

Sports Editor:
Peter Hockaday
peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com

SPORTS

Best bet
MLB: Seattle at Oakland
7 p.m., Fox Sports

Wednesday, April 2, 2003

Track time: Ducks try for Pac-10 titles

MEN: Two former NCAA champions return to anchor a team that's trying to improve on last year's second-place finish at the Pac-10 Championships

Men's track and field

Peter Hockaday
Sports Editor

Well, there's always track season.

Last year, the pressure was on the Oregon men's track and field team to finish the series of Pacific-10 Conference titles started by the football and men's basketball teams.

This year, the track team is the only squad left with a chance to win a Pac-10 title.

But of any of Oregon's major sports, the men's track squad has perhaps the best chance to win that Pac-10 crown, and the Ducks could even compete for a national championship.

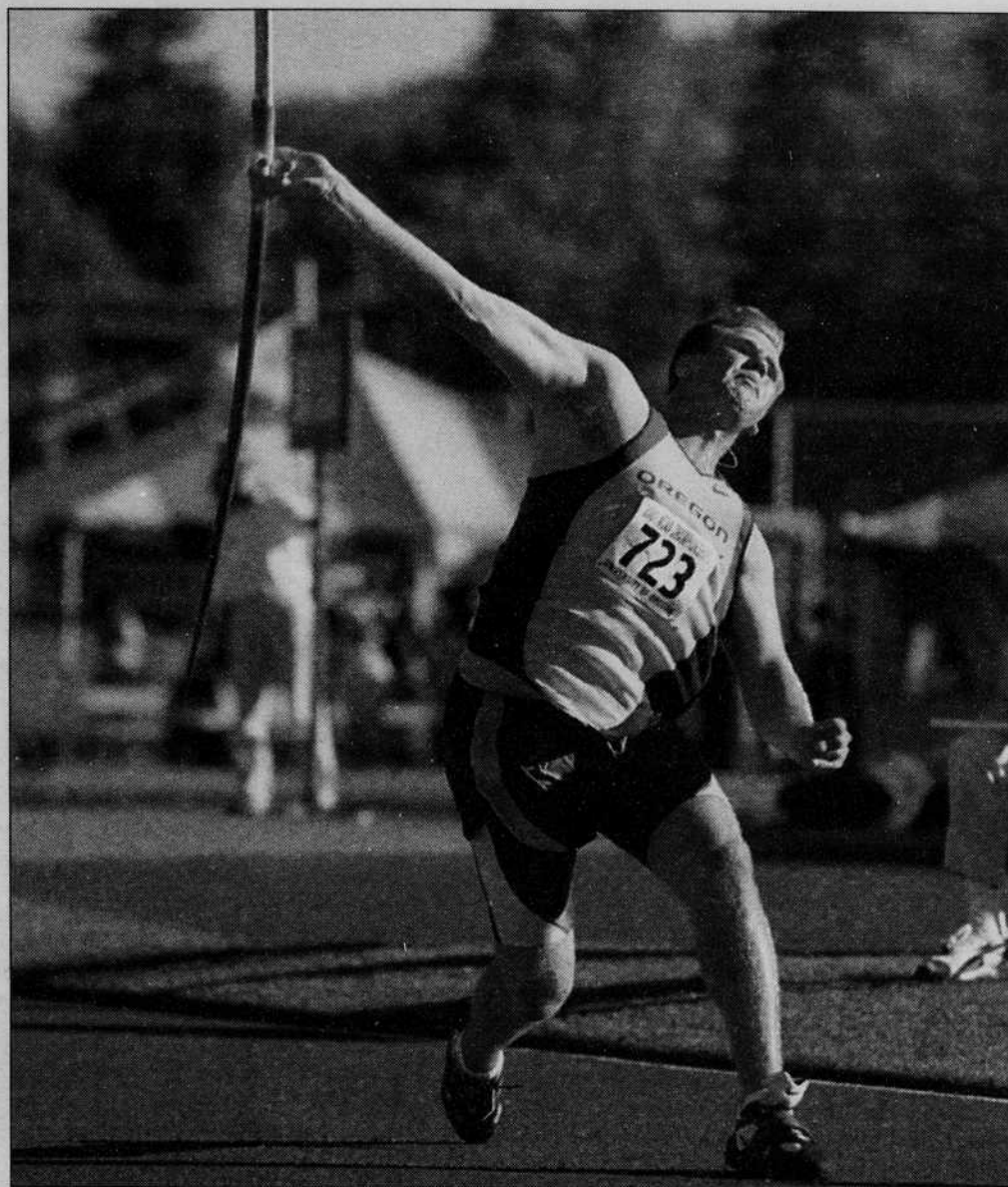
That's what happens when you return two former NCAA champions to a team that finished second at Pac-10s in 2002. Decathlete Santiago Lorenzo and javelin thrower John Stiegeler, both individual national champions in 2001 who both redshirted last season with injuries, join 2002 Pac-10 champions Adam Kriz (hammer) and Brandon Holliday (400-meter hurdles), as well as 2002 Pac-10 runners-up Jason Hartmann (10,000) and Foluso Akinradewo (triple jump).

