

"I just started laughing ... I told her, 'You launched that thing. You almost nailed their coach in the dugout.'"

Oregon softball player Erin Goodell about Breanne Sabol's error last weekend against Oregon State

Men's track and field

Relay team seeking its third title in a row

Oregon runners will take part in the Cardinal Invitational and the Drake Relays this weekend

BY BRIAN SMITH
SPORTS REPORTER

The Oregon men's track and field team splits up this weekend as the majority of the Ducks head for the Drake Relays in Des Moines, Iowa, on Saturday.

Meanwhile, Oregon will send some of its top distance runners to compete in the Cardinal Invitational at the Cobb Track & Angell Field in Stanford, Calif., on Sunday.

Saturday's competition in Iowa will mark the first time the No. 11 Ducks have competed in the Drake Relays since 1999 and will be highlighted by the 4x100-meter relay team, which will go for a third straight relay title as well as a new school record. In the last two events in as many weeks, the Ducks have nearly eclipsed the time of 39.80 set in 1991 and have notched two top-five times in Oregon history.

"We expect an extremely good time," relay team member Richard Del Rincon said. "If the handoffs are good, we should get the school record."

The Ducks are ranked third in the Pacific-10 Conference this season.

Not to be outdone, the 4x400 relay team of Kedar Inico, A.K. Ikwuakor, Travis Anderson and Matt Scherer will face off against NCAA Indoor Championship competitors Baylor and Northern Iowa, who finished second and third, respectively, just ahead of the fifth-place Ducks in March. In that race, the Ducks set an Oregon indoor record of 3:04.17.

Also in the sprinter category, redshirt sophomore Jordan Kent has settled into the outdoor season by winning two of his first three individual events since making his return at the Pepsi Invitational, including his long jump title last week at the Oregon Invitational. Kent won the event by more than six inches, but according to teammate Leonidas Watson, he still has some issues to work through.

"It was great," Watson said of Kent's performance last week. "Just a lot of technical stuff he isn't doing, and he's jumping that far without doing all that technical stuff. Man, he's ready to go far."

In the field events, senior Paul Etter will lead the field and try to better his season best of 203 feet, four inches in the hammer throw.

"I'm expecting to get a big mark," Etter said. "I haven't had one since the (Oregon) Preview. Anything over 62, 63 meters would be great."

A quintet of Oregon distance runners will make the trip to Stanford on Sunday, lead by seniors Eric Logsdon and Brett Holts. Holts will compete in his second steeplechase event of the season, while Logsdon will compete in the 5,000-meters. Also competing will be Robert Gillespie in the 800-meters, Kyle Alcorn and Scott Wall in the steeplechase and Nick Dalton in the 1,500-meters.

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Duck softball



Oregon shortstop Breanne Sabol, left and below, and second baseman Erin Goodell, right, have anchored the Ducks' defense for the past three seasons. The duo has helped Oregon lead the conference in double plays this season with 17.

Double Duty Double Duty

Erin Goodell and Breanne Sabol have helped the Ducks lead the conference in double plays

BY CLAYTON JONES
SPORTS EDITOR

The old saying goes that a double play is a pitcher's best friend.

For Oregon, it's been more than a best friend — it has been a savior.

The Ducks ranked third in the nation last season in double plays turned per game, and this season they once again sit atop the Pacific-10 Conference in that category.

The bulk of their defensive success can be traced to the continuity of their middle infielders, junior shortstop Breanne Sabol and senior second baseman Erin Goodell.

"It's the whole reason why we love being out there," Goodell said about turning a double play. "Each game we try and tell ourselves that we want to turn a couple double plays."

Sabol said the double play is especially special

because of the shorter dimensions in softball (60 feet between bases) compared to baseball (90 feet).

"It's cool because in softball I guess you don't get many double plays because you are closer," the Buena Park, Calif., native said. "Sometimes (baseball players) make it look like it happens all the time and it's easy. People probably think, 'Why doesn't softball turn that many double plays?'"

"That's why I think it's cool we turn so many double plays and still make them look pretty nice."

Goodell admits there is a hint of bitterness toward baseball players and the time they have to turn a double play.

"You watch the highlights

on SportsCenter and it looks like they are taking it nice and easy," the Roseburg native said. "They are so nonchalant and casual about it."

"I'm a little jealous about that, I'm not going to lie." All jealousy aside, these two have formed a double play combo that defensively is second to none in the conference according to teammate Beth Boskovich.

"On most teams, I don't think every time a ball is hit up the middle with a runner on first it is common for a double play, but for us it seems automatic," Boskovich said. For pitchers and coaches it's even more of a luxury.

"It's security," Oregon softball head coach Kathy Arendsen said. "I have complete confidence in both those players. They read (the situation) well and see what the pitcher is throwing and adjust ... It is a great advantage for us."

While they can read situations well, the two have also become familiar with each other's playing styles over the past three seasons and trust one another's instincts.

"We just know each other so well and the chemistry is there," Goodell said. "We know how each other

Women's track and field

Kersh looks to achieve 180 mark at next relay

Also, Julie Schmidt-Scherer will attempt the 200-meter leg of the Sprint Medley for the first time

BY STEPHEN MILLER
SPORTS REPORTER

A select group of the Oregon women's track and field team is visiting Des Moines, Iowa, to compete in the Drake Relays, which run through Saturday.

Some athletes will try to improve regional qualifying marks, while others will focus on form and technique. Nevertheless, first-place finishes will be more of a challenge for the Ducks this week than they have been in the past.

"It's supposed to be competitive, with some very competitive people going," Oregon hammer thrower Katie Kersh said. "There's going to be a lot of flights so it should be a good meet for us. So far we (the throwers) haven't had a lot of competition."

Oregon's throwers represent the largest portion of the traveling squad. Kersh and teammate Brittany Hinchcliffe have already earned invitations to the NCAA West Regional competition. In fact, Kersh qualified last weekend with a toss of 179-7 at the Oregon Invitational.

"That was a pretty good step for me," the redshirt senior said about her three-foot improvement on her personal record. "I've thrown pretty well in practice but I hadn't done it in a meet."

Saturday, Kersh will strive for an even higher measurement.

"I want to go over 180 (feet)," Kersh said. "I think 180 is within my grasp. I'd like to get 185, but I try not to think about distance; I try thinking about throwing well."

Javelin throwers Sarah Malone, Roslyn Lundeen and Elisa Crumley will all be throwing today, as will Bree Fuqua in her two events: shotput and discus. All four athletes hold regional qualifying marks in their respective events.

On the track, the Ducks are slated to compete in the Sprint Medley for the first time this season.

Oregon freshman Julie Schmidt-Scherer, a native of Denmark, said she will run the second 200-meter leg of the race just after being introduced to the relay's structure.

"I had never heard of it before, but it sounds cool," Schmidt-Scherer said. "I ran the 200 and 400 in the last two weeks and I ran really slow. I'm in good shape, but I just need to get out better."

Schmidt-Scherer expects that Sofie Abildtrup will run the first 200-meter leg, Michelle Donovan will run the 400-meter leg and Sara Schaaf will anchor the race with an 800-meter leg.

The Ducks are also scheduled to compete in the 4x400 relay, with preliminaries running today and the final race on Saturday.

Oregon heptathlete Lauryn Jordan will have a light load this week as she is only participating in the triple jump today and the long jump Saturday. She will be Oregon's lone female jumper to make the trip.

Sophomore pole vaulter Emily Enders will also compete this weekend, as will senior Kayla Mellott and freshman Kasey Harwood in the 400 hurdles.

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