.

This story started two days before the race, in Ann Arbor, Mich., when Olivia Kate McMullen was born at nine pounds and 22 inches long.

"I think she's going to be a high jumper," her father, Paul McMullen, said Saturday.

When he raced in the 1,500 Saturday, Paul still hadn't seen Olivia. He wore a pink ribbon on his chest in honor of his newborn, being careful to explain this to reporters so they wouldn't think less of him. What Paul did see was the tape at the finish line, and his surprise to learn he had finished third. Was that Gabe Jennings behind him? How did that happen?

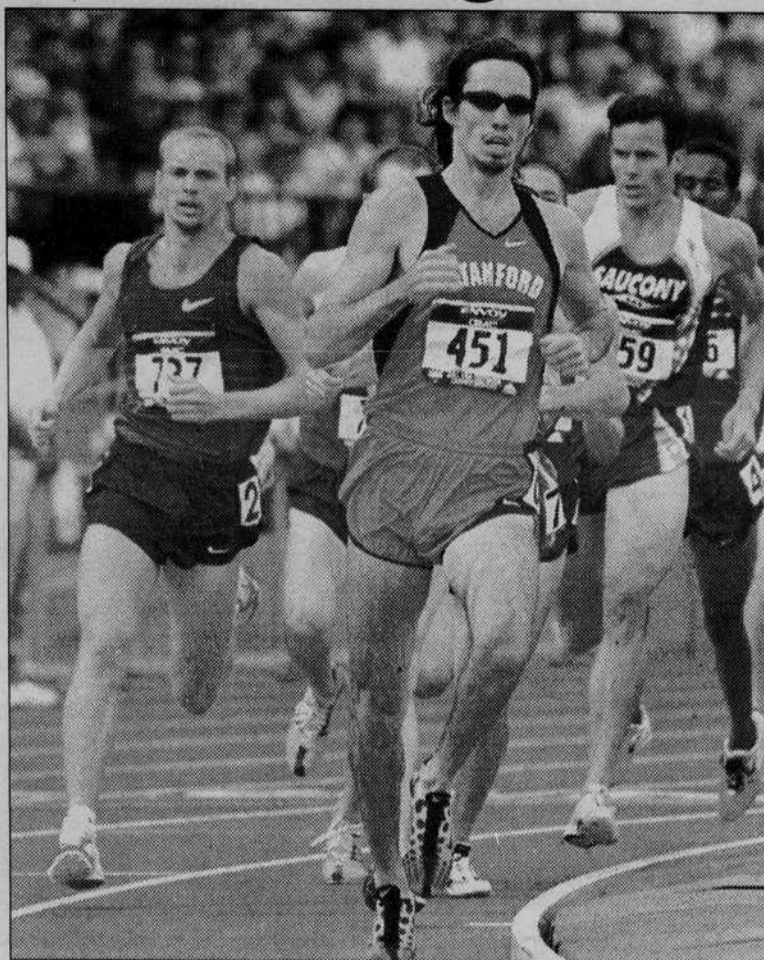
But the story gets ahead of itself.

The second part of the story comes in a hotel room in Eugene, hours before the race Saturday. That's where Andy Downin sits down with his coach to formulate a plan of attack in a race that features so many big names it's tough to fit them on one hand.

"My plan was just to race smart," Downin said. "The race plan is 80 percent of the race."

And race smart he did. When Jennings kicked with 400 meters left, when Seneca Lassiter made a move with 200 to go, when Downin trailed at just 50 meters, he never exhausted himself. He never even flinched, despite being the filly with the 86-1 odds.

The final preface to the race came minutes before the scheduled gun, when the Hayward Field announcer urged his crowd to make some noise because ESPN — yes, *the* ESPN — would televise the race live nationally.



R. Ashley Smith Emerald

Gabe Jennings (451) begins his kick with one lap left in the 1,500-meter race Saturday. Jennings, an Olympian last year, faltered with 20 meters left and lost to Andy Downin.

Then came the race itself, with all that buildup.

NCAA Champion Bryan Berryhill started fast and led for most of the race, just as he did at the NCAAs.

But Jennings, noted for his strong finishing speed, took a large lead with one lap left, perhaps remembering the NCAA race where his kick at 300 meters wasn't enough to catch Berryhill. Saturday's charge came too early for Jennings, however, as he sputtered with 20 meters left and finished fourth.

"Gabe just hit the brakes," McMullen said. "With 10 meters to go, I thought I was fourth."

Meanwhile, Downin, Lassiter and McMullen took advantage of Jennings' demise and broke the tape al-

most in unison, with Downin taking the crown. Berryhill ran an unusually slow final lap and finished seventh.

As a footnote to the race, prep sensation Alan Webb disappointed the Hayward Field crowd after stunning it a month ago at the Prefontaine Classic. He finished fifth and still ran the second-fastest high school 1,500 ever, but he spoke of his disappointment after the race.

"I set a goal for myself, and I didn't quite get it," Webb said. "I'll be back, though. I'm looking forward to more battles with these guys."

That's how this story ends. But if Webb's bold predictions are true, and if the runners have their way, it was only the first of many novels to come in American middle-distance running.

ALL YOU CAN EAT
SPAGHETTI
& garlic bread
\$3.25
Every Tuesday
PIZZA
PETE'S
2506 Willakenzie 344-0998
Oasis Plaza
2673 Willamette 484-0996
27th and Willamette

All Ways Travel
• Summer Specials •
Newark - \$258.00*
Tokyo - \$599.00*
London - \$750.00*
Sydney - \$999.00*
*tax not included, restrictions may apply. Subject to change without notice.
Eurail Passes issued On-Site!!
E-mail: awt@luv2travel.com
1200 High St.
338-4199
Student Travel Experts

RECYCLE

Is business SLOW?

Plasma donations
earn around \$175 every month.

- ✓ \$20 on 1st donation
- ✓ \$30 on 2nd donation
- ✓ \$50 for the first week
- ✓ \$5 extra for first-time donors if you bring in this ad!

Seramed Biocenter • Eugene
1 Block east of 8th and Garfield
1901 West 8th Ave., Eugene
683-9430
also at 225 B Main St. in Springfield

CASH!

HOUSE OF RECORDS

BUY & SELL NEW & USED CD'S, LP'S, & CASSETTES

258 E. 13th AVENUE EUGENE, OR 97401

This gentleman has just graduated, but the siren-like call of the House of Records could lead him astray to a degree of sound he never explored before.

Get your sound degree at
HOUSE OF RECORDS

To earn a 4.00 in Brewology all you need to know is **STEELHEAD.**

- 9 Award-Winning Micro-Brews
- Soups, Salads Ribs Fresh Pizza
- Sandwiches Pastas Burgers
- Spirits Home-Made Rootbeer

TAKE A BREW HOME IN STEELHEAD'S BOX O' BEER

Steelhead Brewing Company
199 East 5th Avenue Eugene, OR Phone 686-2739
Eugene, OR - Burlingame, CA - Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco, CA - Irvine, CA