

# Pre turns back Hailu as Ducks blitz Beavers

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In a race that those who saw will never forget — and in five years 100,000 people will say they were there — Steve Prefontaine reached back for more intestines than one man's stomach should hold in repelling the inspired 1,500-meter challenge of Oregon State's Hailu Saturday at Hayward Field.

Bill Bowerman called it one of the greatest races he has ever seen.

It will forever overshadow Oregon's obliteration of OSU in the dual meet (117-37), Pete Shock's prodigious 66-5 shot put, Bouncy Moore's windy 26-5¼ long jump, Tinker Hatfield's 16-1 frosh record in the pole vault, and UO school records by Mike Bolliger (177-9) in the hammer and Ed Bilusak (49-7¼) in the triple jump.

**IN ALL, THE Ducks** blitzed the Beavers with 10 lifetime bests, equalled two others and added two season bests in sweeping four consecutive events — the 440, 880, discus and 100. OSU won only one

event, a 5,000-meter triumph by Leonard Hill.

It was the first time Oregon had scored more than 100 points against OSU in 69 meetings, and it was the worst beating the Beavers have ever absorbed in the track Civil War, exceeding a 99½-31½ Oregon win in 1957.

"In my 23 years of coaching," said OSU Coach Berny Wagner, "that is the very best job I've ever seen a track team do against a team I've coached.

"Oregon came to compete."

Especially Pre.

In an effort to blunt Oregon's mounting momentum by beating its ace, Prefontaine, Wagner threw Hailu into the 1,500 when the coach had led all to believe the Ethiopian sophomore would oppose Steve Bence in the 800 meters.

A revved up crowd of more than 9,000 responded to the notification that Hailu, who has run a 3:59.3 mile this year, would oppose Pre at 1,500, the shortest distance Pre will run competitively.

**"IT WAS SOMETHING** the kid (Hailu)

wanted to do," said Wagner. "I tried to take as much pressure off him this week as I could. He's been under a lot, believe me. He's been taking tranquilizers all week."

The results say that Prefontaine won in 3:39.8 (a lifetime best for him at that distance and the equivalent of a 3:56.8 mile) and that Hailu was three strides back in 3:40.4.

As Pre said later, "I wanted the race to be a question of who had the most guts, not who had the most speed."

Pre, who was aware of Hailu's speed, can thank teammate Rich Ritchie, who pulled the field through a rapid 57-second first lap.

The 800-meter lead went to Pre in 1:57 and he had it at three laps when Hailu made his move.

The crowd sensed the time had come for Pre to be tested. For a moment or two, as they battled stride for stride down the back stretch, there was a lingering doubt whether Pre could repel the challenge of the quicker African.

**PRE USED HIS** superior experience, moving gradually over on the track as the two moved in front of the east grandstand. He forced Hailu to move wider than he wanted and the Ethiopian could never forge ahead.

Slowly, Pre pulled away around the turn and, although he wobbled the last 30 yards from sheer exhaustion, he hung on to win. The victory was not an easy one.

"I had to make him sprint sooner than he wanted to," Pre said later. "I know he's got speed. But it's pretty tough to sprint after you've run a 1:57 half.

"At the gun lap I could feel him coming on. He started sprinting and I started, too. I knew that if he wouldn't go by me with 300 yards to go, he wouldn't go by. I was determined not to let him pass me there."

Pre was reading Hailu's strategy correctly.

"Hailu ran exactly the race I told him to run," explained Neil Webber, the OSU assistant who trains Hailu.

**"I TOLD HIM** to take Pre with 300

left. That's exactly where Arne Kvalheim took him last year in the Twilight Meet. Pre's never been beaten in college by a college runner and we thought if Hailu jumped him there he might shake his confidence."

Both Webber and Hailu commented on Pre's tactics of moving his novice foe to the outside down the backstretch.

"It was smart tactics on Pre's part," said Webber. "He moved Hailu out to the third or fourth lane. Hailu didn't know enough to hold his ground and be bumped."

Hailu, a 20-year-old from Addis Ababa who was a 4:32 high school miler, was upset about Pre's tactics.

"I never got pushed before," he said. "His strategy was really outrageous . . . this is running not fighting. Next time I would hold my ground and take some physical action."

**WHILE A MEET** official at the turn said there was no contact between the two runners, Hailu said there was. All concerned agreed that Prefontaine did not

violate the rule with a sudden lurch or movement to the outside.

"He did it like a master," said Kenny Moore, the AAU marathon champion who was watching the race closely on the backstretch. "Pre's tactics are not unusual," explained Moore. "Frank Shorter won a race in Europe that finished out in the sixth lane."

"I thought Hailu's biggest mistake was not trying to pass Pre with a quick, decisive move. I don't think Pre would have gotten back around if he had," said Moore.

**BOTH ARE** anticipating to run the mile at the Pac-8, Pre because he will then run strictly 5,000-meter races in the NCAA and Olympic Trials. And Hailu because he wants to run 1,500 meters for Ethiopia in the Olympics.

"I won't say now what my strategy will be next time," said Hailu, "but it will be something different."

And said Pre, "If he wants to run it again, I'll be there."