

It's official: Prefontaine double best ever

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It didn't beat UCLA, but Steve Prefontaine's mile—three-mile double against the Bruins has the track and field world talking to itself.

His 3:56.8-13:06.4 was officially judged the best one-day double in the history of track and field Monday when Track and Field News certified it via the Portugese Scoring Tables.

Pre's double, achieved in one hour and five minutes, bettered the previous double of 3:53.1-13:31.6 by Kip Keino at Kisumu, Kenya, in 1967.

Pre's double is worth 1,978 points, surpassing Keino's total of 1,949.

His mile and three-mile times are also the best recorded in the world this year.

WHILE HE WAS impressing the world, Pre didn't do much for his relations with his Oregon teammates, however.

He was openly disgruntled with the team's performance in losing to UCLA Saturday.

"I don't know why I ought to go out there and kill myself," he said of his double. "I don't think our team is competing up to its capabilities. I don't think our sprinters came through the way they should."

Earlier, Oregon Coach Bill Dellinger had talked about Pre doubling in the Pac-8 meet, running a steeplechase one day and the three-mile the next. There are no heats in either race.

"At this point why should I consider doubling," he said. "Our team hasn't come along like it should. I don't need to double; I'll do it only if we have a chance to win. Right now we don't look like we do."

Although the Ducks lost Saturday, the quality and depth of distance running was superb. Pre not withstanding.

IT WAS ONLY a year ago that the Ducks failed for the first time in 15 years to qualify a runner for the finals of either the NCAA mile or steeplechase. And to make matters worse, it was at Hayward Field.

A year later, however, the Ducks once again appear ready to dominate, to send three or four runners under nine minutes in the two-mile and steeplechase, and even to go under four minutes in the mile.

Even though Washington State is mounting distance strength as evidenced by the fine three-mile performances Saturday of John Ngeno and Phil Burkwist, the Ducks should be able to score heavily in the Pac-8 mile, three-mile, six-mile and steeplechase.

And there will be no more appropriate setting than Hayward Field, the site of the Pac-8 on May 18-19.

LAST YEAR IN the Pac-8 the Ducks could get just a fifth place in the mile and a fourth in the steeplechase.

Last year, however, Todd Lathers' best was 8:48 in the steeplechase and he was dead last in the Pac-8 final in 9:40.4.

Last year Mark Feig hadn't run well enough to make the 24-man squad limit. And neither had Scott Daggatt, by a long ways.

And Bob Grubbs and Gary Barber were still in high school.

From this group, however, has come a new age in Oregon distance running as evidenced Saturday when

Daggatt and Feig broke 4:03 in the mile, Lathers ran the nation's fastest steeplechase time, and Grubbs showed his competitiveness in gunning down UCLA's Jim Salcido in the three-mile.

Perhaps the most pleasant surprise is Daggatt.

"Last year I was trying to be a three-miler," he said, "and I just couldn't get it together.

"So Dellinger thought I ought to try the mile."

IT'S BEEN MORE than an experiment for Daggatt, who's now chopped more than 10 seconds off his high school best of 4:14. He came to Oregon from Bellevue, Wash., in fact, more known as a long distance runner. He had run 9:05 for two miles and 29:45 for six miles.

"That's an important breakthrough," said Prefontaine, who led Daggatt and Feig to a sweep of UCLA, Washington State and Nebraska.

"You have to contend with 4:05,"

he continued. "It's a barrier just like 4:10. Now the next one for them is 4:00."

Dellinger was completely pleased with the progress of Feig and Daggatt and brought both of them to Monday's Oregon Club meeting.

"I mentioned earlier in the year that these guys weren't giving us consistent performances," he said. "Well, they've shown now that they can meet the challenge."

Grubbs showed that Saturday, too, when he stayed with his UCLA opponent and nailed him down the backstretch to the delight of the 9,500 fans on hand.

GRUBBS, ODDLY enough, was not highly recruited in high school even though he finished third in the California state meet behind two juniors and ran 8:54.

Neither California nor Stanford talked to him even though he was in nearby Fremont, Calif., and he finally signed a Big Ten letter of intent with Indiana and former OSU Coach Sam Bell.

But Grubbs had always wanted Oregon. He came up for the Olympic Trials, and talked again with Dellinger.

Grubbs dropped 10 seconds to 13:39.6 against the Bruins and is shooting for 13:30 or better. He is already well below the NCAA qualifying mark of 13:55.

A performance overshadowed by Lathers' 8:35 was the 8:45 by Mike Long in the steeplechase, or well below the 9:00 NCAA standard. Long's time would have placed him third in the Pac-8 last year and ninth in the NCAA.

SATURDAY AT Pullman, Dellinger will apparently scramble his distance running order against the Cougars.

Right now, it appears that Lathers will run a mile, Feig an 880, Long a three-mile.

Dellinger also indicated that Pre may or may not run, depending on the meet's outcome. A year ago he wouldn't have considered it. Times have changed.