

SPORTS

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Best bet
MLB:
Atlanta vs. Florida
5 p.m. Sunday, ESPN

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One Year Wonder

Sofie Abildtrup has made a positive impression on Oregon's track and field team during her year here

By Alex Tam
Sports Reporter

Sofie Abildtrup is quickly becoming one of Oregon's most recognizable athletes.

The 23-year-old's popularity soared after her performance at the Pepsi Team Invitational two weeks ago, when she pulled a hat trick of victories in the 200, 400 and as the anchor of the 4x400 relay team. However, the Ducks will compete without her at the Oregon Invitational meet at Hayward Field today because she's getting physically tired and has decided to wait for the Pacific-10 Conference Championships in May.

People started recognizing the native of Frederiksberg, Denmark, immediately following the Pepsi Invite as one of the Ducks' best sprinters this year, despite this season being her first and most likely last one in Eugene.

"I think it's just great that people acknowledge what I do," Abildtrup said. "People are a little bit more private in Denmark."

One of those encounters occurred recently when she was grocery shopping alone at the PC Market of Choice on Franklin Boulevard near the Oregon campus. While browsing through the store, a man, who Abildtrup estimated was in his 50s, approached to introduce himself.

"He told me, 'I just wanted to welcome you to Oregon and I think you did a really good job,'" Abildtrup said.

Abildtrup, though, detects one common characteristic among most of the people who approach her.

"It's kind of funny because I've been stopped a couple times after that meet and it's almost always men in their 50s," she said jokingly.

Her teammates laugh off those incidents, since they know the type of person Abildtrup is; she's considered one of the nicest people on the team.

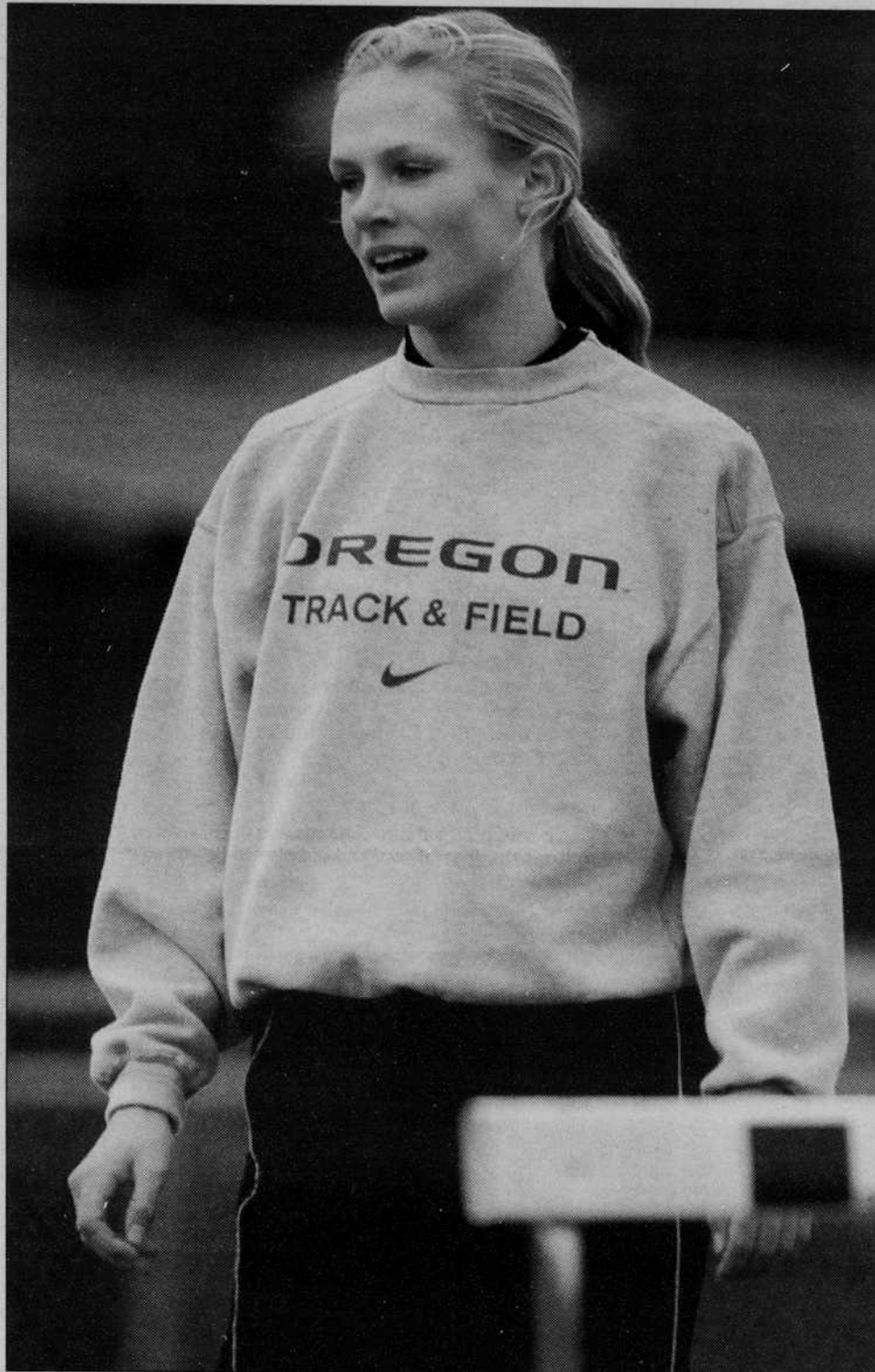
"She's a sweetheart," teammate and sprinter Michelle Donovan said. "She's just got a very cute sense of humor and is very energetic and polite. She's very good with talking to new people and she's just great with everyone."

