

Oregon men hold lead in NCAA championships

By NEIL BRANSON
For the Daily Astorian



AP Photo/Don Ryan

Oregon's Edward Cheserek, left, crosses the finish line ahead of teammate Eric Jenkins as they finish 1-2 in the men's 10,000 meters during the NCAA track and field championships in Eugene Wednesday.

Home grown (Sweet Home) decathlete Dakota Keys finished Day 1 of the two-day completion in fourth place with 4,072 points, 168 back of event leader Pau Tonnesen of Arizona.

Keys is confident going into Day 2 as he said "that was one of my best first days that I have had in a long time."

In the 5,000 meters, Oregon will flex its distance strength with Cheserek and Jenkins, who will be joined by Will Geoghegan and Jake Leingang.

Day 2 - Ladies Rule

Thursday, Oregon's women got off to an excellent start with the first running event of the day, as their 400-meter

relay team qualified for Saturday's finals by placing second in their heat, running 43.49.

Jenna Prandini, who anchored the relay, came back to qualify in the 100 meters (11.03) behind Morolake Akinosun of Texas at 10.96.

Prandini no sooner finished the 100 before she headed for the long jump competition. She left the long jump prelims with the leading mark, then ran the 200-meter preliminary in which she got second to qualify for the finals.

Prandini was leading the long jump at 22-3/4 going into the fifth jump when she was passed by Alabama sophomore Quanesha Burks (22-8). Having passed her fourth



AP Photo/Don Ryan

The crowd watches as Oregon's Jillian Weir competes in the hammer throw during the NCAA track and field championships in Eugene Thursday. notforsale

and fifth jumps, Prandini had one last chance to pull out the victory but fouled.

What a day for Prandini, as she qualified for the finals in the 100 and 200, anchored the 400 relay that made it to the finals and picked up eight points for her team with the second place in the long jump.

Squeaking into the finals in the 1,500 was freshman Nikki Hiltz (4:18.26). She will come back Saturday with the possibility of getting into the top eight for team points.

With her 2:06.94 in the semi, 11th of 12 qualifiers, Oregon's Raevyn Rogers looks like she could be a force in the finals as she ran smooth and only extended herself in the

last 150 meters to easily win her heat.

Putting five points on the board for the ladies was Julian Weir with a 218-11 throw in the hammer. The event was won by junior DeAnna Price of Southern Illinois (234-6).

Another four points came from Brittany Mann in the shot put as she threw 56-6 for fifth. The real excitement in this event came when Raven Saunders, a freshman from Southern Illinois, went from fourth to first on her final throw with a toss of 60-2 1/2, and in the process improved on her American Junior Record. On her last throw Raven passed Wisconsin junior Kelsey Card, who posted a best of 58-11 1/4.

SCOREBOARD

SPORTS SCHEDULE

TODAY
Junior State Baseball — Neah-Kah-Nie at Seaside, 4 p.m.

SATURDAY
Baseball — Jon Gizdavich Memorial Alumni Doubleheader, Broadway Field, 1 p.m.

SUNDAY
Junior State Baseball — Wilson at Astoria Ford (2), 2 p.m.; Astoria Ford B at Nehalem (2), 2 p.m.

Experienced at coming from behind, Raven also won the indoor title on her final throw.

Having not really flexed any muscle in the distance races, the Oregon ladies changed all that as they picked up nine points in the 10,000 with junior Molly Grabill and senior Waverly Neer, fourth and fifth, respectively, in 33:26.62 and 33.26.98.

The day ended as it started for the Ducks as they lead the competition with 31 points, followed by Arkansas with 22 and Georgia 21.

With the decathlon finishing up Thursday, the Oregon men picked up another six points with Dakota Keys' third-place, which will send the men into the last day with 40 points. A long way back, but loaded with speed, are Florida and USC.

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