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Best bet
MLB:
Seattle vs. Anaheim
7 p.m., ESPN

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Hank Hager
Behind the dish

Heinonen would be big asset for Ducks

As Colorado's Dathan Ritzenhein was on his way to a record-breaking performance Saturday at the Pepsi Team Invitational, Erik Heinonen was stuck in relative anonymity.

The redshirt freshman was near the back of the pack for most of the 3,000-meter race, fighting to stay out of last place at Hayward Field. Predominantly clad in Colorado's signature black uniform, he stood out against Oregon's yellow, Washington's purple and Minnesota's cream-colored uniforms, but not enough to get serious recognition.

A year ago, Heinonen would have been in that yellow. He would have been one of Oregon head coach Martin Smith's athletes, a piece of a team that would end up winning the Pacific-10 Conference Championship.

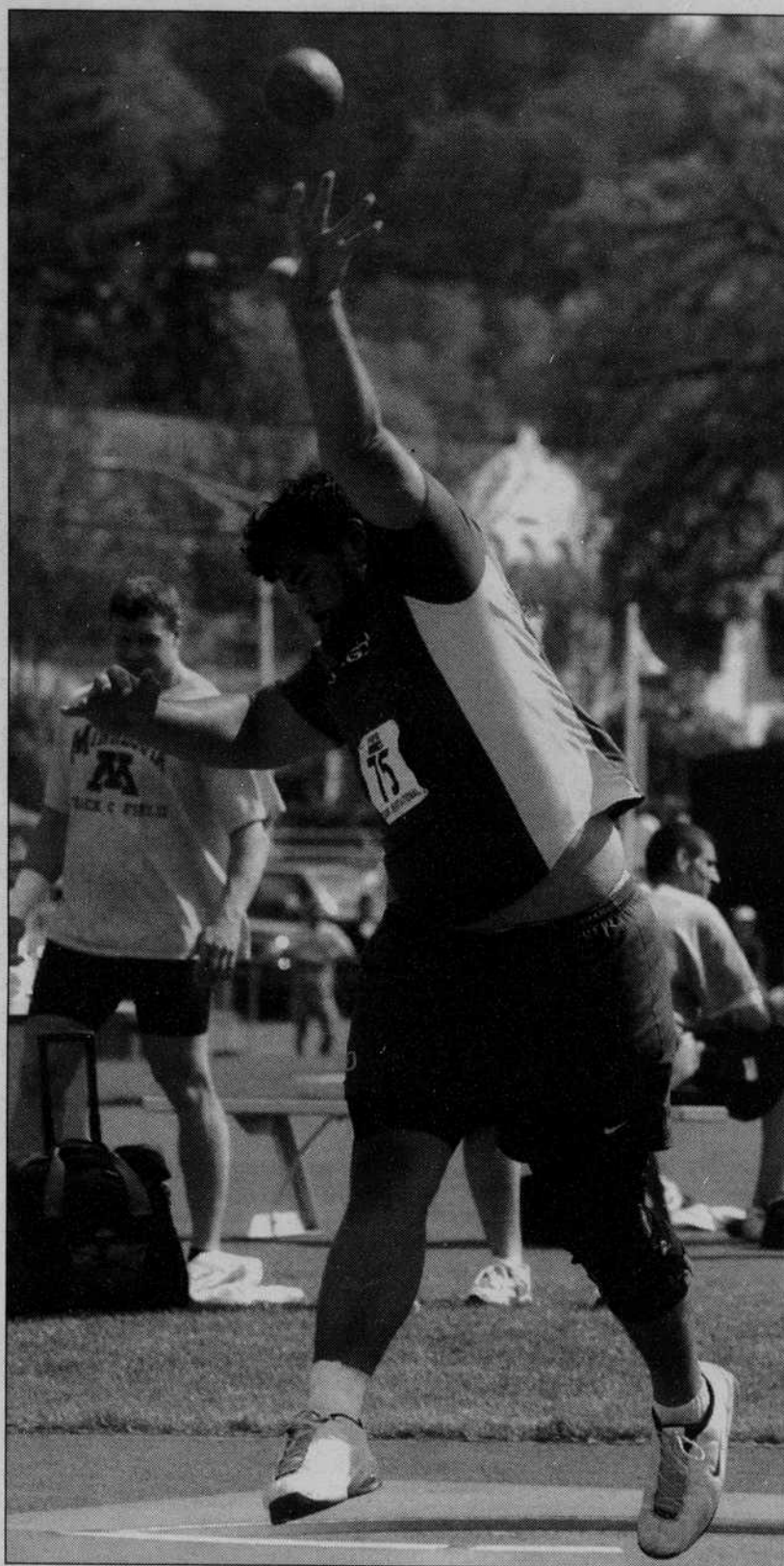
But he wasn't. Instead injuries that kept him from competing as an Oregon entry the entire season.