Back on the track, her talents are no laughing matter.

Abildtrup's track career began almost 12 years ago in Denmark when some of her friends were working out and encouraged her to give it a try.

"I thought it was fun," Abildtrup said. "We had a good group of girls for a couple of years for the club I competed for."

In 1996, she realized her potential as a runner after a track meet in Portugal. She remembers finishing

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Geoff Thurner Oregon Media Services

Junior Sofie Abildtrup is one of Oregon's top sprinters in the 200 and 400-meter events.

Holliday ready for rematch

Brandon Holliday has added motivation to win the 400 hurdles at the upcoming Oregon Invitational

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

Brandon Holliday remembers.

The former Pacific-10 Conference 400-meter hurdle champion was competing in his signature event during the Pepsi Team Invitational on April 10 at Hayward Field.

Despite battling the tight turns that came with being stuck in lane one, the Beaverton native ran a respectable time of 51.52 seconds, which was more than one second better than the nearest competitor.

Except for one.

Fellow Duck and sophomore Eric Mitchum, who was victorious in the 110 hurdles earlier in the day, finished

.05 seconds ahead of Holliday, winning the event that the senior prides himself on.

"It did bother me, just not as much as people think it did," Holliday said. "I definitely wasn't happy about losing. Nobody wants to lose. But it's not like I lost to some guy off the street. Eric's a good athlete and he's stepping up his game every race. I was upset at myself, not at him."

Mitchum conceded that Holliday's second-place finish was likely due to him running in lane one, where the tightness of the turns can wear on an athlete during longer races.

"Running in lane one is hard to do," Mitchum said. "It's rough on the inside."

Still, not coming in first in the 400

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Mother's death still difficult for Reed

Six months after his mother's death, Ramone Reed is now challenging for a starting spot as a linebacker for the Ducks

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

Debra Fite would have wanted it this way. She would have wanted her son, Ramone Reed, to return to Oregon. She would have wanted him to get back on the field and into the classroom.

DUCK FOOTBALL

She would have wanted things to go back to normal for the Berkeley, Calif. native.

Fite was particularly close to Reed, a 21-year-old senior linebacker for the Ducks. After Fite passed away on Oct. 13, Reed tried to get things back to normal.

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Transfer of POWER

Junior transfer Ani Nyhus made the transition from junior college to the top-15 program this season

By Mindi Rice
Senior Sports Reporter

The Oregon softball coaching trio of Kathy Arendsen, J. Gaudreau and Mike White has either luck or recruiting know-how on its side.

Most likely, it's a little bit of both that helped the Ducks nab Ani Nyhus from Central Arizona College and propel her into the circle of a Division I, Pacific-10 Conference, top-15 program. In fact, Oregon's success this season can be traced to Nyhus. Her 17-7 record thus far reflects a small part of her contribution from the circle. In a March 27 victory against Utah State, Nyhus set a single-game strikeout record with 16 strikeouts on her way to a no-hitter in the second game of a doubleheader. From the

seventh inning of that doubleheader's first game, through April 4, Nyhus pitched 38.1 scoreless innings. She also threw two one-hitters in the same span.

Nyhus has also thrown four shutouts and two one-hitters against Pac-10 opponents, and has started all but two of Oregon's conference games, earning herself a 5-2 Pac-10 record. Arendsen recalled when Nyhus first caught her attention.

"(Assistant coach J. Gaudreau) and I were at the Canada Cup in the summer of 2002 and saw (Nyhus) pitch," said Arendsen, Oregon's head coach. "We thought she was going to be a freshman in junior college, so we had her on our list to watch for this year."

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Pitcher Ani Nyhus is 17-7 this season.

She threw a no-hitter, setting the Oregon record for 16 strikeouts during a March 27 game against Utah State. The junior transfer has been named Pacific-10 Conference Pitcher of the Week twice this season.

Erik R. Bishoff
Photographer