

Monday, June 2, 2003

Holliday sets collegiate record in vault

Oregon earns seven national invites along with two wins in the first-ever NCAA West Regional

Women's track and field

Jesse Thomas
Sports Reporter

Redshirt senior Becky Holliday found that she has yet to reach her limit, along with six other Ducks who outdid themselves in the first edition of the NCAA West Regional this weekend.

Holliday nearly touched the sky Friday after clearing 14 feet, 8 inches to win the pole vault competition by 10 inches.

A personal best improvement of two inches gave her the collegiate record by 1/4 inch over former UCLA NCAA Champion Tracy O'Hara in 2000. As the top-ranked collegian, she is now sixth all-time among Americans and ranks fourth in the world this season.

"It was a fun day to compete, and the conditions were great," Holliday said of her mark that was nearly 1 1/2 feet higher than the winners from the other three regionals nationally this weekend. "But a record only means more pressure and expectations, so I need to go back to work and prepare for NCAA's."

The Sparks, Nev., native was one of a handful of Ducks who will see action in Sacramento, Calif., on June 11 for the NCAA Championships. Redshirt senior Niki McEwen will also make the trip after tying for third (13-6 1/4) in the pole vault, for her seventh NCAA appearance.

Senior Mary Etter found new wind Saturday afternoon after a disappointing finish (23rd, 44-8) in Friday's shot put. Etter stepped into the discus ring knowing it could be her last meet as a Duck and let one rip for a 2-foot, 6-inch season best of 179-7.

The two-time All-American won the competition by nearly three feet to earn her fourth NCAA appearance in the event.

"I didn't feel so hot coming in," Etter said. "And I started to get down emotionally even before it started. But then I realized what I was doing and told myself, 'No, you're not going to count yourself out — this is your last meet, and there's no reason you can't throw well.'"

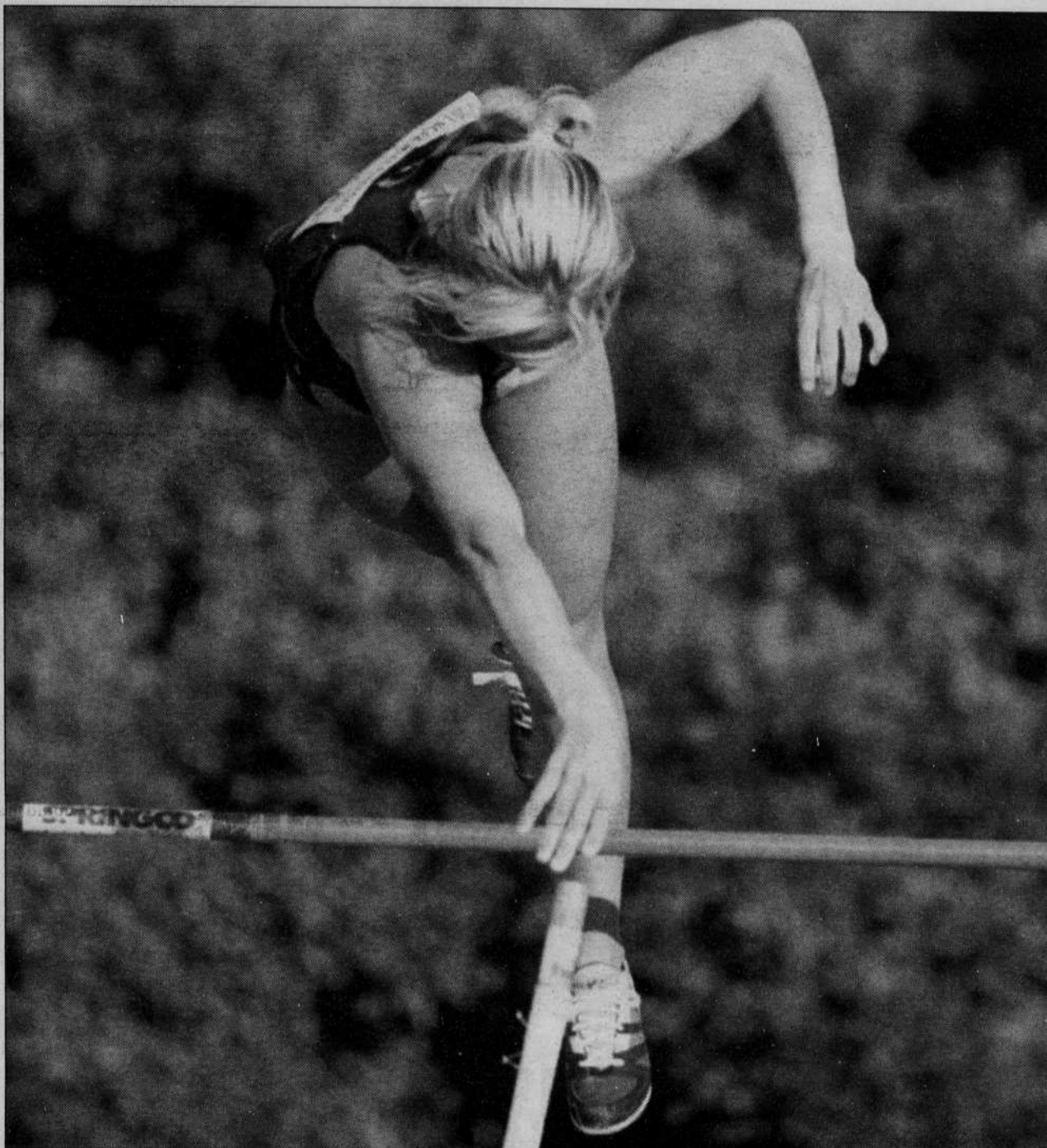
When senior Amanda Brown lifted off in Saturday's triple jump final, it was vintage Michael Jordan as it took a while to come down. Her 7 1/2-inch personal best was enough to upset the competition as she finished second (41-5) after a ninth-place ranking coming in.

