

SPORTS

Sports Editor:
Adam Jude
adamjude@dailyemerald.com

Best Bet
NBA playoffs:
Portland at L.A. Lakers
7:30 p.m., TNT



Thursday, April 25, 2002

"I don't want anything like that to happen again."
— Trevor Woods, on no heighting in the 2002 NCAA Championships

OUT of the Woods

Sophomore pole vaulter Trevor Woods has left behind last season's disappointment to reach new heights

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

Trevor Woods still has the newspaper, even though it's yellow with age and tattered, as if it's fought many weary battles with the reader.

The faded piece of newsprint is the May 31, 2001, sports section from The World, the local paper from Woods' hometown of Coos Bay. On May 30, Woods had suffered a pole vaulter's worst nightmare by no-heighting at the NCAA Championships at Hayward Field, and his hometown paper didn't mince words on the subject.

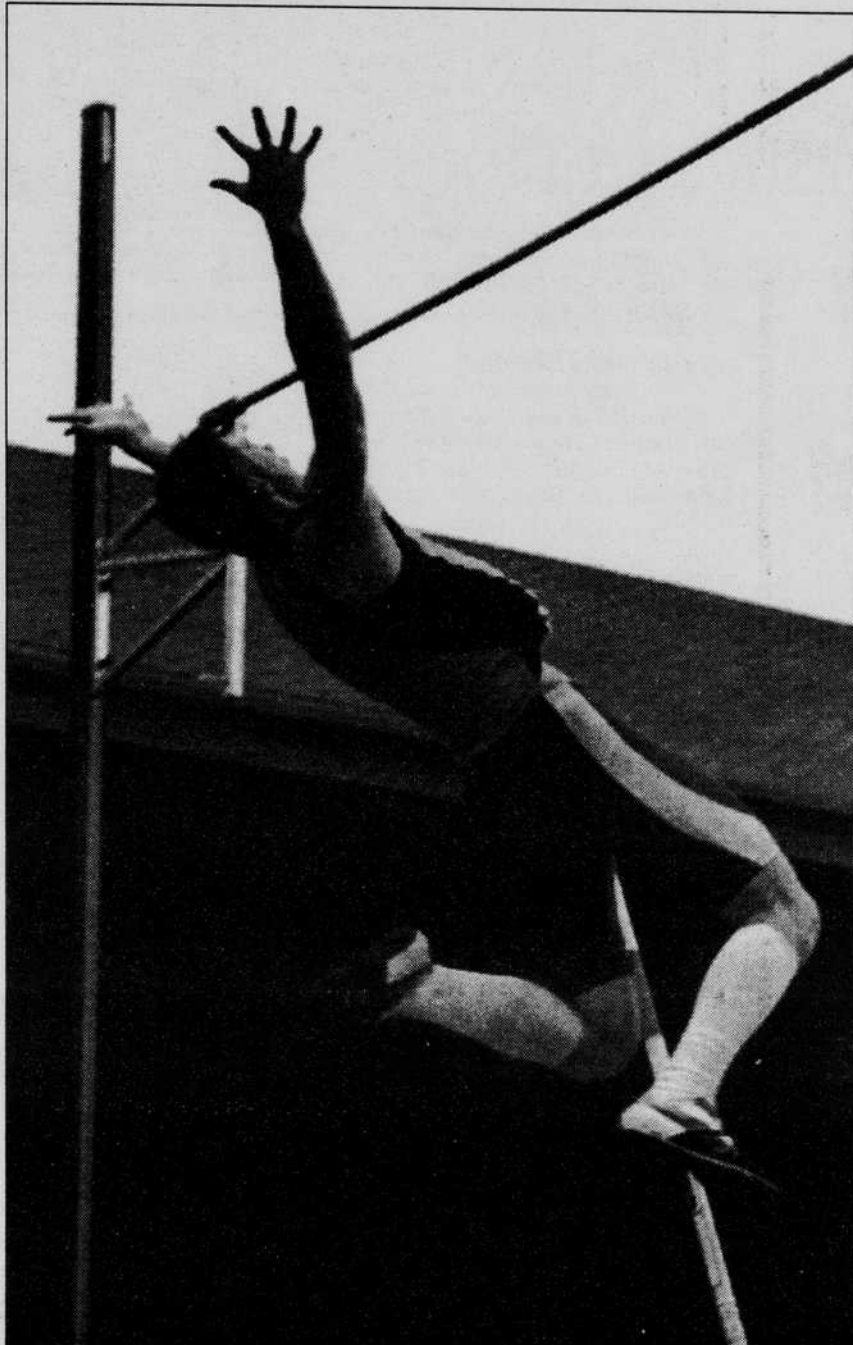
So now, Woods keeps the newspaper stuffed into the bottom of his backpack, even if a normal person might burn it.

