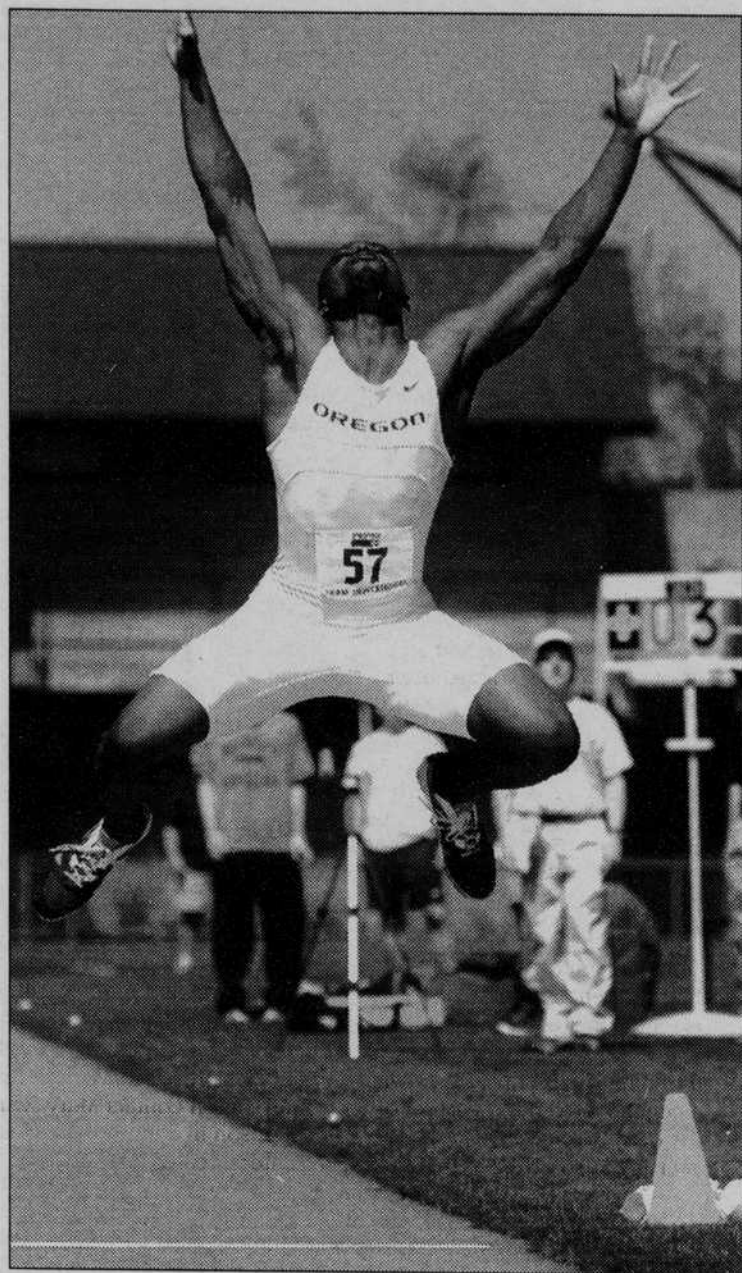


## SPORTS

Sports Editor:  
Hank Hager  
hankhager@dailyemerald.com

Best bet  
NHL Playoffs:  
San Jose vs. St. Louis  
6:30 p.m., ESPN2

Monday, April 12, 2004



Leonidas Watson jumps during the Pepsi Team Invitational on Saturday. He won the long and triple jump events, joining Sofie Abildtrup and Eric Mitchum as athletes to win two events. Lauren Wimer Photographer

## Duck men dominate Invite

Oregon captures the team title at the Pepsi Team Invitational while winning eight individual events on Saturday

By Jon Roetman  
Sports Reporter

Leonidas Watson was disappointed with the effort he had just given in the triple jump. The junior transfer had given away several inches on his effort by missing the board on his takeoff.

Watson turned to jumps coach Bill Lawson, seeking advice for improving in his next attempt.

"Hit the board," Lawson said to Watson in a fiery, competitive voice. "And let's put this one away."

Watson took Lawson's words to heart, responding with an eventual event-winning mark of 48 feet, 10 3/4 inches.

