



Friday, May 10, 2002

A Hayward Holliday



HOLLIDAY

Through tough times, Becky Holliday has maintained her composure and has been a force for the Ducks

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

In late April, Tom Jordan, meet director for the Prefontaine Classic Grand Prix, announced that only pole vaulters who had cleared a height of 15-feet would be eligible to compete in this season's meet.

Except, of course, for Becky Holliday, because of her local status.

Two weeks after Jordan's announcement, Holliday, a diminutive yet talented pole vaulter for the Ducks, is stuck with a decision.

Should she vault at the meet even though it is just a few days before the NCAA Championships in Baton Rouge, La., or take that Sunday off to prepare?

The decision may be a bit more complex than that, but that doesn't mean she isn't giving it a serious thought.

"That's the world's best coming to Hayward Field, and it's my home field," she said. "Last year, when the Prefontaine came, I almost got into it. That just amazed me. If I got a chance to do it this year, I think I would want to. I think it would be the best thing for me."

It wasn't always going to be that way for the junior from Sparks, Nev.

Holliday starred at Reed High, claiming the Nevada state prep title as a senior and finishing fourth the year before that. That earned her a trip to Mt. Hood Community College in Gresham.

However, Holliday would never com-

pete for the school, citing problems with the coach at the time. She decided to transfer in December.

"When I went there, the coach said a number of things he was going to do but didn't go through with them," she said. "Come December, it was either transfer or go home. I took that year off, worked, and took it as my redshirt year. It was just a bad decision on my part."

Holliday was lucky though, at the time, to find Rick Baggett. The pole vaulting coach at Clackamas Community College in Oregon City, Baggett had once coached Holliday's high school coach, Todd Freitag, as well as current Oregon volunteer coach Mark Vanderville.

In two years at Clackamas, Holliday set a personal record of 14-4, was second best last season among collegians and participated at the World University Games in Beijing, China.

All of her accomplishments came during a tough and unstable time in her life.

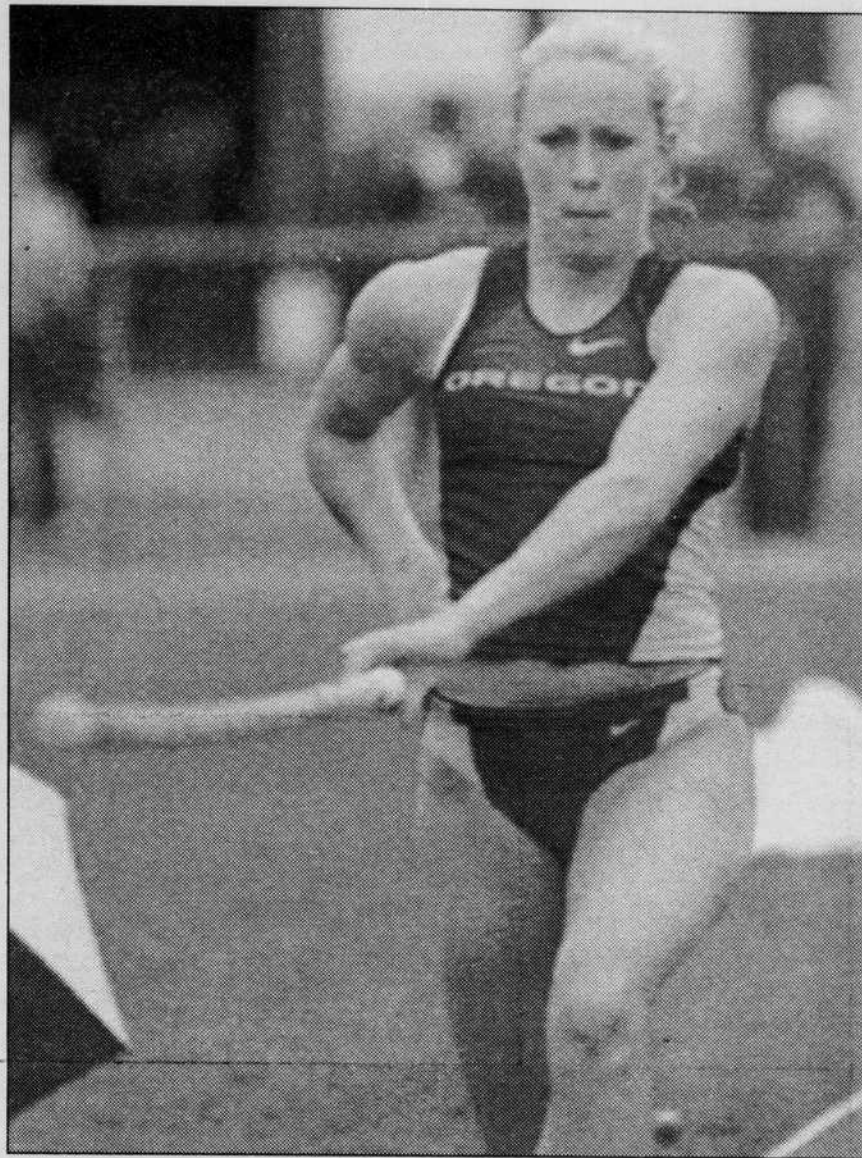
"I saw her through some very formidable years, and she was willing and able to make that progression," Baggett said.

Now came the hard part. Georgia, UCLA, Arizona and Nebraska all came calling, hoping to get the vaulter to attend school. Holliday had a made an impression on some of the nation's best track and field programs.

But there was also Oregon. The Ducks suffered through a 60th place finish last season at the NCAA Championships but were on the rise.

