

■ In my opinion



STEPHEN MILLER  
OFF THE CROSSBAR

## Just try to 'Stop Bree' and her team of supporters

So much has happened in the world of Oregon track and field during the last few weeks.

Both the men and women have been putting together some impressive performances.

We've all heard about the arrival of Galen Rupp to the collegiate distance running world. Steve Prefontaine's boy wonder debuted at the Oregon Invitational last week where he suffered a nasty fall but still took fifth in the 5K race.

Then there's Jordan Kent, quite possibly the best athlete on any Duck roster — or rosters, in his case. The speedster, who happens to play basketball on the side, has already collected first-place finishes in the long jump and 4x100 relay coming off a redshirt season.

Rupp is like one of those gas-electric hybrid cars. He has a way of efficiently consuming his fuel during a race to make the laps look effortless.

Kent, on the other hand, is like a sports car you can fire up, put the pedal to the metal and be sure will be first to see the checkered flag.

The rest of us are amazed because we seem to be more like those road-crowding SUV's that lug around and let so much go to waste.

Away from the running world, throwers are usually overlooked in track and field, but tucked away in Hayward Field, the Oregon women are starting to catch the attention of many spectators with groundbreaking performances.

"It's great because throwers tend to be on the outskirts," Oregon hammer thrower Britany Hinchcliffe said. "But I think we get a lot of support here."

And the support is well deserved. The school records for two of the four throwing events have already been rewritten this season, and many more personal records have been improved.

Senior Bree Fuqua tallied the first record-breaker at the Montana Open by heaving her shot 53 feet, 9 inches.

Hinchcliffe made history when she started the Pepsi Team Invitational with a hammer toss of 199 feet, 2 inches (she broke the school record on a previous throw but decided to up the ante for fun). Fuqua added 2 1/4 inches to her shot put mark at that meet as well.

Teammates and training partners are trying to create some awareness about Fuqua and her progress.

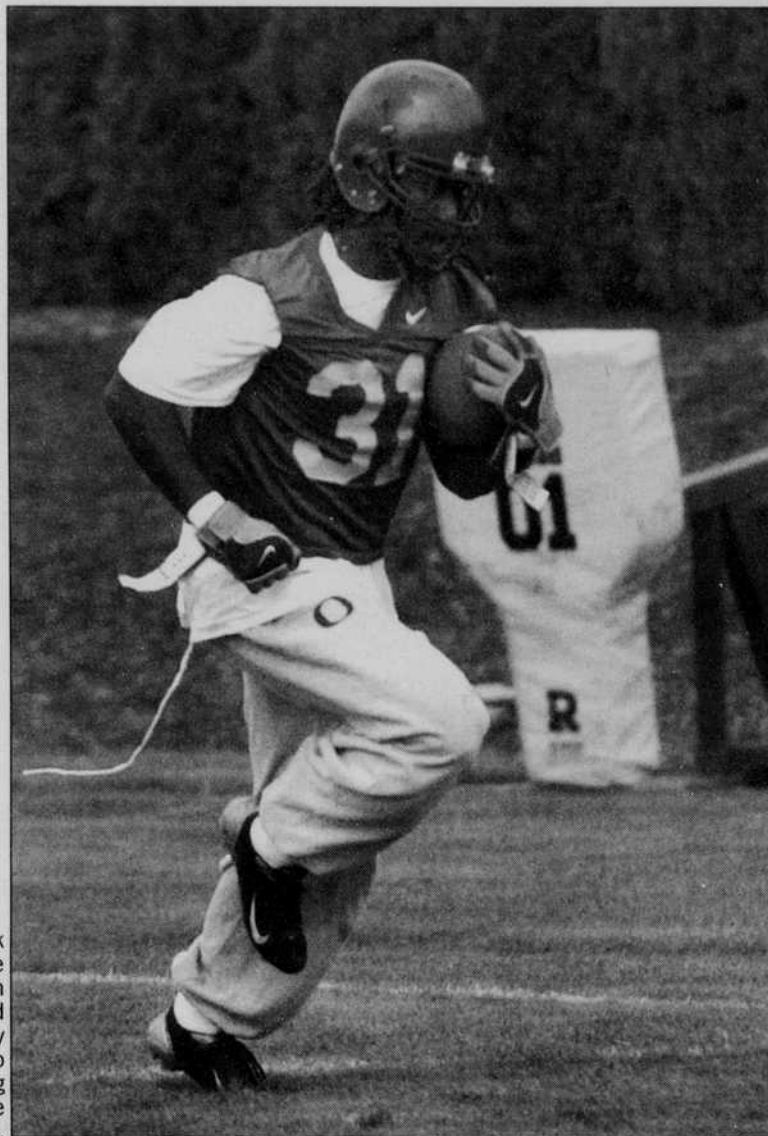
Forget trying to stop Pre, try stopping Bree.

