

Oregon track indoor season will come to close at NCAA's

The Oregon men's and women's track teams send 11 athletes to the NCAA Indoor Championships

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

Oregon hopes to close the indoor track season with a bang this weekend. The Ducks' men's and women's track teams sent 11 athletes to Fayetteville, Ark. for this weekend's two-day NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships. Events are scheduled for today and Saturday in the Randal Tyson Track Center.

DUCK TRACK

The men's team will have seven athletes participate, featuring the most qualifiers among Pacific-10 Conference teams. Stanford and UCLA each have six, while Arizona State sent five.

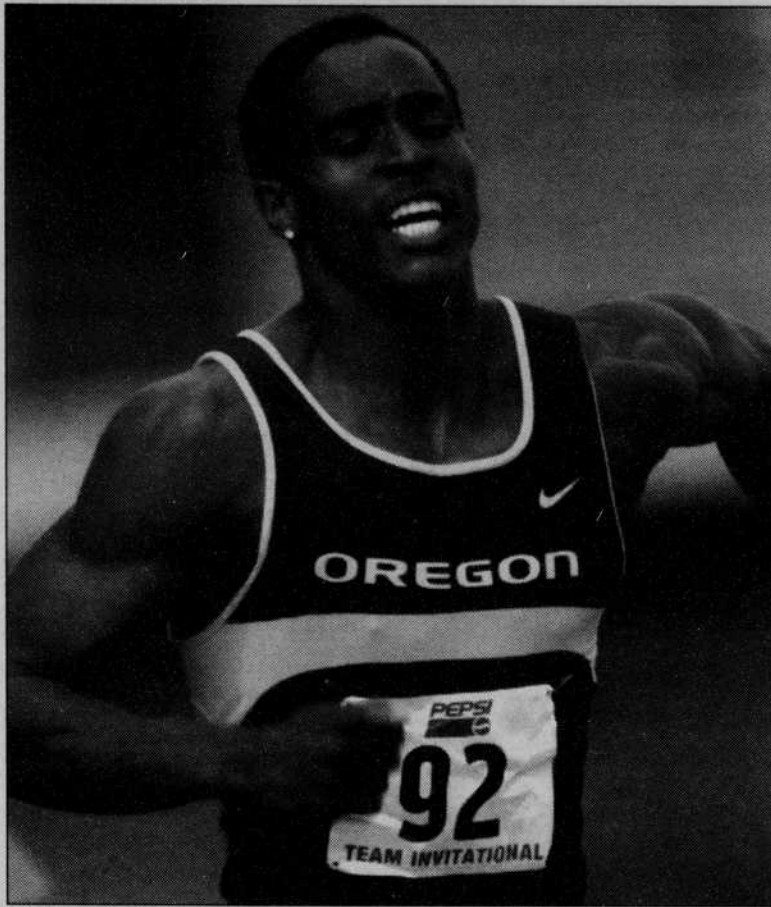
The men's group is highlighted by pole-vaulter phenom Tommy Skipper. The freshman from Sandy captured the nation's top pole vault mark this season, when he cleared a height of 18 feet, 8 3/4 inches Feb. 7 in Nampa, Idaho. The vault also gave Skipper the Oregon record, breaking the old mark of 18-6 1/2, set by Kory Tarpening in 1985.

Skipper said he wasn't satisfied with just one amazing vault and wanted to continue striving for better marks to add to his already impressive résumé.

"I want to clear good marks consistently," Skipper said after breaking the Oregon pole vault record. "That's the most important thing and I have a lot of work to do."

Along with Skipper, sophomore Eric Mitchum will represent the Ducks in the 60-meter hurdles. The Calumet City, Ill., native is tied for the nation's ninth best time at 7.78 seconds.

Senior Ryan Andrus will run in the 5,000-meter race for Oregon. The Orem, Utah, native did himself a favor at last weekend's NCAA Last Chance In the Dempsey Indoor in Seattle by recording a 16-second personal best. Andrus' time of 13:51.00 allowed him to lock up an automatic bid to the indoor championships with the fourth-best time in the country.



Adam Amato Senior Photographer

Eric Mitchum holds one of the country's 10-best times in the 60-meter hurdles.

Sophomore Matt Scherer will compete in the 400 meters, while holding the 13th best time in the country at 46.40.

Mitchum, Andrus and Scherer are each veterans of the 2003 NCAA Outdoor Championships.

Junior Leonidas Watson will compete in two events for Oregon. The St. Louis native ranks in the top 10 nationally in both the long jump (8th-tie, 25-6 1/2) and triple jump (8th, 52-10 1/4).

The Oregon 4x400 team, composed of senior Brandon Holliday, junior Roderick Dotts, sophomore Travis Anderson and Scherer, will also compete. The team set a then-school record with a two-second season best (3:06.73) in June.

On the women's side, the Ducks send four athletes to their first NCAA indoors. Junior Magdalena Sandoval leads the way for Oregon, holding the

nation's sixth-best time in the 5,000 (16:04.40).

Senior Eri Macdonald helped herself last weekend in Seattle, recording nearly a 1 1/2-second indoor best in the 800 (2:06.75). Macdonald's time bumped her up to 14th on the national list.

Junior pole vaulter Hannah Moore (10th, 13-5) and senior pentathlete Abby Andrus (11th, 3,908) also will compete for Oregon.

The women rank third in the Pac-10 with four qualifiers, behind UCLA (10) and Stanford (5).

The Duck women and men will look to improve on 15th and 34th-place team finishes, respectively, in last year's NCAA Indoor Championships.

The Ducks open their outdoor campaign March 20 when they host the Oregon Preview.

Contact the sports reporter at jonroetman@dailyemerald.com.

REVENGE

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feel ready to return to its winning ways.

"These are two very good programs and we need to play our best in order to meet our goals for the weekend," he said. "The Huskies have definitely been highlighted on our schedule ever since we dropped a close match to them."

In the loss, the Ducks started the dual contest impressively by sweeping all three doubles matches to take a 1-0 lead. But Washington dominated the

singles portion by winning five of the six matches to earn the victory and hand Oregon its first loss on the season.

"I felt it was a winnable match," Schyllander said afterwards. "It just didn't go our way. We let a good opportunity slip away."

Washington (11-2) comes to Eugene after winning three straight and is led by two of the top-25 players in the nation. No. 25 senior Claire Carter and No. 23 junior Dea Sumantri headline the squad at the first two positions in the lineup. Sumantri has been a

consistent force in compiling a perfect 12-0 dual singles record.

"Oregon is a very tough squad," Washington head coach Patty McCain said before the last match-up. "We knew they were going to be tough with all their talent this year."

The women will next take on struggling a Washington State team on Saturday at 11 a.m. The Cougars (3-7) have lost six of their last eight dual matches.

Alex Tam is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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