

Sports brief

Bibby's shot
sinks Lakers' stars

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The conventional wisdom in the NBA dictates stars win championships. Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Larry Bird, Isiah Thomas, Shaquille O'Neal.

And only stars beat other stars. The Lakers have the stars in O'Neal and Kobe Bryant. The Kings, though they have Chris

Webber, rely more on their talent constellation, with six players averaging in double figures in the playoffs.

"They have the two greatest players around," Kings center Vlade Divac said. "But we know overall we are a better team."

The theorem was tested again Tuesday, and Sacramento's hunch took the 92-91 victory. Mike Bibby knocked down the winning shot with 11.4 seconds left after a pick from Webber freed him. Webber scored 29 points.

The Kings lead the Western Conference finals 3-2 with the possible series-clinching Game 6 in Los Angeles on Friday.

Bryant scored 30, but his shot bounced off the rim at the end of the game. O'Neal, who scored 28 points, fouled out with 3:22 remaining.

The Lakers came into Game 5 emboldened by their good fortune more than their play after Robert Horry's winning basket Sunday.

— Sam Smith
Knight Ridder Newspapers

Kriz

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"I had the application for Oregon and the application for Southern sitting next to each other on the table," Adam said. "I thought Oregon represented the best of the best. Southern Oregon was not the best of the best, but I had a pretty good shot at getting a scholarship there. Then I remember I heard this song, and it was 'Bittersweet Symphony,' and I went 'Yep, I'm going to Oregon.' That decided it for some reason."

Bittersweet, indeed, that Rachael ended up in Eugene because of sheer love, and Adam ended up here because of sheer luck. But in their own ways, the brother and sister became true Ducks.

Adam, of course, ended up making the team as a hammer thrower, despite his small size. He took a redshirt year to beef up, worked on technique and soon built his status as a top thrower in the program.

In his first season focusing solely on the hammer — though he's continued to "mess around," as he called it, in the shot put and discus — Adam took eighth at the

Pac-10 meet. As a sophomore, he took fourth.

This year he won it.

"It's been incredible to watch Adam (improve)," Rachael said. "I'd love to walk in that guy's footsteps."

Rachael has also improved in her two years here, in small ways. She capped a disappointing freshman season with an 11th-place finish at the Pac-10s. She flirted with her personal best of 5 feet, 7 and 1/4 inches several times throughout the season, but never hit the big height.

She experienced similar frustration through much of this season, missing again and again at the big heights. Then, toward the end of the year, she went back to her high school roots, messed around, had fun. At the Oregon Twilight meet, she threw the javelin just for kicks. She went to the Pac-10s the next week and, not coincidentally, hit a new personal best in the high jump at 5-7 1/2.

"Doing one event was killing me," Rachael said. "I need to be doing more than just one thing. The javelin is such a fun event for me. I miss those events where I can go 100 percent on each one and know that I'm not going to have to save anything for later on."

For Rachael, it seems, walking in

her brother's footsteps may not be so difficult after all.

Adam has come a long way since his days as a freshman, when he said he was afraid of not making the Duck squad. Today he stands proud at the NCAA Championships, where he said he will be more relaxed than ever.

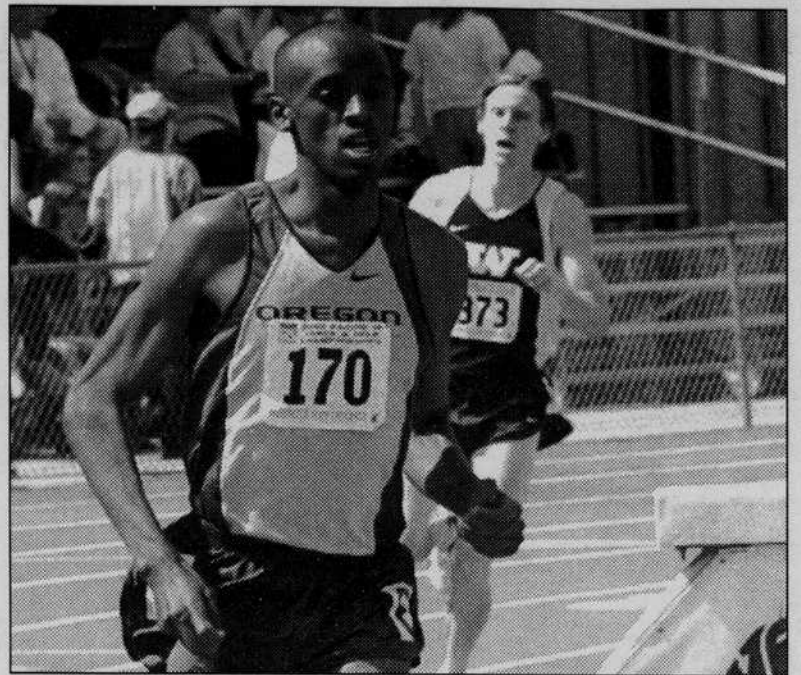
"This is gravy from here on out," Adam said. "There's nothing to worry about. At Pac-10s there was a lot pressure on me. If we stood a chance of getting a team title I needed to start off with that 10 points. This week there's no pressure. I'm ranked 13th. Nothing's expected of me. I can just sit back and try to get a big mark."