"If I feel like I'm lacking motivation, I can pull that out,"

Woods said. "I don't want anything like that to happen again."

If Woods keeps his current torrid pace, he may never know pole-vaulting disappointment again. He recently vaulted 18 feet for the first time at the Washington Dual and the jump proved that Woods, one of the most heavily-recruited athletes out of Oregon two years ago, is only getting stronger.

Turn to Woods, page 16



Adam Jones Emerald

Sophomore pole vaulter Trevor Woods, a Coos Bay native, celebrates after clearing 18 feet at the Washington Dual on April 13. Woods had improved by 16 inches since his senior year in high school.

Duck softball sweeps PSU in two games

■ Oregon softball takes two off Portland State
— the Ducks have won three of their last four games

By Chris Cabot
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon softball team is back on the winning track. In a Wednesday afternoon doubleheader against Portland State, the Ducks won the first game 7-1, before edging the Vikings 4-2 in the second. Oregon's record improves to 20-22 overall (0-12 Pacific-10 Conference), while Portland State falls to 17-26 overall (6-8 Western Athletic Conference).



"It was nice to see the Ducks battle today and come out on top," head coach Brent Rincon said.

With the game tied 2-2 heading into the bottom of the sixth, Oregon's Kristi Hall hit a deep fly ball to right field that Portland State's Monica Martell dropped, allowing Hall to reach second. After Ashley Richards struck out for the Ducks' second out, right fielder Rachel Tommasini ripped a line drive for the game winning RBI. Center fielder Amber Hutchison added an insurance run for Oregon as she followed with an RBI triple that scored Tommasini.

Portland State made a bid at a two-out seventh-inning rally with two consecutive infield hits, but Oregon escaped the scare when Tommasini made a diving snag of a ball off the bat of Portland State pinch hitter Rose Rutledge that was twisting down the right field line.

Although Connie McMurren gave up 10 hits to the Vikings, she managed to escape a few dangerous situations, including bases loaded jams in the second and fifth innings. McMurren threw all seven innings, allowing one walk to go along with five strike outs.

Offensively in Game 2, Oregon received an outstanding output from the bottom of its line up. Hutchison was 3-for-3 with three RBIs and a run scored, and Tommasini hit 2-for-2 with an RBI and two runs scored.

Freshman Mari Lyn Petrick may have had the best of

Turn to Softball, page 16

'Mr. Consistency' takes UO into Pac-10s

■ Senior Aaron Byers has been solid at No. 1 for the Ducks as they chase a Pac-10 title

By Jesse Thomas
for the Emerald

When senior Aaron Byers began hitting the plastic whiffle balls with plastic clubs in his backyard almost 18 years ago, he never thought he would be the top golfer for a Pacific-10 Conference team.

Today, Byers leads the Oregon men's golf team as it begins its quest for a Pac-10 title.

At the age of 6, Byers had his father to teach him the game of golf — and it just seemed to come naturally.

"He is very blessed with a great deal of natural talent," Oregon head coach Steve Nosler said. "His swing is about as natural as anyone I have ever had the pleasure of coaching."

