

Adam Amato Emerald

John Stiegeler sits second in the conference javelin race, but the 2001 national champion has a good shot to win the Pac-10 title.

Men's

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Ducks will need consistent performances from their stars and exceptional performances from their middle-men in order to take their first Pac-10 crown since 1990.

At a team dinner Tuesday night, Oregon's upperclassmen urged the underclassmen to stay calm and focused in Los Angeles.

"They feel we can do it," freshman middle-distance runner Ryan Flaherty said. "And we want to do it for them."

"It" — winning the Pac-10 — can be done, and Flaherty is exactly the type of athlete that can get "it" done. The Ducks already have one Pac-10 champion in decathlete Santiago Lorenzo, who won the multi-event title last weekend. The Ducks also have solid scoring stars in senior John Stiegeler, who won the NCAA

javelin title two years ago, and defending Pac-10 hammer champion Adam Kriz. Add javelin-thrower Adam Jenkins, whose best mark this season out-distances Stiegeler's, and Brett Holts, who leads the conference in the steeplechase, to that list.

But it's the Flahertys of the world that will win a Pac-10 title for Oregon if it is to be won. Flaherty is ranked fourth in the conference in the 800-meter race and, if he can move up, could help the Ducks even more in the team scoring.

"I would love to get in that top three," Flaherty said. "It's possible. It can be done."

The Ducks have a whole host of

athletes who sit in the middle of their packs and could move up. Samie Parker is fourth in the 100. Eric Logsdon sits fifth in the 5,000. Jason Hartmann is fourth in the 10,000 but finished second last season in essentially the same field. Brandon Holliday is fourth in the 400-meter hurdles.

The list of Duck middle-men grows when considering the field events. Freshmen Teddy Davis and Chad Clason sit fourth and seventh in the high jump, respectively. Trevor Woods is ranked fourth in the pole vault. Foluso Akinradewo is third in the triple jump.

Then there are Oregon's wild cards. Lorenzo already won the decathlon but could score more points

in this weekend's events. He could run the 400 hurdles or compete in the long jump or javelin. He's qualified in all those events. The second wild card is Jordan Kent, who will run the 100 and 200 and possibly one of the relays.

"It would mean a lot if we were going to beat Stanford or USC," Kent said. "But it's going to take a lot of effort. If people do what they're capable of doing, I think we can do well."

Stanford and host USC will be the favorites this weekend. The Cardinal dominate the conference in the distance races, while the Trojans have seven individual-event leaders.

In the end, it's all about team. "All year, you're running for individual PRs," Kent said. "Then, at the end of the year, everybody brings their talents together as a team, and you try to get a team title."

Contact the sports editor at peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com.

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Jordan Kent
Oregon freshman

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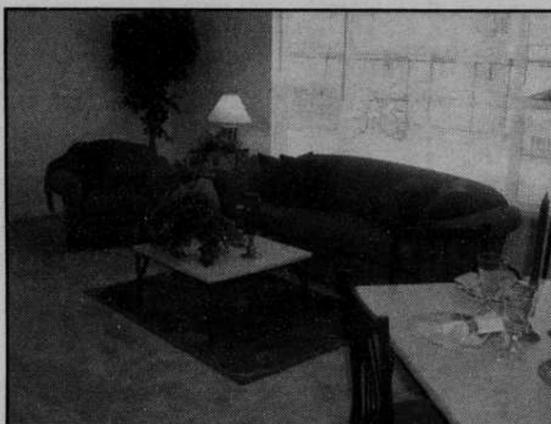
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