After a rough start in the prelims, Brown edged into the final where she earned her first NCAA appearance.

"Looking back over my career, I believe things happen for a reason and I guess today maybe it showed that I was meant to be a track athlete — and one that would go to nationals," Brown said after moving to second on Oregon's all-time list.

The sophomore All-American duo of Elisa Crumley and Roslyn Lundeen improved on pre-meet seedings to earn

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Geoff Thurner Oregon Media Services

Becky Holliday clears a bar at the West Regional in Stanford, Calif., on Friday. She later set the collegiate record in the event at 14 feet, 8 inches.

Men punch 10 NCAA tickets, leave some unpunched

The sprinters and hurdlers shine at the NCAA Regional meet, and the Ducks now look ahead to the national meet

Men's track

Peter Hockaday
Sports Editor

The regional format giveth, and the regional format taketh away.

The Oregon men's track and field team came away from the first-ever NCAA West Regional in Stanford, Calif., this weekend with mixed results. Ten Ducks (or Duck relay teams) qualified for the NCAA Championships in Sacramento, Calif., later this month. But Oregon also had several athletes — victims of the regional's "finish in the top five or go home" format — who could miss the season finale.

Among those who missed out were Trevor Woods, who no-heighted in the pole vault, Fofuso Akinradewo in the triple jump and Ryan

Flaherty in the 800-meter run. Woods is still ranked 13th in the nation and will likely earn a "wild card" NCAA berth.

Luckily for the Ducks, the qualifiers outweighed the non-qualifiers at Stanford. Oregon's 4x400-meter relay turned in a stunning qualifying performance, and the Ducks got similar better-than-anticipated performances from Jordan Kent in the 200-meter dash, Samie Parker in the 100 and Matt Scherer in the 400. Kent and Parker both won their respective events.

"We had an outstanding series of individual efforts one after another, especially on the track," Oregon head coach Martin Smith said. "The two champions on top of the other qualifiers was an extra icing on the cake."

Kent's victory was a landmark for the freshman dual-sport star, who said before the meet that he didn't anticipate making the trip to nationals.

"The last seven weeks, I've felt better after every weekend of training and have now added

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Don't 'Pac' this conference; we're just fine with 10, thank you

Say it isn't so Pac-10, just say it isn't so.

Tell me you're not going to listen to the pundits who say the best conference on the West Coast should expand. Say you're not going to add the Utahs and San Diego States on a whim, even after the Atlantic Coast Conference pillages the Big East and then dominoes fall around the nation.

Let me sleep easy. Tell me everything is all right. Tell me status quo is what really matters most.

Just don't fall to the level of the rest

of the nation.

It looks like Miami, Boston College and Syracuse are set to bolt to the ACC, a conference best known for its rabid college basketball fans, the Cameron Craziest. Who could blame



Hank Hager
Behind the dish

Miami? The school hasn't said its pure intentions just yet, but come on, it's a no-brainer.

Let 'em do whatever they want. Let the ACC become a 20-team superpower, for all I care.

What I care about is the Pacific-10 Conference remains just that: A conference of 10 teams all located on the Pacific Ocean, or at least one state away. There's no reason to invite more teams, bloat the conference and fall into the trap that seemingly every other conference has

gotten hooked on.

Money.

OK, Pac-10, this is where you come into the picture. Utah, Brigham Young, Texas Christian and even San Diego State would not be worth the price of admission into the conference. No conference championship in football would be worth it to bring any of these schools — or, for the most part, any other school in the nation — into the fold.

This is where I say that Texas, Colorado or Michigan would be

worth it. Texas and Colorado have been coveted before, and I can basically guarantee that they won't be for quite a while, if ever.

I'd rather see the Ducks take on Washington and Arizona State before the Utes or Horned Frogs. Besides, tradition still has to matter somewhat these days. The Pac-10 has not ushered in a new school in any of the major sports since 1978 when Arizona and Arizona State were brought in.

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