

SPORTS

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Best Bet
NHL playoffs:
Toronto vs. Carolina
4 p.m., ESPN



Tuesday, May 28, 2002

The 28th Prefontaine Classic

Throwers steal show from 'El G'

■ Hicham El Guerrouj, the world record-holder in the mile, can't improve his mark as Hayward Field turns into 'shot put town'

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

For one day, at least, Track Town deserved another title.

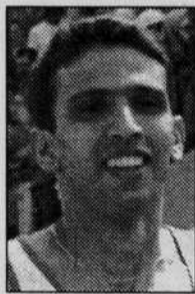
"This is Shot Put Town right now," thrower Kevin Toth said. "It's not Track Town any more."

Even headliners like Hicham El Guerrouj, Tim Montgomery and Allen Johnson couldn't match the excitement generated by the shot putters at the 28th Prefontaine Classic on Sunday at Hayward Field.

El Guerrouj, hoping to break his own world mile record, couldn't match his time from the 2001 Pre Classic. Sprinters Montgomery and Johnson didn't come close to the Pre Classic records in the 100 and 110 hurdles, respectively.

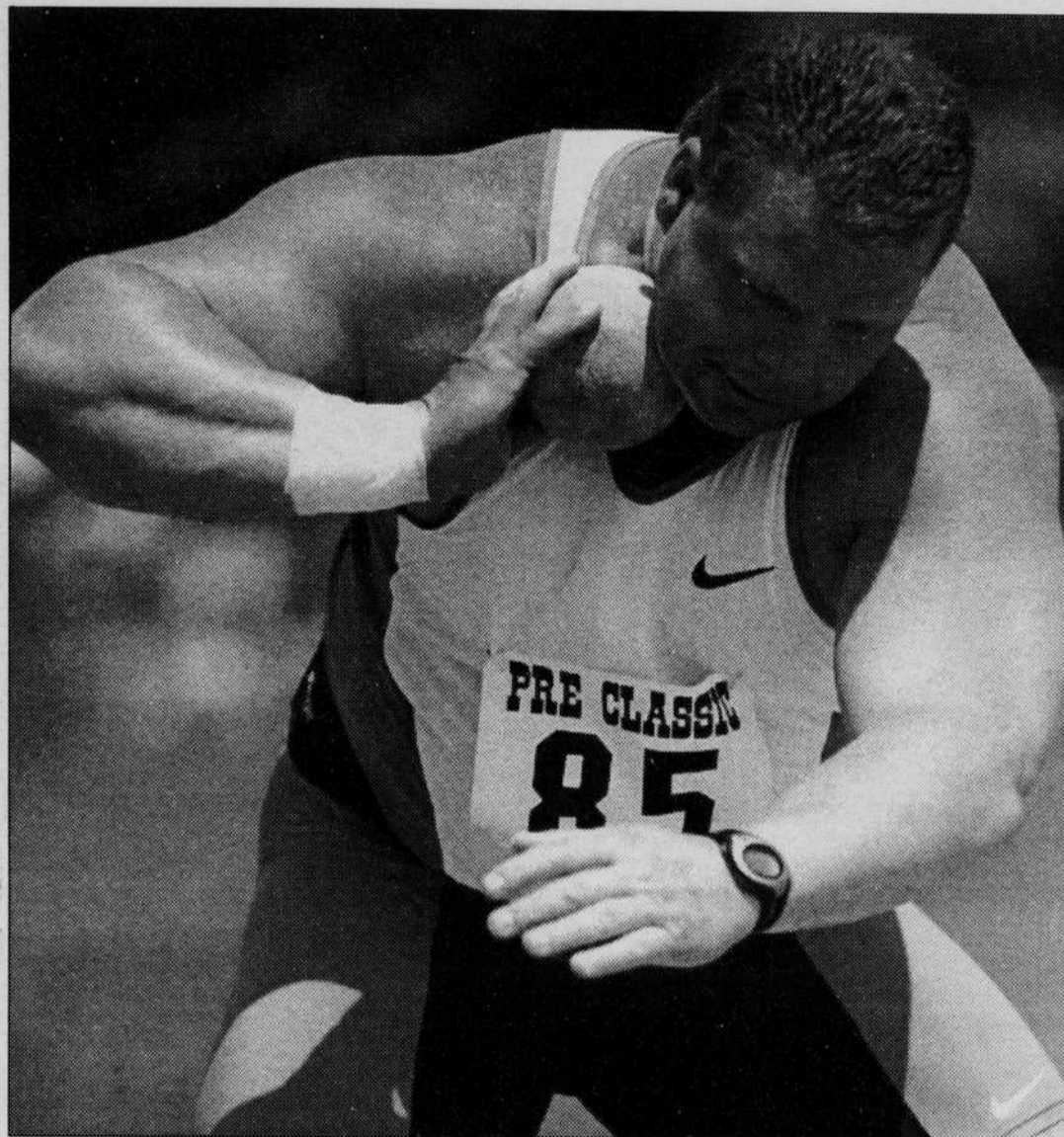
But the shot putters provided enough thrills for the overflow crowd of 11,227. For the first time ever, three Americans went over 71 feet in the same meet, and the longest throw — Toth's — came