That idea came from Oregon throws coach Lance Deal, and a group of his pupils ironed his sentiment onto cotton. Senior javelin thrower Sarah Malone, redshirt hammer thrower Britney Henry and Team XO hammer thrower Cari Soong all wore T-shirts with a stop sign on the front that read "Stop Bree."

Fuqua is Oregon's only everyday competitor in the shot put and discus. The depth that Oregon has in the hammer throw and javelin

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■ Duck football



Senior cornerback Justin Phinisee is part of an experienced Oregon secondary that is working to carry its spring success into the fall season.

DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

## Defensive backs gain invaluable confidence

The Duck secondary has lacked confidence in recent years but is finally feeling secure this spring

BY JON ROETMAN  
SENIOR SPORTS REPORTER

The life of an Oregon defensive back hasn't exactly been a glamorous existence during recent seasons.

Whether it was allowing former Arizona State quarterback Andrew Walter to throw for a Pacific-10 Conference record 536 yards at Autzen Stadium in 2002, or watching former Oregon State quarterback Derek Anderson knock the Ducks out of bowl game eligibility by throwing for 351 yards last fall, the Oregon secondary hasn't exactly been among the nation's elite.

As spring practice enters its final days, however, Oregon defensive backs have played like a group that knows it can succeed in the fall.

It appears there are no memories of the rented-mule style beatings taken at the hands of Pac-10 quarterbacks. There are no glaring signs of hesitancy. On any given play, Aaron Gipson can be seen locking up a receiver, while Justin Phinisee can be heard informing Duck pass catchers — especially Demetrius Williams — that their attempts to get open will be futile.

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■ Men's golf

## St. Clair shines as Ducks finish fifth

BY SCOTT J. ADAMS  
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

The Oregon men's golf team carried out a four-spot turnaround Wednesday in Walla Walla, Wash., at the final round of the Pacific-10 Conference Championships as the Ducks leap-frogged No. 14 Southern California and others to take fifth place. Tremendous play down the stretch from Justin St. Clair and Jay Snyder proved vital in pulling Oregon out of its ninth-place position after the first round.

"I'm really proud of the boys and how they played today," Oregon head coach Steve Nosler said. "With how we finished today, I like our chances of making it to the NCAA Regional."

The NCAA West Regional is in reach now for Oregon, a team that was in dire need of a strong finish at the championships. St. Clair spearheaded the late rally for the Ducks by carding a 2-under par 69 Tuesday and an even par 71 Wednesday. St. Clair's performance garnered him a tie for fifth place with California's Brandon Beck, which is the highest individual finish for a Duck at the Pac-10 Championship in 13 years.

The biggest surprise of the tournament came with the superb play of Vancouver, B.C., closed the third round of the sixth tournament he has played in as a Duck by shaving five

strokes off his first round score. It was the second straight day that Snyder, a walk-on, recorded a career-low round, a pleasant surprise for both him and Nosler.

"Jay gave us more than we needed at the end," Nosler said. "His third round really made a difference for us."

Like Snyder and St. Clair, sophomore Matt Ma also delivered a sub-70 score for Oregon on Tuesday and added a 1-under 70 on Wednesday. He finished the tournament tied for 14th.

Washington's Erik Olson shot a 2-under par 69 to claim the Pac-10 crown. He shot 8-under for the tournament and beat out Arizona's Nathan Lashley by a shot and Arizona State's Pat Moore by two. Moore was the leader after the third round Tuesday but struggled in the final round, shooting a 5-over par 76.

In the team competition, Washington came back from a 17-shot deficit to defeat No. 17 Arizona State in a tie-breaker. Washington shot a 5-under 250 on Wednesday, while the Sun Devils limped to the finish with a 12-over 267. The only other team to break par in the final round was No. 24 Arizona, who finished third. No. 16 UCLA finished fourth.

The fifth-place finish for Oregon capped off a rejuvenating period the NCAA Regional, which the Ducks are poised to attend. Combined team efforts in each week of play have helped



Oregon's Matt Ma, seen here earlier this season, shot a 70 on Wednesday to help lead the Ducks to a fifth-place finish at the Pacific-10 Conference Championships. Ma finished the tournament tied for 14th.

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the Ducks record top-10 finishes in the past five tournaments.

Nosler credits the success to his team's competitive nature, maintaining that Oregon intends to extend its season past the NCAA Regional, scheduled to

start May 19. Bids to the Regional will be announced Monday.

"We have had a terrific spring," Nosler said. "We don't want to go to regionals just to say we went to regionals, though. We want to make the most of it."