Oregon Goes a Distance to Beat UCLA, USC

BY MAL FLORENCE Times Staff Writer

TEMPE, Ariz.—UCLA and USC didn't falter Sunday night in the Pacific 10 track and field championships at Sun Angel Stadium but, in the long run, favored Oregon had too much balance for the Bruins and Trojans. So the Ducks, traditionally strong

So the Ducks, traditionally strong in the distance races, won their first conference championship since 1967, scoring 145 points. UCLA, getting a surprising 1-2-3 in the triple jump, finished second with 123½ points. USC was third with 98½.

Although Oregon got its expected points in the distance races, a hurdler, Phil Branson, gave the Ducks a lift when the Bruins and Trojans were

threatening.

He finished second in the 110-meter high hurdles and then won the 400 intermediate hurdles, an event in which he wasn't expected to finish better than fourth or fifth. So Branson accounted for 18 points

UCLA's Greg Foster was a double winner. He won the high hurdles, as anticipated, in 13.47 and then beat USC's James Sanford in the 200 in

20.35.

The UCLA and USC coaches, Jim Bush and Vern Wolfe, said their

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teams performed almost as well as they could. Neither coach had been optimistic about beating Oregon.

Among the noteworthy performances by Bruins and Trojans were

these:

—UCLA's Chip Benson won the triple jump at 53-7¼ and teammates Dokie Williams and Dwayne Joseph finished second and third at 51-6¼ and 51-5¾—lifetime bests for the three jumpers.

—The Bruins' Anthony Curran cleared 17-0 in the pole vault but finished second to Oregon's Tom Hintnaus because Hintnaus had fewer misses.

—USC's James Walters, a sophomore, had a lifetime best time of 1:47.6 in winning the 800. The Trojans' David Omwansa recorded the same time in second place in a stirring race to the tape.

The Trojans' Rod Bethany, a freshman, and Colin Bradford had personal bests of 45.94 and 46.15 while running 2-3 behind Oregon

State's Kasheof Hassan (45.59) in the 400.

-Sanford won the 100 in 10.37 with UCLA's Eric Brown a close second in 10.39.

But the Trojans didn't get the points they hoped for in the pole vault and high hurdles.

Vaulter Jerry Mulligan went unplaced and Arto Brygarre, Phil Johnson and Milan Stewart were 4-5-6 in the 110-meter race.

"Our big disappointment was our vaulter and we could have scored more in the high hurdles but they're all freshmen," said Wolfe, whose Trojans had won the last five conference track championships. "I think Walters might place high in the NCAA meet now. As for Sanford, he had a tight groin muscle and wasn't at his best."

Sanford had beaten Foster in the USC-UCLA dual meet in a 200 photo finesh. But the strong Bruin had a 1-yard lead over Sanford coming off the turn and held it to the finish.

Other highlights:

—Oregon's Rudy Chapa won the 1,500 in 3:38.7—second best time in the world this year. He came back in the 5,000 but couldn't catch Washington State's Henry Rono in the stretch and lost by about 5 yards.

Rono, who set four world distance records in 1978, is not in world class shape. His winning time was 13:32.8 in the 5,000 compared to his world record of 13:08.4

—USC won both the 400-meter and mile relays. The latter race was run in two sections with Sanford, Walters, Bradford and Bethany timed in 3:08.1

—The Bruins' Brown, only a freshman, figures to be a strong competitor for years to come. In addition to his second in the 100, he finished fourth in the 200.

Perhaps, the Bruins and Trojans will fare better in the NCAA meet at Champaign, Ill., May 31-June 2. But the Ducks will be there and so will Texas El Paso, which is more formidable than Oregon.

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