And then there's the new talent. The biggest recruit was Jordan Kent, son of Oregon basketball head coach Ernie Kent. The younger Kent is a multi-event threat, as he won a total of eight Oregon 4A high school titles in the 100, 200, 400 and long jump. Travis Anderson, a Colorado high school champion in the 400, already holds the top Duck times in the 200 and 400 this season. Erik Heinonen, son of women's head coach Tom Heinonen, was once the top-ranked high schooler in the 10,000 and should make an impact in the distance events.

Several Ducks will be in action this week at the Texas Relays at Mike A. Myers Stadium in Austin, Texas. Lorenzo will compete in his first full decathlon of the season, starting today, and he will be joined in the event by fellow Ducks Gabe LeMay and Andy Young.

Thursday, more Oregon athletes will enter the fray as the Ducks' 4x800 relay team will take on a deep, talented field. Holliday and Eric Mitchum will compete in the 400 hurdles, and Jason Slye will compete in the pole vaulting "B" section.

The meet is the first of four for the men be-



Emerald

John Stiegeler is one of two 2001 NCAA Champions returning to the Oregon track and field team this spring.

fore the Pac-10 Championships in Los Angeles May 17-18. After the Texas Relays, it's all home cookin' for the Ducks as they come back to Hayward Field for the Pepsi Team Invitational, the Oregon Invitational and the Oregon Twilight meets.

All those meets, including the Pac-10 Championships, lead up to the NCAA West Regionals in late May. In a year of change and rebirth, the

NCAA West Regional is perhaps the most monolithic example of freshness.

In previous years, athletes attempted to hit marks that would either qualify them automatically or put them on a provisional list to make the NCAA Championships. Depending on how many athletes qualified automatically for each event, a certain amount of athletes (different for

Turn to **Men's**, page 12

WOMEN: Oregon looks to have its best season in years with a veteran squad and a coach who could go out with a bang

Women's track and field

Jesse Thomas
Sports Reporter

The heart of track season is finally upon us in Track Town USA.

The season has crept up on Oregon like a ghost in the night with the Texas Relays beginning today.

The Oregon women's track and field team is going full steam ahead with records already being broken. The Ducks have a long list of senior athletes who will anchor Oregon's veteran squad in the jumps and throws.

The team, which includes six returning NCAA participants and three Pac-10 runners-up from last season, has already begun to propel the excitement that is Oregon track and field.

It will be a season to remember as legendary head coach Tom Heinonen is set to leave his final mark on the program, as the men's and women's teams will merge in 2004.

Heinonen is wrapping up an unprecedented career in his 27th season as the only head coach to win multiple NCAA titles in track and field and cross country, along with many other career highlights.

Eight of Oregon's 11 athletes competing in Texas are seniors, with the veteran leadership of the squad primarily in the jumps and throws.

The throwing duo of seniors Mary Etter and Jordan Sauvage will lead Oregon at Mike A. Myers Stadium and, the Ducks hope, to a solid regional performance in May.

Etter anchors the team as a two-time All-American and four-time Pac-10 scorer in her final season. The Washington native ranks in the top five all-time at Oregon in the hammer, discus and shot put.

Etter has posted season bests of 169 feet, 7 inches in the discus and 167-8 in the hammer, yet both marks are almost

Turn to **Women's**, page 14

QBs leave for NFL Draft, leave Pac-10 teams reeling

Three of last season's top teams look to replace star quarterbacks as spring practices begin around the conference

Spring football notes

Hank Hager
Sports Reporter

With the year of the quarterback over in the Pacific-10 Conference, it is time for a few teams to find their signal-caller of the future.

