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Jon Roetman

Roughing the passer

Oregon vaulters epitomize teamwork

As senior pole vaulter Trevor Woods prepared himself for an attempt at a new season best during the Oregon Twilight, words of encouragement flowed from the mouths of his Duck teammates.

The determined Coos Bay native then sprinted towards his takeoff point, lifted himself more than 17 feet into the air and tried desperately to avoid knocking the bar from its resting place. Woods cleared the bar by the slimmest of margins, sending the crowd and his teammates into an eruption of applause.

Judging by the reaction of Woods' teammates, it was impossible to decipher who had just set a new season best. Each Oregon vaulter expressed so much joy that it would be easy to think that all four had cleared the bar at the same time.

While track and field is often viewed as individual competition, the team-oriented aspect of the sport often goes unnoticed.

One peek inside the oval at Hayward Field would introduce an observer into a world where individual successes are treated as team accomplishments. No group of track and field athletes exemplifies this mentality more than a quartet of Oregon pole vaulters. Tommy Skipper, David Moore, Jon Derby and Woods have about as much fun as athletes can while competing, and are constantly pushing one another to succeed.

"It's a great group of guys," pole vaulting coach Mark Vanderville said. "They're always helping each other."

While each athlete possess a different level of athletic ability, no accomplishment goes unnoticed and no failure comes without positive encouragement.

Skipper is the youngest and most physically gifted of the four Ducks. The freshman from Sandy set the school record in early February (18-8 3/4) and is routinely so far ahead of the competition that he is left to vault against himself by the end of the event. Despite his success, the 2003 Track and Field News' Boys Athlete of the Year often shows more interest in the accomplishments of his fellow Ducks.

Moore is the second youngest of the group and recently set a new season best at the Oregon Twilight (16-5 1/2). The redshirt freshman from Orinda, Calif., was a decorated prep athlete and knows his best vaulting is ahead of him. While Moore's marks are improving, he is usually left to watch his teammates attempt greater heights by the end of the event. Still, Moore is always utilizing his time on the field in a productive manner. When he's not vaulting, the former prep All-American is discussing technique with Vanderville or cheering on his teammates.

Moore is also one of the friendliest guys you could run into. Helping answer

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UO heads out to silence 'Cat calls



Tim Kupsick Photographer

Second baseman Erin Goodell and the Ducks take to Arizona this weekend in search of at least one win.

The Ducks head into the desert to play Arizona and Arizona State in their final conference road trip of the season

By Mindi Rice
Senior Sports Reporter

It has been 15 years since an Oregon softball team won a game against Arizona in Tucson, Ariz.

Just four times since Feb. 14, 1989, have the Ducks beat Arizona in Pacific-10 Conference play.

DUCK SOFTBALL

Tonight at 7 p.m., the No. 10 Ducks (37-14 overall, 9-6 Pacific-10 Conference) have their best chance in recent history

to change their fortune as they face No. 1 Arizona (48-3, 12-2).

Oregon is 1-1 this season against the Wildcats, with a 6-1 loss and 1-0 win at Howe Field. The Ducks were the first team to beat Arizona in conference play.

"I expect that it's going to be a great game," Oregon head coach Kathy Arendsen said. "I think we're going to be a lot tougher than they think we're going to be."

The Wildcats are coming off a 2-1 upset by No. 7 Stanford at Arizona's Rita Hillenbrand Memorial Stadium on Sunday. It was Arizona's third loss of the season. The Wildcats' first loss came in a preseason tournament to Washington. Their second loss was to Oregon.

"I know Arizona is going to be an angry and upset team because of the fact that they lost their last game as well," Arendsen said.

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UO quintet heads to start of Pac-10s

Four men and one woman will represent Oregon this Friday and Saturday in the decathlon and heptathlon

By Jon Roetman and Alex Tam
Sports Reporters

Entering an athletic event as the favorite can be a double-edged sword.

On the positive side, an athlete can intimidate his or her opponents before the event even starts. On the downside, being recognized as the one on top places a giant target on an athlete's back.

In this year's Pacific-10 Conference Championship decathlon, however, it will be a school with a target on its back instead of an athlete.

Oregon sports three of the conference's top five decathletes, with competition scheduled for today and Saturday.

