

AAU meet opens on a dull note

Duck star spurns the mile

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. — The Cop Out, the Pre Out (of a mile) or the Big Bore. Any of the three would have described first-day action in the 85th annual AAU track and field championships Thursday night.

Action there was not as Memorial Stadium quickly became the site of the non-show instead of the Big Show. When the athletes finished their non-appearing act, trials were needed in only five of the 15 events scheduled for the first day.

Even Steve Prefontaine was bored with the show.

"My mental attitude was not really into this," said the Oregon star after winning the second heat of the three-mile trials in 13:17.8. "It was kinda Mickey Mouse."

FOR SEVERAL DAYS, area track fans had been saturated with published reports that Pre would challenge Marty Liquori in the mile. Some of the stories even said Pre would be going for Jim Ryun's world record of 3:51.1 set here six years ago.

Not so, said Pre.

"I didn't even open my mouth."

"Pre was surprised as anyone when he read it in the paper," said Oregon Coach Bill Dellinger. "There were no plans whatsoever for him to run the mile here."

Whatever Pre's plans were, he had little trouble winning his heat of the three-mile. Taking over on the sixth lap of the 12-lapper, he remained in control throughout the remainder of the race before letting up at the finish.

Dick Buerkle of the New York Athletic Club, leader for the first five laps, finished second in 13:19.0 with James Crawford of the Army next at 13:24. Paul Geis of the Oregon Track Club followed in 13:26-flat as six men qualified from the heat for Saturday's final.

MARIO PEREZ of Mexico won the first heat in 13:22.3 with John Hartnett of the New York AC second in 13:28.6.

Two members of the Oregon Track Club qualified for Saturday's final in the mile.

Mark Feig completed the four laps in 4:04.3 to finish second behind the fast-closing Chuck LaBenz (4:04.0) in the first heat. Scott Daggatt, equaling his second best time, clocked 4:02.1 to place fourth in the second heat as six qualified from each heat for the final.

Len Hilton of the Pacific Coast Club won the second heat in 4:00.5 with the Marines' Howell Michael second in 4:01.5 and Liquori third in 4:02.0.

IN HAMMER QUALIFYING, Eugene native Steve DeAutremont, a two-time NCAA champion while at Oregon State and now competing for the Beverly Hills Striders, turned his last attempt into a 205-7 throw to move from a tie for 11th to fifth place among the qualifiers.

World co-record-holder Steve Williams of the San Diego Track Club topped qualifying in the 100-yard dash as he won the opening heat in 9.4. Williams also qualified in the 220, winning his heat in 21.2. Mark Lutz and Willie Deckard each had times of 21.0 to pace qualifiers.

Thursday qualifying in the shot put, javelin, 120 high hurdles, 440, 880 and 440 intermediate hurdles were cancelled Wednesday because of lack of entries. For the same reason, qualifying in the steeplechase, long jump and high jump were scrubbed Thursday.

Then, because of the wind, trials in the pole vault were called off, leaving spectators with no action to watch at times Thursday night as meet officials stuck to their original time schedule.

Finals are scheduled for tonight in the hammer, long jump, shot, discus, 100, high hurdles, intermediate hurdles and six-mile. The remainder of the meet will be held Saturday night.