Turn to Men's, page 12



EL GUERROUJ

Toth hits shot heard 'round the world



Jonathan House Emerald

Kevin Toth took home the win at the Prefontaine Classic on Sunday along with the event and Hayward Field records.

■ Kevin Toth wins the shot put on Sunday as three American athletes throw over 71 feet, the first time in the same competition

By Chris Cabot
Oregon Daily Emerald

Above the roar of the 11,227 Hayward Field faithful, the microphones around the stadium resonated with the words "the greatest shot put competition ever in America."

For the first time ever, three Americans threw the 16-pound shot over 71 feet in the same competition.

Kevin Toth, 34, won the Prefontaine Classic with a throw of 72 feet, 9 3/4 inches, breaking the previous Pre Classic record (70-07.50) and the Hayward Field record of 72-03.

The Hayward record was set in 1999 by John Godina, who finished Sunday's Classic in third place with a throw of 71-10 3/4. Adam Nelson placed second with a throw of 72-00.25.

"We're becoming a marquee event — let's keep it that way," Toth said. "We can entertain as well as anybody, if not better because we're bigger."

Nelson, who won a silver medal in the 2000 Olympics in Sydney and a gold the next year at the Goodwill Games, thrilled the Hayward crowd with his energetic pre-throw routine that involved walking in two complete circles, pausing on the right foul line of the shot put field and then stomping down the line toward the throwing circle while throwing off his warmup shirt.

"I was very pleased with my Turn to Shot put, page 10

American women shine in Classic

■ The women of the Pre Classic set records and provide excitement for the Hayward crowd

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

Nicole Teter started it, Gail Devers, Marla Runyan and Stacy Dragila continued it and Marion Jones capped it off.

It was a day of records and upsets on Sunday at the 28th Prefontaine Classic Grand Prix, held at Hayward Field. And each one of the eight winners in the women's events seemed to have a specific thought in mind.

"It's always fun to come back to Hayward and set a record, especially with the crowds cheering you on," Dragila said from beneath the Hayward Field scoreboard, flanked by scores of fans.

Save for Teter, the three Americans set some form of a record Sunday, with Dragila upping her Hayward Field record to 15 feet, 05 and 3/4 inches, and Jones running the fastest 100 in the world this year with a time of 10.90.

Devers even set a little record of her own. Wanting to come in and run the fastest time ever by an American in the 100 hurdles, the former UCLA star did just

that. Only it didn't count.

Devers, who already holds the record with a time of 12.33, earned a time of 12.29. However, because the wind reading was marked at 2.7 meters per second — 0.7 more than the limit — the record will not stand.

That didn't discourage the 11,227 in attendance from roaring with applause when it was announced that Devers had run the fastest time in American history under any condition.

"That was great," Devers said of her first hurdles race of the year. "I had no idea of what the time was."

Wisdom gave way to youth after Devers left the Hayward track and American star Jones lit up the Oregon track, leaving the crowd in awe.

Despite two false starts in the event — one of which was credited to the Los Angeles native — Jones won her seventh career event in as many tries at the Prefontaine, running the fastest 100 in the event's history.