Adam won't have Rachael to holler at him in Baton Rouge, she's staying home for a cousin's wedding this weekend.

It's fitting that Rachael will miss Adam's performance for another family member, though she said "Adam knows" the entire Kriz family will be willing him to do well.

Fitting. And perhaps even bittersweet.

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Courtesy Washington State Media Services

Simon Kimata, seen here during his win in the Pac-10 800, runs today at the NCAA's.

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can score points, the Ducks could end up in the top 10 for the second year in a row. It took 27 points to propel Oregon to ninth last year.

Judging solely from national rankings, the Ducks would score only eight points this year, which would have earned them 29th at the national meet last season. But the Oregon athletes busted predictability last year and at the Pac-10s this year, and at least a few Ducks are talking about doing it again.

"If things go well, I'm looking to score a lot more (decathlon points) than Pac-10s," Pappas said. "I'm not going into nationals expecting to win. There are a lot of good guys there. But I'm trying to do the best for myself."

Harris, too, echoed the sentiments that anything can happen at the NCAA's.

"The guys are running the top times in the country, so everybody's good," Harris said. "All bets are off. If you're the first one or the last one to qualify — if you're not on your 'A' game — it's going to be

tough to win."

The senior hurdler is one of four in the group of seven with NCAA experience. Last year, Harris surprised the field by making the semi-final heat in the 110 hurdles. This year he wants to surprise the field by making the finals, where only eight athletes compete, so he would automatically score points.

"I want to get further than last year," Harris said. "I want to improve."

Pappas and Hartmann are the only two returning athletes who scored in the NCAA meet last season. Pappas finished eighth in the decathlon, while Hartmann finished third in the 10,000-meter race.

Woods joins Harris in looking to avenge last year's loss. Woods no-heighted despite high expectations heading in, and this year enters with even higher expectations after he broke the fabled 18-foot barrier earlier this season.

But whatever happens, one thing is sure: The NCAA Championships won't be predictable.

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Oregon's participation at the championships beginning Thursday at 1 p.m.

Malone, a sophomore, finished seventh in the 2001 version, held at Hayward Field, while Crumley and Lundeen, the two newest additions to Oregon's NCAA contingent, are looking to get their feet wet in Louisiana.

Ending Oregon's weekend down in the South, junior Mary Etter will make her third appearance at the NCAA's in the discus on Friday.

Holliday, a junior transfer from Clackamas Community College, follows up a third-place finish in the Pacific-10 Conference Championships a week ago with her first NCAA appearance.

However, it should be familiar territory for the pole vaulter.

Fellow Pac-10 athletes, Arizona's Amy Linnen and UCLA's Tracy O'Hara, will be accompanying Holliday to the Championships, with O'Hara ranked first in the nation and Linnen second.

"It's between the three of us," Holliday said, "the top three in the Pac-10. I just have to go out there and have a good day, and I know if I PR, I'll take the title."

At the Pac-10 Championships, Holliday finished a disappointing third, especially considering her personal best is 14-4, set in 2001 while competing for Clackamas.

It was even more disappointing for the Sparks, Nev., native though, because Linnen, a sophomore took first. O'Hara and Holliday have a friendly history of competing against one another, and for O'Hara, the NCAA Championships will be her last competition in a UCLA uniform.

Suffice to say, if Holliday fails to claim first, she will be rooting for O'Hara.

"It's her senior year, and we're really good friends," Holliday said of O'Hara. "I'd rather see her get first. She said she'd rather see me get first than Amy, too. We don't want a sophomore coming up and beating us."

The Championships will be a culmination of sorts for Holliday, at least for the collegiate season. In what she has described as a tough season, especially with becoming acclimated to the Oregon squad, Holliday is a favorite to start the Ducks off on the right foot.

Oregon finished with two points in 2001. If Holliday can place in the top three as expected, it will give Oregon at least six points after one day, which would have placed the Ducks at No. 37 this past season.

"Toward the end of the season, I'm getting closer to the heights I've wanted," Holliday said. "I'm definitely peaking right now."

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