See, Heinonen isn't your typical runner. He isn't a typical college athlete. Or at least he wasn't in Eugene.

Heinonen has running in his blood. He's the son of Tom Heinonen, the former women's coach at Oregon who retired after last season. The elder Heinonen had been at the helm for 27 years, leading the track program to one national championship. He also spearheaded the women's cross country team, where he was even more successful, taking home two top finishes.

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Ngata makes Oregon track debut



Haloti Ngata described his performance in the shot put Saturday as "all right."

Ngata, who tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee during Oregon's win over Mississippi State last August, was convinced to compete in the Pepsi Team Invitational by Oregon strength and conditioning coach Jim Radcliffe. It was the first time Ngata had competed in track and field since his sophomore year in high school.

Lauren Wimer
Photographer

Haloti Ngata competes in the shot put for the first time since his sophomore year in high school

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

Haloti Ngata sat on a bench Saturday, mentally preparing himself for competition. He stood up moments later, donning Oregon green and yellow, and received an ovation from the crowd at Hayward Field.

Hayward Field?

Ngata stepped out of the realm of Duck football and into the world of Oregon track Saturday when he competed in the shot put at the Pepsi Team Invitational.

MEN'S TRACK

The 6-foot-4, 339-pound defensive lineman last competed in the shot put as a sophomore in high school, but he was talked into competing for Oregon by strength and conditioning coach Jim Radcliffe.

Ngata finished sixth with a top throw of 45 feet, 10 3/4 inches. The sophomore from Salt Lake City finished second among Oregon competitors, less than two feet behind freshman Brandon Tower (fifth, 47-9 3/4).

"I could have done better," Ngata said. "It definitely wasn't to the best of my ability, but it was all right."

Despite a so-so performance, Ngata said he was happy to be out competing in front of Oregon fans again after missing all but one game of the football season with a knee injury.

"It felt great," Ngata said. "I'm on a different team but it was nice to have fans cheering for me again."

Ngata's future in the event is unknown, but he said he'd like to keep at it if he continues to improve.

"If I progress and start getting better throws (I'll stay with it)," Ngata said. "Otherwise it will just be another hobby."

Gilliam impressive

Another Oregon football player who had a solid performance at Saturday's meet was freshman Ryan Gilliam.

The 5-foot-9, 158-pound freshman from Tallahassee, Fla., competed in the 100-meter dash and took second with a windy time of 10.72 seconds.

Gilliam's time was only .04 seconds off the pace set by Patrick Davidson of Washington (first, 10.68).

Dotts disappointed

The positive tone set by Oregon's team victory
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New system is no problem early in outdoor season



Oregon junior Rachael Kriz took third place in the javelin Saturday with a mark of 139-6. Kriz later achieved a high jump personal best.

Erik R. Bishoff
Photographer

The Oregon women continue to break records as the 2004 outdoor season progresses

By Alex Tam
Sports Reporter

Records are made to be broken. However, fans and members of the Oregon women's track and field team never expected school records and personal bests to continually fall during every meet this season.

According to the athletes, all of their success so far can be credited to the new leadership under first-year head coach Martin Smith.

Junior Laura Harmon is one of those Ducks reaping the benefits after knocking almost 26 seconds off her personal best in the 5,000-meters three weeks ago at the

Stanford Invitational.

At Saturday's Pepsi Invitational, Harmon achieved a new personal best in the 3,000-meters with a time of 9 minutes, 45.52 seconds. It was nearly eight seconds faster than her previous indoor record of 9:53.55, set at the Husky Preview in 2003.

Harmon said that she is happy about the way things are going after Oregon defeated three teams to win the 15th edition of the Pepsi Team Invitational at Hayward Field Saturday.

Most people "didn't expect great things from our team," Harmon said. "I think we're definitely surpassing what people thought we were going to do."

Harmon, a Vancouver, Wash., native, said that the team's success so far is instilling a positive attitude and confident environment that has been lacking the past couple of years.

"Our athletes are definitely making strides toward bigger goals and we're doing it as a whole team," Harmon said.

Junior Clarice Hayward-Lee is one example of the new philosophy. Despite winning the triple jump event Saturday and setting a new personal best of 40 feet, 4 3/4 inches, Hayward-Lee said afterward that she was still unsatisfied with her efforts.

"I was happy with my 40-foot jump but I wasn't really happy with my overall performance that I had," Hayward-Lee said. "I had a lot of 38-foot jumps, but I was aiming for something higher."

The Bellevue, Wash., native dominated her competition as she defeated the second-place finisher, Colorado's Liza Negri, by almost a foot. Negri's best mark was 39-07 1/4.

In the long jump, junior Maegan Traver also set a new personal best of 17-06 1/4.

Other personal records also fell for the women. Sophomore Megan Kriz threw 181-09 in the hammer, which placed her fourth all-time in school history. She is now less than 10 feet away from the Oregon

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WOMEN'S TRACK