

EUGENE, OREGON, FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 1972

Ducks blanked in NCAA 1,500, steeplechase

Prefontaine: UO 'not out of this'

By **BLAINE NEWNHAM**
Register-Guard Sports Editor

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A string which began with Bill Dellinger's 4:13.8 mile victory in 1954 and included five other mile victories and one steeplechase title, ended Thursday at an unlikely place, Hayward Field.

Texas-El Paso Coach Wayne Vandenburg called it "gasitis" on Oregon's part, which translated means Oregon failed to respond to the challenge in the national champion meet it has won four times. Choke is another word.

"OREGON DIDN'T do very well, did they?" asked Jim Bush, the UCLA coach who was answering his own question. And Vern Wolfe, the USC coach, called it a three-team race for the title. He mentioned his Trojans, UCLA and El Paso.

Quite frankly, the Ducks did about as well as could be expected for a team which got a fifth place in the Pacific-8 Conference mile and a fourth in the Pac-8 steeplechase.

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Gone besides Lathers and Long in the steeple, Rhen, Ritchie and Mark Feig in the 1,500, were Russ Francis in the javelin, John Mays in the 100, Mike McClendon in the 800, Paul Wilkinson in the intermediate hurdles, Randy James in the 5,000 and Marty Hill in the high jump.

"I said before the week started that if we finished in the top five that would be great," said Bowerman, "and that if we failed to finish in the top 10 I'd be disappointed. And right now it looks like a one-two-three battle between USC, UCLA and El Paso.

"But," he said, "if we got awfully hot with our half-dozen or so good competitors, we'd have a chance."

OREGON'S POINT potential is where it has always been, with Prefontaine in the 5,000, Moore in the long jump, Pete Shmock in the shot put, MacWilkins and Gary Wolf in the discus and the two relay teams, both of which look capable of scoring.

Perhaps the key to Oregon's fleeting chances for the team title are with Moore, the defending long jump champion who qualified 11th Thursday among 12 qualifiers.

He had hoped for a one-jump qualifying effort, but instead had to make it on his third and final jump at 24-10 $\frac{3}{4}$. Earlier, he had fouled a good jump and then followed that with a 24-7. USC freshman Randy Williams, the Pac-8 champ, opened with 26-7 $\frac{3}{4}$ and it easily stood up. The marks do not carry over to the finals, however.

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True. Rick Ritchie was fourth in a heat with three to qualify, running 3:47.6 for 1,500 meters (4:04.6). And Bob Rhen was fifth in his, running 3:49.2. In the steeplechase, Mike Long and Todd Lathers both finished out of the money when you had to run better than 8:50 to qualify.

One wire service called Lathers' failure a major disappointment for the Ducks, recalling Lathers' 8:40.4 last season. Fact is that Lathers has not won a steeplechase all year and was dead last in the Pac-8 final in 9:40.4.

To suggest that he would score in this meet was incorrect. And so it went.

"As far as I'm concerned," said Steve Prefontaine, who easily upheld tradition, "all the (Oregon) guys that I thought would qualify, qualified, and all the ones I thought wouldn't, didn't qualify."

"We're not out of this anyway. Our big guns are up tomorrow and Saturday."

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Moore, who was jumping for the first time in three weeks, was obviously hurting.

"I WAS FEELING okay," he said, "and then on my third jump, I felt it." Bouncy was pointing to his lower left thigh which has pained him because of a pinched nerve in his back. "It all depends on how this feels later on tonight."

If Oregon is to remain in contention, either Moore or Blackman, who ranked sixth with a jump of 25-8, must score high, very high.