### MEN'S TRACK

Winning efforts were contagious for the Duck men Saturday as eight individual event victories led to an overall team win for Oregon during the Pepsi Team Invitational at Hayward Field.

Oregon (191 points) defeated Minnesota (second, 169), Washington (third, 144) and Colorado (fourth, 101) in the first point-scoring meet of the outdoor season.

Eric Mitchum was one of Oregon's biggest point contributors, winning the 110 meter hurdles (13.70 seconds) and the 400 meter hurdles (51.47). The sophomore All-American's blazing time in the 110 missed Micah Harris's two-year school record by .03 seconds.

Travis Anderson shined in the 400-meter dash, winning the event with a time of 47.04.

Adam Jenkins set a positive tone early for Oregon in the field, winning the javelin with a mark of 218 feet. The 2003 Pacific-10 Conference champion made his outdoor season debut after nursing a sore shoulder and didn't disappoint. The Gladstone, Ore. native improved on all but one of six throws — using a half approach — and won the event by more than 15 feet.

"I just wanted to go out there and get a decent

mark," Jenkins said. "It felt good and I wanted to have a good time because I didn't want to get stressed out and mess up."

Along with Jenkins' performance, the Ducks captured four other field events. Watson, in addition to winning the triple jump, took home first-place honors in the long jump (24-2 1/4). The St. Louis Community College transfer stood in third place until his fifth jump, when he was able to regain the top position from Minnesota's Steffen Landgraf (23-10 1/4).

While Watson's marks fell well short of his personal bests, the St. Louis native said he was happy with his performance because he was using a short approach.

"It feels good and it's a (personal record) from short approach," Watson said. "I wanted to go from full approach but coach (Lawson) was just holding me back. We were just going for the win and just wanted to rest for Pac-10s."

Mansfield, Texas native Jeff Lindsey won the high jump (7-1 3/4), while holding off Minnesota's talented duo of Bryant Howe (second, 7-0 1/2) and Josh Paulson (third, 7-0 1/2). The sophomore improved his Oregon best by 1/4 inch and was pumped about defeating his Golden Gopher opponents.

"It's a lot easier (to get excited) when there's three guys over seven feet," Lindsey said. "Once you start jumping like 6-10 you start getting in a zone and you're in your own little world."

Freshman Tommy Skipper had one of the busiest days of any Oregon athlete. The Sandy, Ore. native won the pole vault for the second time at Hayward Field (17-5), but not before taking third in the javelin with a Pac-10-qualifying mark of 198 feet.

The All-American pole vaulter said preparing himself mentally for different events throughout the meet might have had an impact on his performance in the day's final field event — pole vault.

"When it's spread out throughout the day, you're warming up and cooling down," Skipper said. "Emotionally it's a little straining on you, but you have to try and be on top of your game."

Contact the sports reporter  
at jonroetman@dailyemerald.com.

## Abildtrup, Kriz pace UO women in scoring victory

The Oregon women triumph in seven events to win the 2004 Pepsi Team Invite on Saturday at Hayward Field

By Alex Tam  
Sports Reporter

As junior Sofie Abildtrup took the baton for the final leg of the 4x400 relay in the last women's track event of the day, she was confident she would overcome the leader, Minnesota's Mollie Hupp.

Before a crowd of 3,514 people, who rose to their feet and cheered raucously as she ran down the back stretch, Abildtrup took the lead and won the event to cap off an eventful day for the Oregon women.

The Ducks posted 184 1/2 points to defeat Washington (169), Minnesota (160) and Colorado (100) in the 15th annual Pepsi Team

Invitational at Hayward Field on Saturday. The meet was Oregon's first scoring meet of the season.

Abildtrup finished the race for her team in three minutes, 46.92 seconds, which topped Minnesota by less than one second at 3:47.81. The Denmark native said the fans played a huge factor as she rounded the final turn.

### WOMEN'S TRACK

"It was great to compete," Abildtrup said. "I felt like the crowd just gave me an extra kick. Going over there with the home crowd in the back, I just knew I had the extra strength to go." The women's triumph in the 4x400 relay was one of seven event wins that also included Abildtrup's victories in the 200-meters and 400-meters. Her time of 23.94 seconds in the 200 meters set a new personal best and placed her seventh all-time in school history.

