Kenyans Get Cougars Off to a Fast Start in Pac-8

BY MAL FLORENCE

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Washington State may not win the Pacific 8 track and field championships but the Cougars, led by tireless Henry Rono, made an impressive showing on the opening day of the meet Friday at Drake Stadium.

The Cougars, accumulating 28 points in the 3,000-meter steeple-chase and 10,000, have a total of 70, while favored USC has only 20.

But the Trojans have their best events going for them today—everything from 100 to 800 meters—and most of Vern Wolfe's athletes qualified as expected.

John Chaplin, the staccato-talking Washington State coach, doesn't believe his team has a chance of beating USC, but he isn't concerned. He has another goal.

"We just want to beat our favorite

fellow," he said, "the one who loves us the most."

Chaplin was referring to Jim Bush of UCLA. Bush has criticized Washington State and other schools for recruiting foreigners, namely Kenyans, saying their presence deprives U.S. athletes of getting scholarships. He has even called some schools the "University of Kenya" and, when asked where the Pac-8 meet headquarters would be, he replied, "Nairobi."

Washington State has three quality Kenyan runners—Rono, Samson Kimombwa and Joshua Kimeto—and they're going to score a lot of points before the Pac-8 meet concludes.

Rono, a freshman and already the NCAA indoor 2-mile and cross country champion, won the steeplechase

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in a meet record 8:35.4 and came back at the end of the day to finish second in the 10,000 behind Kimombwa, who also set a meet mark of 28:13.4.

Rono has been bothered by a viral infection but you wouldn't know it watching him run. He jumped the field at the outset of the steeplechase and was never challenged in winning by a margin of seven seconds. Then, in the 10,000, he held off Oregon's Rudy Chapa, who was fresh, to take second.

The two distance races were the only track finals Friday. Several field event finals produced no surprises.

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Stanford's James Lofton beat USC's
Larry Doubley in the long jump, a
toss-up event. Lofton leaped 26-4%,
while Doubley was second at 25-10%.

In other events, Washington's Duncan Atwood set a meet record of 265-9 in winning the javelin. Standrd's Terry Albritton won the shotput at 65-64; UCLA's Mike Tully took the pole vault at 17-7 (a meet mark) and Washington's Sott Neilson won the hammer throw at 213-11 for still another meet record.

The Trojans had only one major setback. Rayfield Beaton, favored by some to win the 800 meters, pulled up on the last turn of his heat and didn't qualify.

"Somebody stepped on my leg," said Beaton, "and I lurched and pulled a hamstring muscle in my other leg."

But the Trojans still qualified a pair in the 800 as Lloyd Johnson won a competitive heat in 1:48.9 and David Omwansa, a 29-year-old Kenyan, took his heat in 1:49.4. USC also qualified two or more

runners for the finals of the 100, 200, 400 and 400 intermediate hurdles. UCLA came through as expected and put three sprinters—Millard Hampton, Greg Foster and James Owens—into the 100-meter final.

But Bush, whose Bruins have 22 points, two more than the Trojans, doesn't think his team has a chance to win today. He said Washington State might give USC trouble.



STABBING LOSS—It still isn't as bad as it seems, though, as Jim Smith of Oregon is simply disgusted with his toss in Pac-8 meet. Nothing more. Fellow competitor stuck javelin in the grass.

"Washington State looks tough," Bush said, "and they could score some points in other events tomorrow besides the 5,000 and 1,500. USC will have to work and they're a little thin now. They've got a lot of people in a lot of events."

This was a reference to the Andrews brothers, Tom and Joel. Tom will run the 400-meter relay, 400, 400 intermediates and mile relay. Joel will go in the 400, 200 sprint and mile relays.

Bush pointed out that USC can't use Beaton in the mile relay (he's a 46-second quarter-miler) because he didn't finish the 800. He said it's against NCAA rules for an athlete to compete in another event after he has

failed to finish a previous one.

There's a minor flap developing at the meet between Bush and Chaplin. "I've got nothing against UCLA. It's a fine educational institute," the WSU coach said, "but our kide just want to beat Jim Bush's team. He didn't say anything about on having Kenyans on the team when we weren't winning. He just started saying those things when they cut back track scholarships to 14."

Bush disagreed: "For years I've said we were going the wrong way by recruiting foreigners—long before the scholarship cutback. When we had foreign athletes, I said they shouldn't be allowed to compete in the NCAA meet."

PAC-8 TRACK SUMMARY