

SPORTS

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NCAA Championships

Harris earns All-America honors; UO men 35th

■ LSU becomes the first team since Oregon in 1984 to win the NCAA track championship on its own oval

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

It only takes two to tango at the nation's best track meet, and the Ducks found that out the hard way Saturday.

This past season, the Oregon men's track and field team got 20 points from two athletes and finished ninth at the NCAA Championships. This season, both those athletes — decathlete Santiago Lorenzo and javelin thrower John Stiegeler — missed the meet with injuries, and the Ducks scored seven points to finish 35th.

Louisiana State won the NCAA title on its own track. The Tigers scored 64 points, edging second-place Tennessee by seven points. Southern Methodist was third with 42 points.

Only two Oregon athletes of the seven Ducks who made the trip to Baton Rouge, La., scored points at the national meet. One of those athletes was senior Micah Harris, who finished seventh in the 110 hurdles race Saturday.

"I felt relaxed coming in, and everything went pretty well technique-wise," Harris said. "I would have loved to finish higher, but (the other hurdlers) showed how good they were."

Harris got to the finals after two close heats on Thursday and Friday. In Thursday's quarterfinal, Harris finished fourth in his heat but 11th overall. Friday he finished fifth in his semifinal, but his time was 0.06 seconds faster than the fifth-place finisher in the other semifinal. He was the ninth and final member of the final race.

"Making it through the finals and building toward this is a big achievement," Harris said.

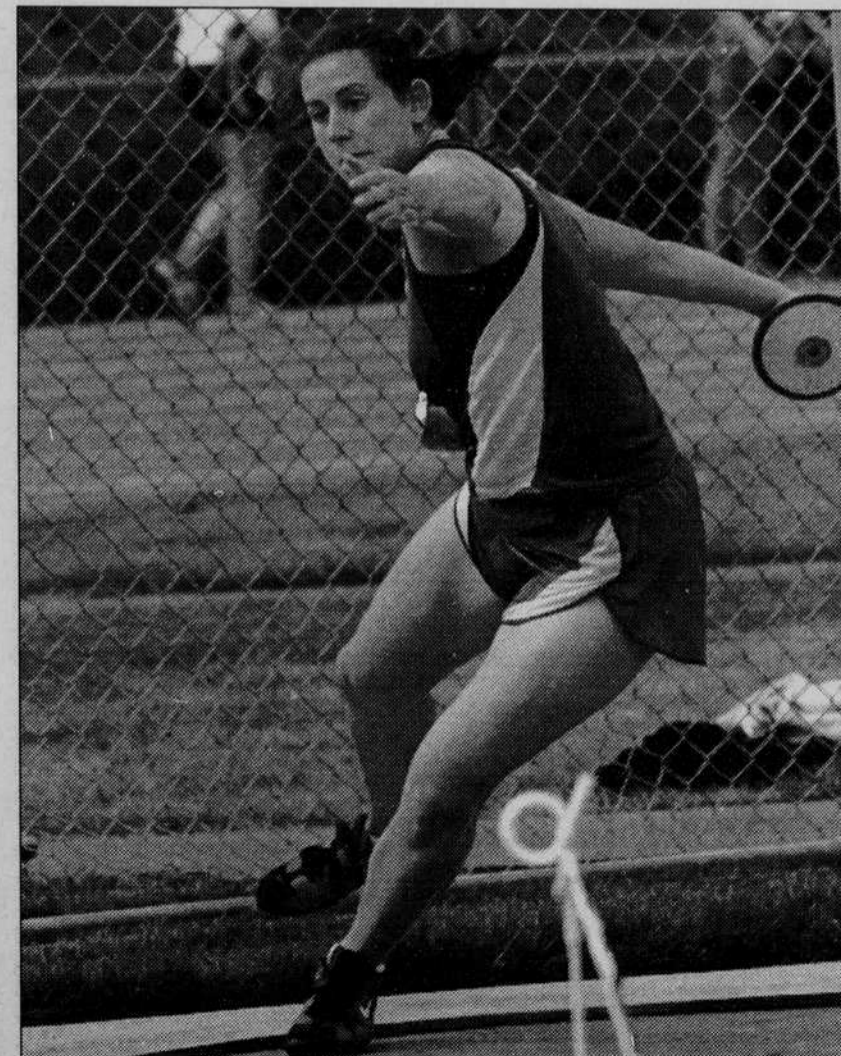
Harris earned All-American honors, a title that eluded him last year when he failed to make the finals.

"It's great to be an All-American, and bottom line, that was what I was here for," Harris said.

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Senior Micah Harris (center), seen here at the 2001 NCAA Championships at Hayward Field, earned All-American honors Saturday with a seventh-place finish in the 110-meter hurdles. The school record-holder finished the race in 13.78 seconds.



Junior Mary Etter ended Oregon's season by placing eighth in the discus on Friday. The one point earned in the event gave the Ducks nine points at the NCAA Championships.

Oregon women nab top-30 finish at NCAA for first time since 1995

■ Four women score nine points in Baton Rouge to lead the Ducks to 27th overall, a big improvement from 2001

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

Going into the 2002 NCAA Championships in Baton Rouge, La., the Ducks had high hopes, sending five capable athletes to the Bayou.

After three days of intense competition that ended Friday, Oregon took home four All-American honors and nine points, good enough for 27th place. The overall point total was the highest the team had earned since 1995 when Oregon amassed 10 points.

It is also the first time since that season that the Ducks finished in the top 30.

"I think we competed hard and four-out-five of our athletes competed well," head coach Tom Heinonen said of Oregon's contingent. "Four out of the five either met or exceeded expectations."

Overall, South Carolina earned its first championship in school history by earning 82 points, 10 points ahead of second-place UCLA. Pacific-10 Conference powerhouse USC finished with 57 points behind Angela Williams' win in the 100 — a record-setting fourth NCAA title for the departing senior.

Host Louisiana State finished fourth with 43 points.

Junior Mary Etter finished the 2002 season for Oregon on Friday, coming through in the discus and finishing in eighth place. The finish earned Oregon one point, giving the squad its final total.

Etter's final throw of 173 feet, 2 inches was a

foot behind Florida's Rachel Longfors for seventh place, and less than nine feet behind eventual winner Chaniqua Ross of UCLA (182-0).

"I came in ready to go and make it happen," Etter said. "I told Sally (Harmon, Oregon assistant coach) beforehand that I was going to throw at least 170 feet today and make the finals, and I did that on my first throw."

Entering the meet with a top throw of 177-5 during the season, Etter was ninth in the nation. She bettered that by one spot, earning her second All-American honor. Her first came as a freshman in 2000.

The Everett, Wash., native is the first discus thrower to earn two All-America honors at Oregon since Quenna Beasley in 1985.

"I improved a spot from where I was seeded, but I'm still frustrated," Etter said. "I've changed my technique the past two weeks — I'm trying to speed it up — and have been throwing 180 feet pretty regularly in practice. I know there's so much more there, and was hoping that it would come out today."

Heinonen was impressed with Etter's resiliency to come back and compete well at the Championships after finishing 19th in the discus a season ago.

"Last year, Mary just tried too hard in Eugene," he said.

Etter's final legal attempt in the discus, a throw of 173-2 — the day's best for the junior — capped off a successful season for the Ducks. While the squad finished 27th — not normally an impressive finish for a collegiate squad — Oregon improved greatly from a 60th place finish in 2001.

The year before that, the Ducks were 45th, and in 2000, placed 51st. The Ducks have traveled a long

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