

■ In my opinion



STEPHEN MILLER
OFF THE CROSSBAR

State is last hurrah for high school track talents

Everything to do with high school is in the past.

The mediocre SAT scores good enough for admission to Oregon are now just forgotten numbers.

But there's no reason — other than a Thirsty Thursday hangover — why we members of higher education can't revisit the days of jammed lockers, spitwads and ice cream-scooped mashed potatoes.

How, you ask?

Well, though none of the items mentioned above will be available, it just so happens that the 2005 Oregon Track and Field State Championships is in Eugene for Class 3A and 4A competitions. Hayward Field, which recently received a facelift in the form of a distinguished entrance, will hold the prep showcase today and Saturday.

This is where the cream-of-the-crop prep athletes can show that their talents extend beyond accurately tossing apples out of school bus windows and consuming mounds of concession-stand hot dogs.

"In high school, State is like what Nationals is to (collegiate athletes) now," said Oregon thrower Bree Fuqua, who won five prep state titles in Montana. "State was always a really big deal. It was your last meet of the year and it's where everything comes together."

"When you sit down at the beginning of the year and write your goals, every kid writes down where they want to place in State. For the kids that are here this weekend, it's probably a culmination of their entire season in that one meet, definitely for the seniors."

That makes it sound like there's a lot at stake, and there is.

"College coaches just look at the State results," Fuqua said. "They just check all the State results and see how people competed at big meets, because it tells them a lot about what kind of competitor they are. It's kind of a big deal in more ways than some of the kids think about, but hopefully it's just fun for them and competitive."

For those without the added pressure of trying to impress collegiate coaches, it's the end of the road — their 15th minute. Oregon senior Sarah Malone has some advice for competitors at State: "Take it all in. For most athletes, it's their last hoorah."

For those wanting to advance to the next level: "Enjoy the easy ride while you can; it's a lot different and a lot harder in college," Malone said.

Malone competed at the State Championships all four years of high school. She said it was "a preview of what life was going to be like from then on."

The Newberg High School graduate said she will be at Hayward Field this weekend to welcome two javelin throwers from her alma mater who will be filling her shoes. Seniors Rachel Yurkovich and Cyrus Hostetler both have plans to compete for Oregon next season. Yurkovich holds a 15-foot advantage as the state's top female javelin thrower. Hostetler owns the third-best toss in the state and is only three inches off the top mark.

Plenty of other former Oregon prep champions are currently competing for the Ducks.

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UO kicks off inaugural World Cup

Eight teams will compete in this weekend's soccer tournament, which will donate all its proceeds to the National Parkinson's Foundation

BY JON ROETMAN
SENIOR SPORTS REPORTER

Fundraising, education and soccer passion will collide in Eugene this weekend as the Warsaw Sports Marketing Club and the Korean

Student Association host the inaugural University of Oregon World Cup.

The two-day event will feature eight teams composed mostly of University students and members of the surrounding community and

will be held at the main turf field next to the Student Recreation Center. All proceeds will benefit the National Parkinson's Foundation.

The eight teams will be split into two groups of four, with play starting at 10 a.m. Saturday. Play will continue through Sunday, with the top two teams from each group advancing to the playoffs.

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THE FIRST STEP



ZANE RITT | PHOTOGRAPHER

The Oregon softball team (34-23 overall) begins its quest for the Women's College World Series in Norman, Okla., at 3 p.m. today against Sun Belt Conference champion No. 14 Louisiana-Lafayette (50-8). The Ducks are making their third consecutive trip to the NCAA tournament and are led by ace Amy Harris and her 1.16 ERA. It will be the last chance for seniors such as Erin Goodell, above, to make it to the World Series after being only one game away the past two seasons.

■ Men's track and field

Personal bests reign at Pac-10 tourney



DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

Oregon sprinter Kedar Inico, right, along with teammate Matt Scherer scored critical points for the Ducks in the 2005 Pacific-10 Championships last week. Inico took home the 400-meters title with a personal best time of 45 minutes, 61 seconds.

Paul Etter in the hammer throw and Kedar Inico in the 400 led Oregon in its 152-point finish

BY BRIAN SMITH
SPORTS REPORTER

Oregon's 2005 Pacific-10 Conference championship last week paid tribute to the depth and talent the Ducks have showcased all season.

In Los Angeles, Duck competitors finished in the top five in 16 of the 21 events, all scoring four points or more, en route to a school-record 152 points tallied at the conference meet.

Buoyed by the strength of the sprint corps for much of the season, Oregon got strong and unexpected performances from the field events, led by the return of Lars Mueller Laursen. The Copenhagen, Denmark, native finished second in the javelin, behind California's Paul Teinert, after sitting out the entire outdoor season recovering

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