California, USC and Washington State head into spring practice looking to replace some of the conference's best. Kyle Boller of California and Carson Palmer of USC are expected to be selected in the first round or possibly No. 1 overall in the NFL Draft in April.

The Pac-10's Co-Offensive Player of the Year, Jason Gesser, is also expected to be taken in the draft, although not as high.

"We have to find out who the quarterback is going to be," first-year Washington State head coach Bill Doba said. "I think Matt Kegel is our leading guy. He has been here four years and he has worked his tail off, and he has been loyal to this program."

Kegel heads into spring camp as the No. 1 signal-caller as the Cougars opened practices Tuesday. For the Golden Bears and Trojans, it doesn't look to be as easy as they approach the midway point through practices.

USC head coach Pete Carroll is auditioning four players for the top spot. Midway through the team's workouts, junior Matt Cassell leads the group in the race. But transfer Brandon Hance, from Purdue, is right on his heels.

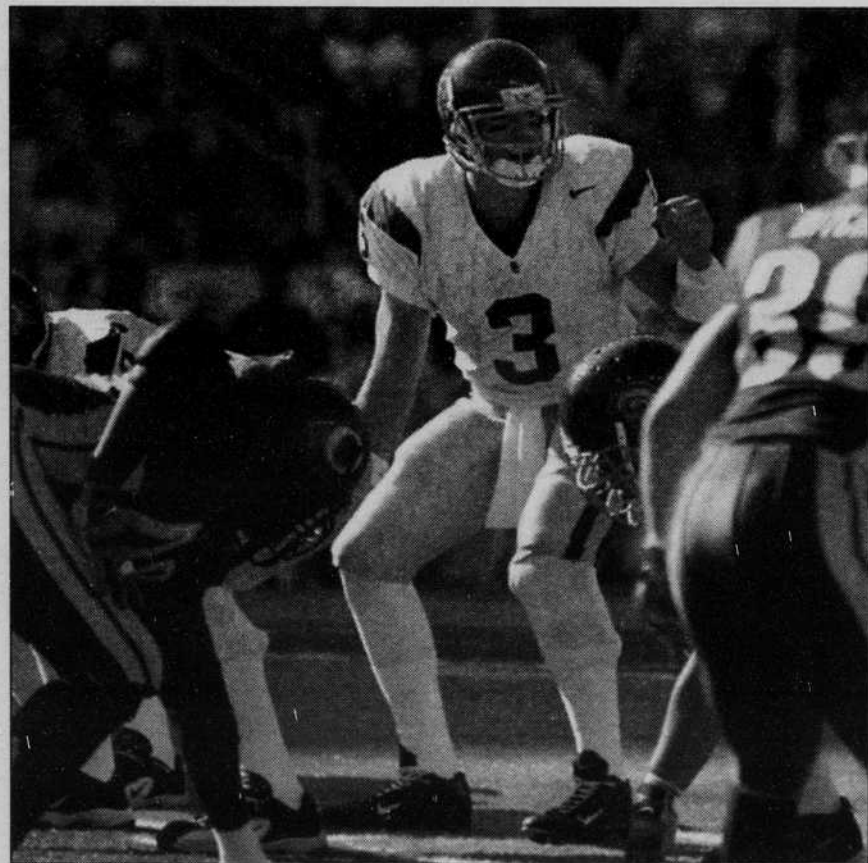
"They're real close," Carroll told the Los Angeles Daily News about the four. "This is a huge week for them. I hope to (name a starter) but I've got to see what happens."

At Cal, the situation is a bit more dire. While the Cougars and Trojans both have quarterbacks who have seen game action — Kegel and Hance — the Golden Bears entered spring practice in mid-March with a group of relative unknowns.

California head coach Jeff Tedford said Reggie Robertson and Richard Schwartz will get most of the snaps, although he does not expect to name a starter until fall practices start.

"No one really has the experience to really have ownership at that position at all," he said. "It's

Turn to **Football**, page 13



Mark McCambridge Emerald

USC's Carson Palmer (3) is expected to go near or at the top of this season's NFL Draft.