Redshirt sophomore Andy Young (first, 7,179 points), redshirt senior Gabriel LeMay (second, 7,175) and redshirt sophomore Ryan Voge (fifth, 7,054) set conference-qualifying marks at the Mike Maynard Wildcat Combined Events decathlon during spring break. The trio is determined to finish 1-2-3 at Pac-10s, but expects to have plenty of competition.

"I don't think we'll have the respect of our opponents," Young said. "I think they're going to think the same thing that we think about them. They think that we can be beaten and we think they can be beaten. That's all there is to it."

A native of Newberg, Young is the team's top returning finisher, placing

fifth as a freshman at last year's Pac-10s (7,017). Young's strengths are the pole vault and the 1,500 meters.

LeMay is the oldest in the group and is confident he can close his final season at Oregon on a positive note. The Yoncalla native is a second-year transfer from Lane Community College who excels in the 400 and recently set a personal record in the pole vault at the Oregon Invitational (16 feet 1 1/4 inches).

LeMay said the Ducks are well prepared for Pac-10s because they face top-notch competition every day in practice.

"It's awesome," LeMay said. "Practicing with that kind of competition makes you learn to react to pressure."

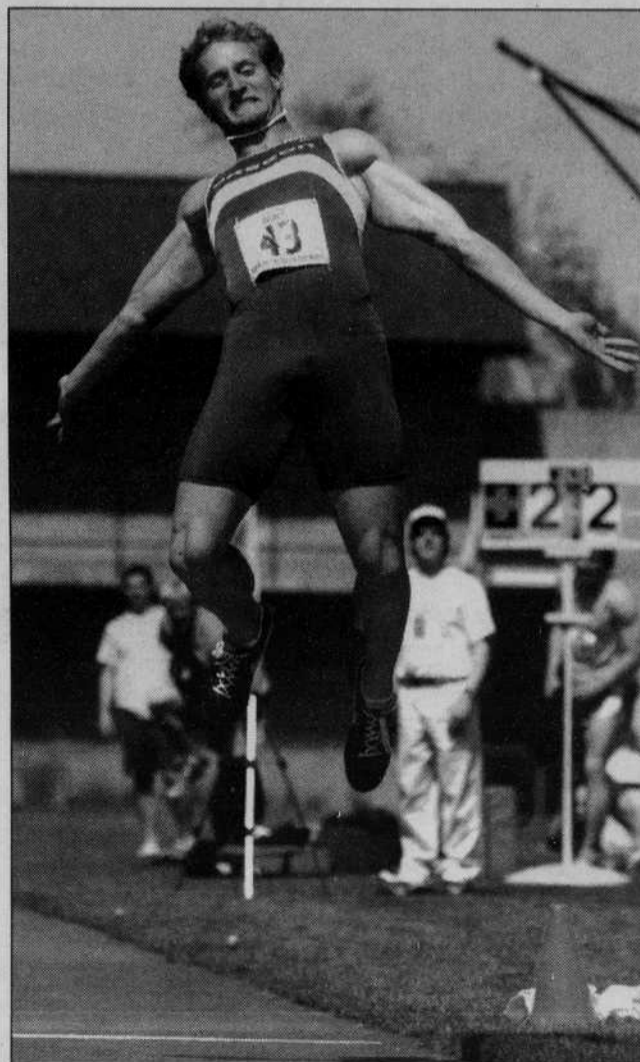
Regardless of how he finishes, Voge has had a successful year by just getting to where he is now. A walk-on who transferred from New Mexico, Voge's spring break performance in Tucson was a 606-point personal best. The Hillsboro native's best events are the long jump and the high jump.

While each Duck decathlete wants the personal glory of being crowned Pac-10 champion, the trio's main goal is to do well as a team and make it to nationals.

"I want to beat both of them badly," Voge said. "But I don't wish them to not perform well. I want them to do as well as they can but I hope in doing that, I still beat them."

Oregon will also use one of its three wild card entries to get freshman Tommy Skipper into the field. The Sandy native will make his event debut after focusing on the pole vault this year.

"I'd like to be in a little better shape," Turn to **QUINTET**, page 9



Lauren Wimer Senior Photographer

Gabriel LeMay enters today's decathlon ranked second in the Pacific-10 Conference. The Ducks will send four men and one woman south.