With a shortened roster because of reduced recruiting during the past couple years, several Ducks participated in multiple events. However, that fact did not deter many of the women from their goals.

Junior Rachael Kriz enjoyed success in the high jump and javelin, despite having to compete in both events at the same time. The Toledo, Ore., native won the high jump at 5 feet 8 inches. The mark set a new personal record and was a Pacific-10 Conference- and regional-qualifying mark.

Kriz also credited the crowd for their support and jumps coach Rock Light for helping her improve in the high jump during the week.

"High jump was just incredible," Kriz said. "That was the best feeling to do that in front of a Hayward crowd. It was sheer and utter excitement. I knew I cleared it from them before I even knew I cleared it, so that just got the celebration going."

Kriz finished in third place at the javelin. Her first attempt ended up being her best at 139-6.

Her sister, Megan Kriz, won the first event of the day for Oregon with a throw 10 feet beyond her personal best at the hammer with a mark of 181-9.

In other field event wins, Sarah Malone dominated the javelin section with a throw of 167-10 to claim first place. The mark was more than 17 feet better than that of the second-place finisher, Washington's Tiffany Zahn, who finished at 150 feet.

Nevertheless, Malone said she was not happy with her performance after breaking her own school record at 179-7 last weekend in the Texas Relays. The Newberg native said she had trouble sleeping before the meet and had to deal with other off-the-field issues.

"I'm OK with (my marks)," Malone said. "I'm not satisfied with it obviously. It was a hard day

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## Duck defense shines in first scrimmage

Nate LiaBraaten had a sack for 11 yards and caught three passes in Oregon's scrimmage

By Hank Hager  
Sports Editor

Usually, Oregon linebacker Jerry Matson said, when an offense makes spectacular plays during spring football, it was because of blown coverage or missed strategy on behalf of the defense.

So when exactly did that happen Saturday at Autzen Stadium? When did the offense exploit the defense?

According to the score, not enough times. The Ducks' defense outplayed its counterpart, winning the first scrimmage of the spring, 48-37.

"Just some great enthusiasm, running around and rallying," Matson said. "A lot of young guys got unleashed today. They did a great job."

The defense won the scrimmage by pressuring five Oregon quarterbacks for three sacks. They held the offense to 13 of 24 passing for one touchdown.

The defense also recovered two fumbles, both created by Dennis Dixon's inability to cleanly handle snaps.

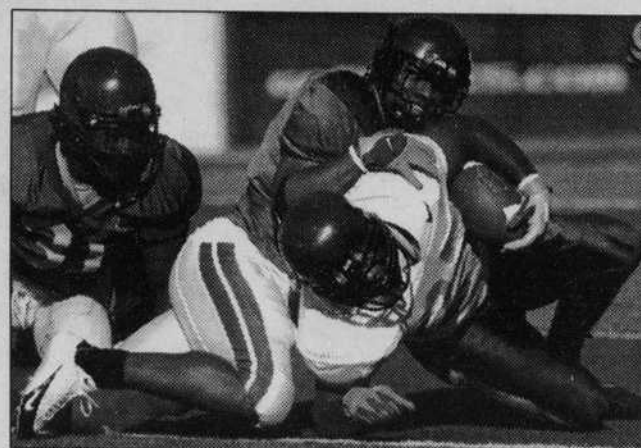
All of that led to the defense's victory, which was scored based on individual plays as well as scoring plays.

"I thought the defense did a good job of making the big plays in fourth-down situations and red zone situations," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "(They) got some turnovers, got some crucial stops. The defense so far in practice had not been showing that, but they played with more emotion today."

Matt Toeaina, Robby Valenzuela and Nate LiaBraaten, who split time on offense and defense, were all credited with sacks. Matson led the team with five tackles, including two for losses, while Sam Hughes had two breakups.

LiaBraaten equaled his defensive output on offense. The junior emerged as the team's leading receiver with three receptions for 11 yards — all the while switching between white and green jersey tops.

"Nasty Nate LiaBraaten, we got him in a green jersey and all of a



Adam Amato Senior Photographer

J.D. Nelson tackles Ryan Shaw (with ball) during Oregon's scrimmage.

sudden he's sacking quarterbacks," Matson said. "We might have to steal him. We'll welcome him with open arms."

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