

SPORTS

Best Bet
Seattle at Texas
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Oregon track enters must-win meet vs. Huskies

■ With several key injuries, the Ducks' team focus becomes more important in the annual Washington Dual this weekend

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

For the second time this outdoor season, the Oregon men's track and field team will face another team in head-to-head competition.

But for the first time this season, the team aspect will mean something.

The Ducks will take on the Huskies from Washington in the 93rd Washington Dual meet at Hayward Field on Saturday. Oregon has won 60 of the 92 meets overall, and

29 of the last 35, but the Ducks are currently reeling from injuries to stars John Stiegeler, Santiago Lorenzo and others, so this weekend's meet could be a benchmark for Oregon's young season.

"I feel like we need to win these ones in order to have confidence for later meets," Oregon middle-distance runner Ross Krempley said. "If we can't win the Washington Dual, we can't win the Pac-10s."

Krempley referred to the Pacific-10 Conference Championships, held May 18-19, where the Ducks haven't placed in the top three since

1996 and haven't finished first since 1990. The Pac-10 meet is one of two remaining scored meets after the Washington Dual, and the NCAA Championships is the second of those meets.

"It's just real different from a big invitation meet," Oregon head coach Martin Smith said after last year's Washington Dual, which the Ducks won 87-75. "It encourages every kid to be a part of the team and to contribute to the chance of the team doing well. It helps bring a team together."

Little did Smith know that a year later, his team would need that sense of team more than ever. With Stiegeler and Lorenzo not competing, and NCAA qualifier Simon Kimata limit-

ed by a minor injury, the Ducks will need to scramble for points this weekend and in future meets.

"I definitely feel like the team is pulling together, not just for this meet but for the meets coming up," Krempley said.

This weekend, Hayward Field will be all green, yellow, purple and gold. Washington finished eighth at last season's Pac-10 Championships and lost star sprinter Ja'Warren Hooker to graduation.

Most events have clear-cut favorites this weekend, and only the pole vault will feature two NCAA qualifiers. Washington junior vaulter Brad Walker is currently fifth in the nation with his best jump of 17 feet, 8 1/4 inches. Oregon's Trevor Woods

has a best height of 17-6 1/2, which was good enough to land him on the NCAA provisional list.

The pole vault competition is slated to start at 2:30 p.m. Saturday. On the track, Washington NCAA-qualifier Mike Hill will square off with Oregon's Pac-10 qualifier, Brett Holts, in the steeplechase at 1:15 p.m. to kick off the running events.

Kimata will test his injured left Achilles' tendon in the 800 at 2:55 p.m.

The first event is scheduled for 12 p.m. Saturday. The last men's field event, the discus, is scheduled for 3:20 p.m. The last track event, the 4x400 relay, is scheduled to begin at 3:50 p.m.

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a SHOT at it all

■ Mary Etter has come on as a tangible force for the Ducks this season, already placing sixth in the nation in discus

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

When Mary Etter and Mariela Guante were budding track and field stars, the two attended a camp together in 1998 in North Idaho, beginning what has turned into a friendly rivalry.

Since then, Guante has gone on to become a force at the shot put at Louisiana Tech, while Etter continually places high in the discus and shot put at Oregon. Etter even participates in the hammer throw, although her notoriety has come from the former two.

Their friendship came to a rise last week when the Texas Relays came calling. Guante edged Etter out of first place in the shot put by less than one inch.

Etter would go on to take both sections of the discus throw in Austin, but her match-up against Guante was something that she will remember for a while.

"I beat her last year, and she beat me this time," Etter said, laughing. "Her number's up. I love her, but she's going down."

If the two are to face-off again this season, it will have to be in the NCAA Championships, held in Baton Rouge, La., in May. Etter, a junior, is close, having already earned an NCAA provisional qualifying mark in both the discus and shot put, the only Oregon woman to do so in two different events this season.