"It felt good," she said. "The

false start flustered me a bit; 10.90 with a bad start — I'll take that here."

Ending the day as the ultimate record holder, Dragila, who owns the world and Prefontaine records in the pole vault, showed the audience what persistence really was.

After missing her first two attempts at a height of 15-05 3/4, Dragila seemingly stepped it up and cleared the record height. Then it was all about breaking her own record, this time going for the best in the world.

Dragila couldn't quite get over 15-9 3/4, hitting the bar in all three attempts, but nevertheless was happy with her day under the golden Oregon sun.

"I felt like I was running good," she said. "Maybe the world record wasn't there, but being confident on different poles was good for me."

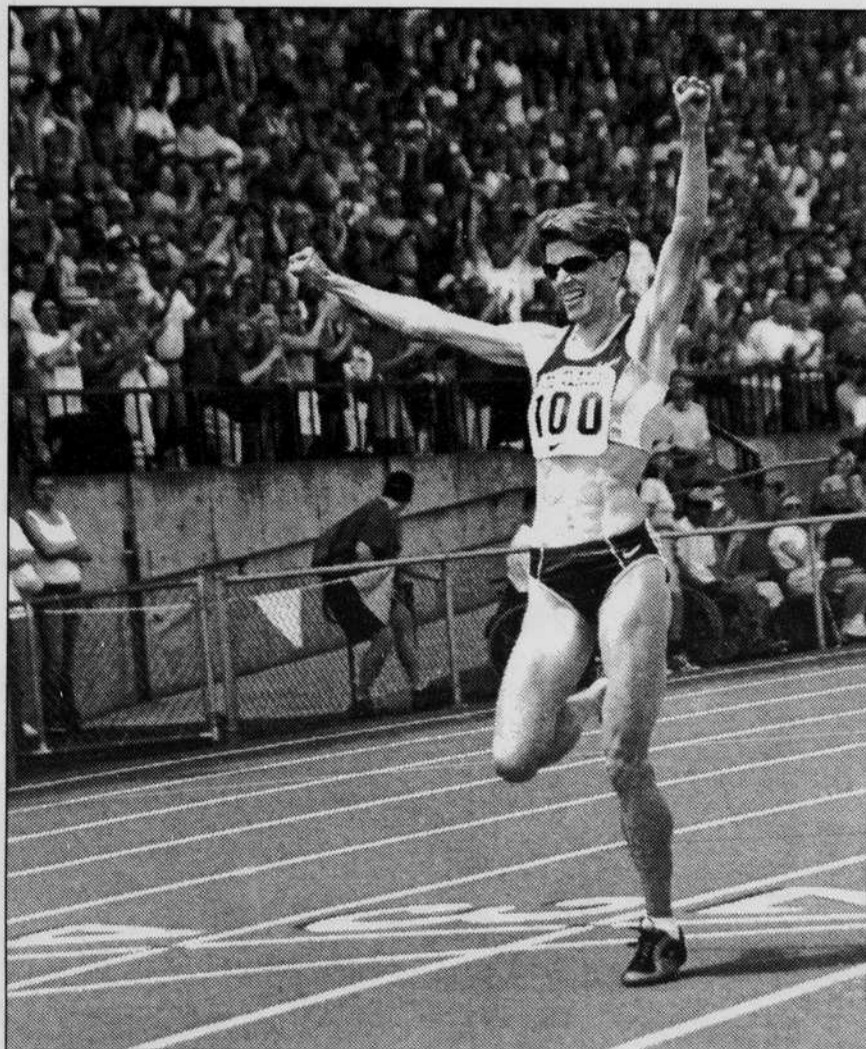
In what may have seemed like the undercard to a title boxing match, the women's 400 and 1,500 flew under the radar of the Eugene crowd.

Michelle Collins, the odds-on favorite to win the 400, did so by three-tenths of a second with a time of 50.87, but the real story from the event was high schooler Sanya Richards.

The Jamaican native, who now



JONES



Thomas Patterson Emerald

Marla Runyan of Eugene barely missed the Prefontaine Classic record in the women's 3,000. She finished in 8:39.33, only 0.03 seconds slower than the meet record.