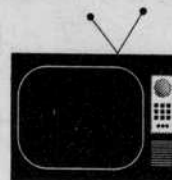


SPORTS

Sports Editor:
Adam Jude
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Best Bet
PGA: The Masters
1 p.m., USA



Thursday, April 11, 2002

Running from harm

■ Middle-distance runner Simon Kimata may be ready for a race at an NCAA title after years of injury

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

Minutes before his scheduled practice Tuesday, Oregon middle-distance runner Simon Kimata descends from the stands at Hayward Field.

With coach Steve Silvey temporarily distracted, Kimata glances both ways and makes his move, a nimble leap over the fence that betrays his left Achilles-tendon injury.

"Simon!" coach Silvey bellows. "Don't do that on a bad Achilles. Don't ever jump fences. That's the worst thing you could be doing. Use your head."

Caught.

The thing is, Kimata has been dodging injury and leaping past responsibility for most of his reign as the star 800-meter runner on the Oregon track and field squad. His times in times without injury, like his nation-leading 800 time of 1 minute, 46.65 seconds this season, paint the picture of a runner with wells of raw talent.

But chronicle his injuries, and the picture becomes complete.

As a star runner in junior college — Butler Community College in El Dorado, Kan. — he broke his shin and was forced to sit out nine months, right before he was scheduled to compete on a top-flight 4x400 relay team in Europe.

Last season he ran a 1:47.92 at the Texas Invitational to land himself on the NCAA provisional list, then pulled a hamstring in a relay in the same meet. He competed in the Pacific-10 Conference Championships, but a dismal performance there convinced him to sit out the NCAA Championships at Hayward Field. This season he's suffering a minor Achilles injury but will likely compete in the Washington Dual meet at Hayward Field this weekend.

Through all the injuries, Kimata keeps one mantra.

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Jon House Emerald

Simon Kimata is looking to compete in his first NCAA Championships later this season.

Elite Pac-10 dominates in softball

■ Oregon softball hasn't found a win in its first six conference games — thanks to its powerful Pac-10 foes

By Chris Cabot
Oregon Daily Emerald

A quick glance at the record of Oregon's softball team in the Pacific-10 Conference — 18-15 overall, 0-6 Pac-10 — and one might think that they are playing at the level of a local high school squad.

Looking at Oregon's conference record last year (1-20) would only back up that deduction. But the Ducks' record doesn't tell the full story. They just have the unfortunate distinction of playing in a conference with seven other teams ranked in the top 14 in the nation.

Holding the top three slots in the national rankings, according to the April 3 poll, are No. 1 UCLA, No. 2 Arizona and No. 3 Stanford. Rounding out the Pac-10 are No. 6 California, No. 8 Arizona State, No. 10 Washington and No. 14 Oregon State.

Within the ranks of the Pac-10 are 13 of the country's 25 finalists for the inaugural USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year Award. Included on the list are Jocelyn Forest of California — who threw a three-hit shutout against Oregon in her last outing Sunday — and three members of the Arizona team, which the Ducks will play twice this weekend.

The Wildcats (35-5 overall, 4-1 Pac-10) had their streak of 70 consecutive home victories broken in a 6-5 loss to UCLA on Sunday. The loss also broke senior Jennie Finch's 60-game winning streak. Last season, Finch was named the Pac-10 Pitcher of the Year and the Honda Award winner as the nation's most outstanding player.

Rained out

The Ducks' doubleheader against Portland State on Wednesday, a welcome break from Pac-10 play, was canceled due to rain. A makeup date has not yet been announced.

Oregon returns to action at 2 p.m. Friday against Arizona State, before they face Arizona at 2 p.m. Saturday and 1 p.m. Sunday. All the games will be held at Howe Field.

E-mail sports reporter Chris Cabot at chriscabot@dailymerald.com.

No longer an 'up-an-comer,' Malone looks to impress in javelin

■ After a stellar first season, sophomore Sarah Malone has officially arrived this year in the javelin competition in Texas

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

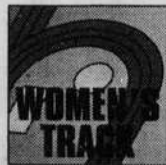
Sarah Malone, the leader of one of the nation's best javelin teams, is already having a phenomenal year.

Last season, Malone placed second in the Pacific-10 Conference Championships and seventh in the NCAA Championships. Just a freshman last year, she had great expectations for herself. "Up-and-comer" would have been the best way to describe her talent.

However, Malone is no longer an up-and-comer. She has arrived.

That was evidenced Saturday in Austin, Texas, when the Newberg native posted her best throwing series ever. She started at 166-foot-6 inches, then 171-5 and 179-1. Malone scratched on her fourth and sixth throws but still finished with a career best.

Her final mark of 179-2 was good enough to eclipse her best mark by more than five feet, yet still leaves her second in the nation. USC's Inga Stasiulionyte leads the collegiate ranks after posting a mark of 183-7 at the Stanford Invite earlier this season.



But there is solace for Malone. She is already on track to a fine season and is guaranteed a spot at this season's NCAA Championships in Baton Rouge, La.

"Normally, I have my best throws early, then go downhill, so I'm psyched to keep improving through the competition," she said after capturing first at the Clyde Littlefield Texas Relays. "That indicates I'm getting stronger and gives me confidence that I'm closing in on my goal of 180 feet."

But "I also don't like being second," she said, "and that gives me some motivation to throw farther, too."

Making Malone's feat even more impressive is



Adam Amato Emerald

Sarah Malone, seen here taking seventh in last season's NCAA Championships, has emerged as a national force for the Ducks and is on the fast track to an All-American honor.

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