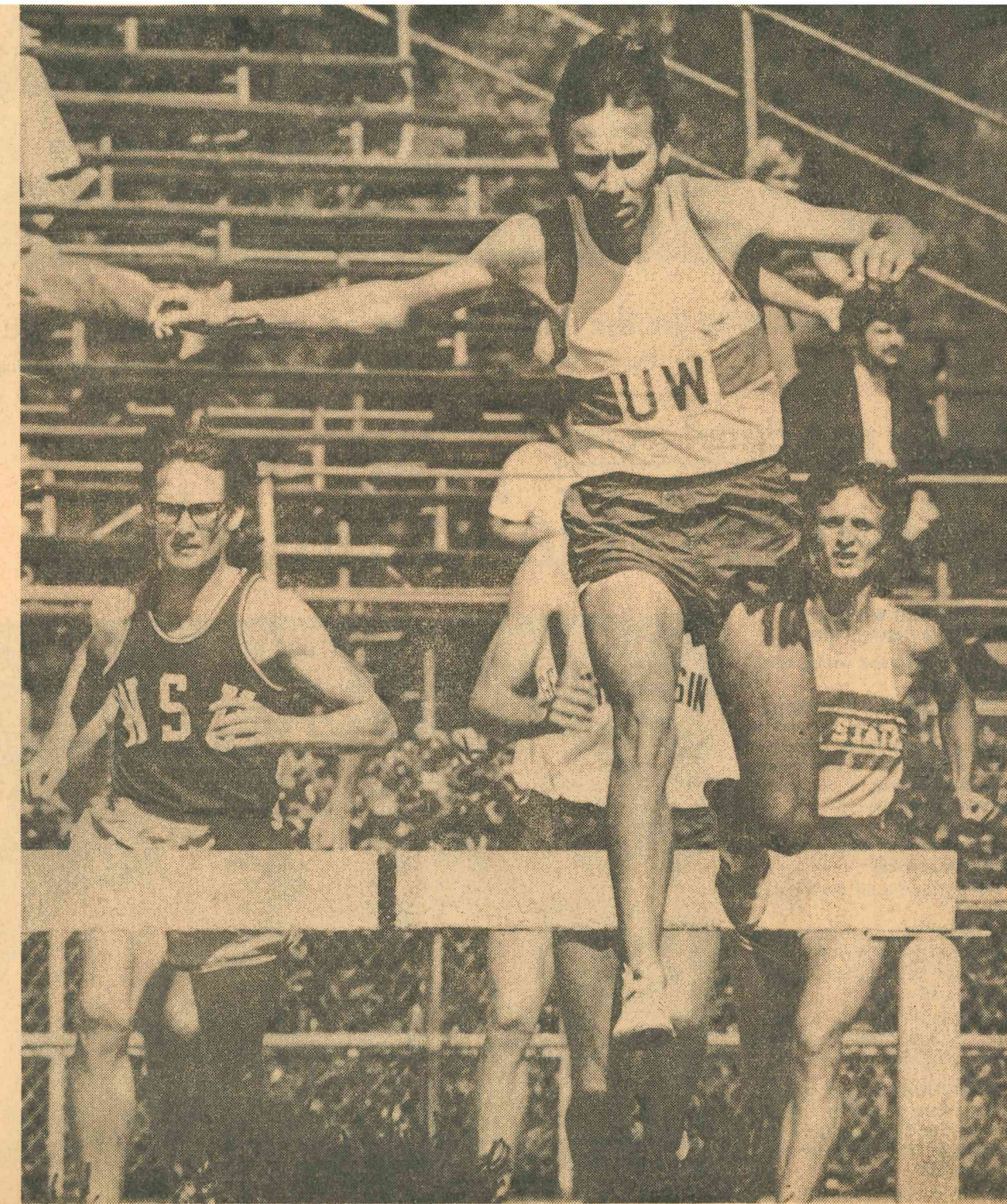
"Bouncy is a hell of a competitor," said Bowerman, "and he'll have to be."

Finals in the long jump, hammer, shot put, 100 meters, 110-meter high hurdles and 10,000 meters go today. The program begins at 3:00 with Bouncy and the long jump.

IN A DAY of qualifying, those who don't make it, are often more important than those who do.

Some who didn't:

● Cary Feldmann, the defending NCAA champion and Pan-American



(Register-Guard photo by Paul Petersen)

Jim Johnson is over the barrier and on his way

Washington steeplechaser leads this heat with WSU's Graham Hutchinson second at this point

gold medalist, was 17th in the javelin with a throw of 225-7.

● Fred Samara of Penn and Mike Hill of Colorado, pre-meet decathlon favorites, dropped out with injuries.

● Harold Williams of Texas-El Paso was disqualified for two false starts in the 100 and teammate Steve Williams reinjured a groin muscle and is out for the meet.

● Hailu, Oregon State's 3:40.4 1,500-meter man, ran fifth in his heat

behind Ritchie, in 3:48.8, and teammate Keith Munson, third last year, ran out of the money.

● George Daniels of Colorado, a placer in both the 100 and 220 last June, failed to cut it.

● Herb Washington, the Big 10 century champion with the best of 9.2, didn't make it clear.

OREGON NOTES . . . Vincent Buford almost stopped for fear of running out of the passing zone in taking the exchange from Ross Blackman but the Ducks won their sprint relay heat, anyway, running 40.8 . . . Hearvey ran a windy 20.5 in finishing third in his 200-meter heat. "I

ran the curve strong," he said. "And in the 100 I think if I get a good start I can hold it." About Oregon's chances in the short relay, Hearvey said, "I think we can score. We did last year (fourth). I'm surprised we haven't already gone under 40 seconds." . . . Harris said he thought he'd have to run 13.5 to make the final in the 100 high hurdles . . . One of the most surprised people was Bence, the UO freshman who fought his way out of a box to finish third in his 800 heat in 1:48.4 behind Morgan Mosser of West Virginia (1:47.8) and Oregon State's Clay Lowrey (1:48.1) and ahead of LSU's Bob Smith (1:48.8), who had the fastest pre-meet time in the field. "I didn't think I'd have to run that fast," said Bence. "I got so boxed in I almost quit once. I guess it was another lesson in running, but this is a terrible time to learn."