Besides, if Holliday was to choose the in-state school, it would offer her a chance to vault at prestigious Hayward, as well as opportunity to stay

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Adam Amato Emerald

Junior Becky Holliday, in her first season as an Oregon pole vaulter, has already broken the school record with a mark of 14-1.25, but she has a goal of clearing 15-feet.

"I saw her through some very formidable years."

Rick Baggett
Pole vaulting coach at Clackamas Community College

Oregon Twilight not quite a highlight for many Duck athletes

Several Ducks will not compete in the Twilight, but prepare for the Pac-10 Championships instead

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

For most of the athletes on Oregon's track teams, the Oregon Twilight meet, held Saturday evening at Hayward Field, will be a chance to get ready.

With the Pacific-10 Conference meet looming on May 18, and some decathletes and heptath-

letes already starting competition in the conference finale, every move is made with the postseason in mind.

"Our whole mission, from the beginning of the year, has been working toward the goal of a Pac-10 championship," Duck hurdler Terry Ellis said. "Everything you do is working toward that goal."

Ellis is one of many Oregon runners, on both the men's and women's squads, who will sit out Saturday's meet. Ellis is rehabilitating his leg, but many of the runners will sit out just to preserve energy for the big meet

next weekend.

The sprinters "usually don't compete in the Twilight, it's more for the people out in the field who want to improve their marks," Ellis said. "You won't find too many runners out there."

So the focus of Saturday's Twilight will be on runners trying to break the Pac-10 time barrier, field athletes searching for improved marks and the post-collegiate talent that will be on hand to entertain the Hayward Field crowd.

The Twilight is usually highlighted by the Bill McChesney

Memorial Mile, but that event was moved to the Oregon Invitational this year.

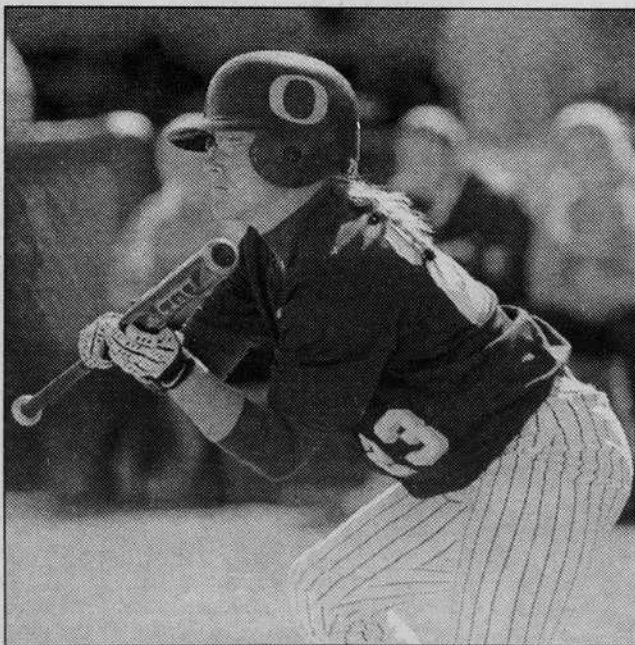
Instead, post-collegiate women will headline, as former Duck Lisa Nye will return to Hayward Field for the first time since winning the steeplechase at the USA Championships last summer. She set a then-American record in the event by running 9:49.91. The field in Saturday's steeplechase also includes the third, ninth and 11th-place finishers from last year's USA Championships. The steeplechase is scheduled to start at 8 p.m.

For many of the Oregon athletes, though, the meet represents a chance to finally qualify for the Pac-10s.

"This might be a meet for some of the athletes to get ready who might not be ready for Pac-10s," Oregon sprinter Samie Parker said.

Several Duck athletes, including Allan Amundson in the men's 100 meters, Aaron Fonder in the high jump, Amanda Brown in the women's long jump and Mary Etter in the hammer, have chances to make the Pac-10 meet.

Saturday's meet will start at 4:30
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Adam Amato Emerald

Senior Kristi Hall, who is hitting .231 with seven doubles and two homers this season, will probably play her last collegiate game this weekend. Connie McMurren will also close out her career with Oregon this year.

Ducks close out season on road

Oregon softball heads south to face No. 5 California and No. 8 Stanford in its final three contests of the season

By Chris Cabot
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon softball team will close out its season this weekend with a three-game set in California. The Ducks (23-28 overall, 1-17 Pacific-10 Conference) will face No. 5 California (45-19, 9-9) on Friday at 2 p.m. and then No. 8 Stanford (40-16, 5-13) in a doubleheader on Saturday beginning at 1 p.m.

Since its win over then-No. 5 Arizona State, Oregon has lost its last four Pac-10 games

— falling 6-0 to Arizona State, 2-1 to UCLA and 6-2 and 8-0 to Washington.

After the blanking at the hands of the Huskies on Sunday, Oregon head coach Brent Rincon was upset with his team's passion and said it lacked production.

"We will get it back before next weekend," Rincon said. "We are going to continue to compete and go to Cal and Stanford and get some victories."

Only two of Oregon's hitters with more than 10 at-bats are hitting over .300 — Alyssa Laux at .329 and Andrea Vidlund at .319. Stanford's Jessica Mendoza (.386), Sarah Beeson (.384) and Kira Ching (.333) are leading the

way offensively for the Cardinal, while four California hitters are hitting better than .300. First baseman Veronica Nelson's .349 and nine home runs is tops for the Bears. She is followed by Kaleo Eldredge (.317) and Courtney Scott and Candace Harper, who both are hitting .316.

The three-game weekend will likely be the last collegiate games for Oregon seniors Connie McMurren and Kristi Hall. McMurren, who will finish her career high in the Oregon record books in many pitching categories, has an 8-11 record this year with a 3.42 earned run average. Hall has hit for a .231 average this season with 13 RBI,

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