The success Byers has had throughout his career began at West Albany High. In 1997 he was the Oregon prep champion for West Albany and was named the Player of the Year by The Statesman Journal in Salem.

After spending a year at a junior college in Texas, Byers was heavily recruited to play at Oregon and had no problem making the commitment because he said this is where he always wanted to be.

"I've always wanted to play golf at a high level," Byers said. "It has been the best playing Pac-10 golf

and for coach Nosler."

Someone who knows Byers as well as anyone is fellow teammate junior Chris Carnahan. The two have played together since they were eight years old and were teammates at Albany High.

"It's pretty special," Carnahan said. "He is Mr. Consistency. He gets the job done day in and day out."

Consistency and getting the job done is what it has taken for Byers to become Oregon's No. 1 player. His career statistics include an average drive of 290 yards and a career-best 66 at the Duck Invitational last year. Just about the only thing he hasn't done is win a tournament as an individual.

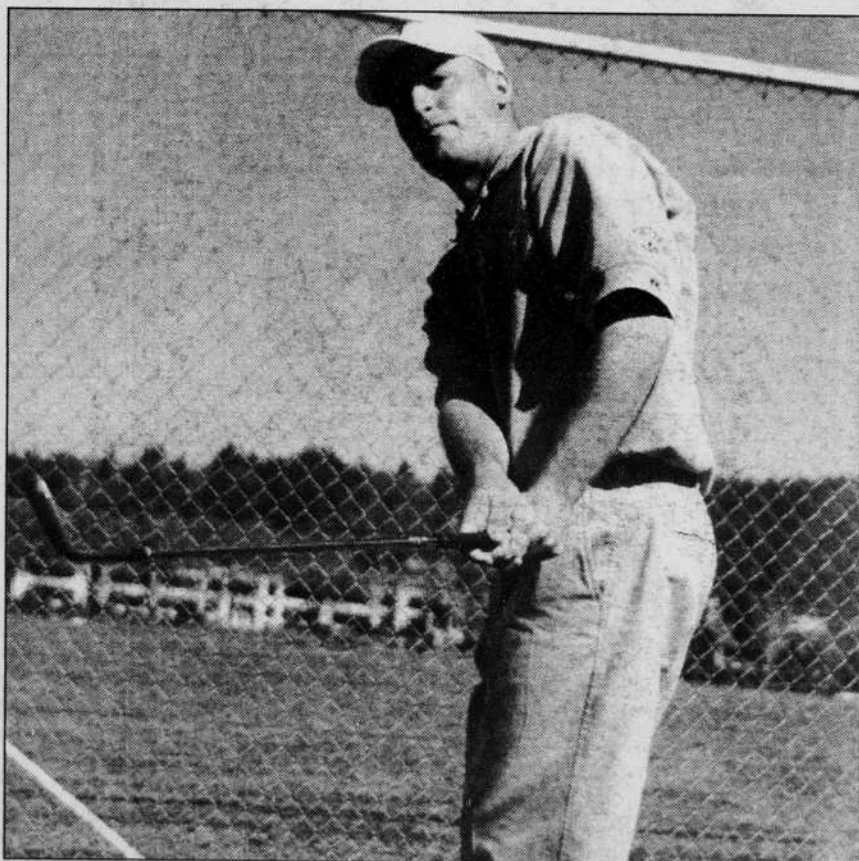
"I wish that I would have won one individual (title)," Byers said. "But when we have been successful as a team, that is my biggest thrill."

Time is running out for Byers with only Pac-10s, regionals and possibly nationals to win an individual title. But there is always the chance to compete professionally.

Byers plans to make a decision at the end of the summer as to whether he will tryout for the PGA Tour, but he said the decision will not be an easy one.

"I realize its going to take a lot of heart and determination," Byers said. "But I can see myself doing it."

Turn to Golf, page 14



Jonathan House Emerald

Senior Aaron Byers, Oregon's No. 1 golfer, heads toward his hometown of Albany as the Ducks start the Pac-10 Championships today in Corvallis.