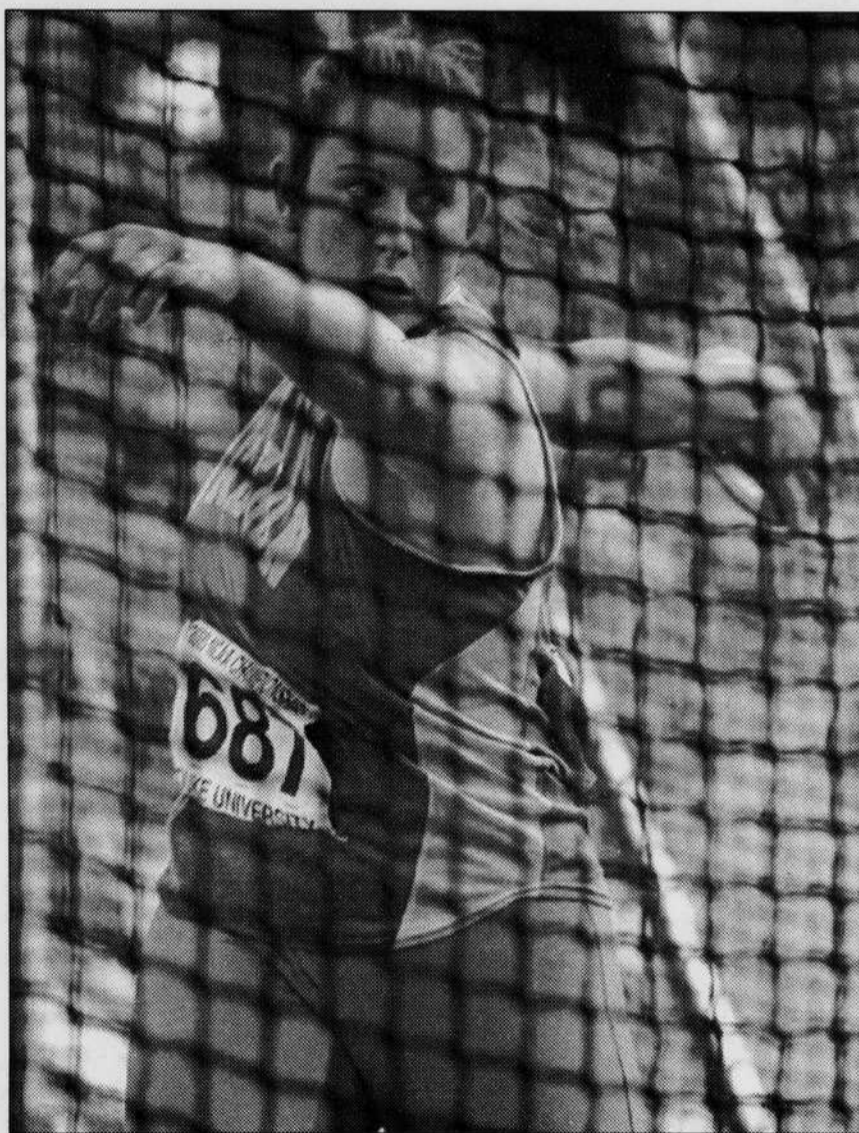
After placing 19th in last season's NCAA Championships in the discus, Etter can't wait to get back.

"Last year at nationals, I don't know what happened," she said. "I had never performed so poorly. Now that it has happened, I'm aware that I can crack under pressure."

But that doesn't mean she will. Under the intense scrutiny of the Texas Relays, Etter was stone cold, although she had to be after a tough first day.

After placing 16th in the hammer throw the previous day, Etter began her discus throws in the "B" section. Hours later, she had taken both the "A" and "B" sections. According to Texas athletic officials, other women have accomplished the

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Geoff Turner Oregon Media Services

Not just a standout in the discus, junior Mary Etter has taken steps to improve in the shot put and hammer as well. The junior has claimed two NCAA provisional marks this season.

Ducks dual with UW in Pac-10 meet

■ The Ducks participate in their only Pac-10 dual meet of the season against their Pacific Northwest rival

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

On the heels of an impressive showing at the Clyde Littlefield Texas Relays last week in Austin, Texas, the Oregon women's track and field team takes on a tough Washington squad Saturday.

And the potential for more is just at the Ducks' fingertips.

Oregon took home five first-place finishes in Texas, which included stellar marks from juniors Mary Etter and Becky Holliday, and sophomore Sarah Malone.

Malone led the field in the javelin throw, and was followed up closely by freshman Elisa Crumley and junior Charyl Weingarten. Add freshman Roslyn Lundeen — who did not make the trip to Texas due to an injury — to the mix, and Oregon is a force in the event.

"This is certainly the best group we've ever had, and maybe the best foursome any school has ever had," head coach Tom Heinonen said of his javelin squad.

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Ducks to host Arizona, ASU

■ Oregon softball continues its Pac-10 season with contests against No. 6 Arizona State and top-ranked Arizona

By Chris Cabot
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Pacific-10 Conference season marches on for the Oregon softball team as they host three games at Howe Field this weekend.

The Ducks (18-15 overall, 0-6 Pac-10) face No. 6 Arizona State (33-9, 3-2) at 2 p.m. today and then No. 1 Arizona (35-5, 4-1) at 2 p.m. Saturday and 1 p.m. Sunday.

Leading the way for the Sun Devils is third baseman Phelan Wright with a .460 batting average, six home runs, and 13 doubles. She is second on the team with 30 RBI. Shortstop Kara Brun and first base/outfielder Nichole Thompson are also batting better than .400.

Arizona State pitcher Kirsten Voak, a two-time All-American, has 881 career strikeouts — the most in school history and fifth all-time in the Pac-10. This season Voak has a record of 7-3 with a 0.95 ERA and 90 strikeouts to go along with just 10 walks.

The top-ranked Wildcats have

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Adam Amato Emerald

Second baseman Alyssa Laux and the Oregon softball team host No. 6 Arizona State and No. 1 Arizona for three games this weekend. Laux is hitting .341 with a home run, five doubles and nine RBI.