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SPORTS

Tracksters fall short in rain at Long Beach

by Mike Mayer
Sports Editor

The Long Beach State track squad continued its domination over SDSU with a 94-68 dual meet victory in a meet that was almost washed away by early morning rains.

The Aztecs have not beaten the 49ers on a dual basis in coach Dick Hill's tenure at San Diego and he believes the team has developed a mental block about running against their long-time rival.

"After they hadn't lost to us in so long, I figured that (Long Beach coach Ron) Alice could only motivate his guys so much," Hill said. "But, it was even harder for our guys to conceptualize winning the meet, even though we had a good chance.

"It developed because we haven't had a meet this year where the team has jelled as a whole and that tends to bring about some doubt and insecurity.

"I could see from walking around to all the events we had a chance to win," Hill added, "but you find guys thinking their single point for a third place finish won't make that much difference, when it really would."

"By the time our guys realized we could beat them, the meet was three-quarters over and we were too far back."

The meet, originally scheduled

for noon, was delayed 90 minutes by heavy rains that returned intermittently throughout the meet. The 110-meter high hurdles were run in a driving rain.

Aztec Brian Donohue, a winner in the 800-meter run, said the weather conditions, which also included strong winds and 50-degree temperatures, left him feeling very tight.

"I felt real stiff after the half-mile," Donohue said, "but even worse in the mile relay. The wind out here was very strong and blew me around on the far turn."

Weather aside, it was Long Beach's clutch performances in the sprints that sent them to victory over SDSU again.

Hill had figured that 12-15 points would need to come from his field competitors if the Aztecs were to have a chance.

But even though they came up with more than 20 points, SDSU fell 26 points short of winning the meet, as 49er Rickie Jackson swept the sprints and questionable officials' decisions took more sprint points from SDSU.

Jackson won the 100-meters in a wind-aided time of 10.2 seconds and the 200-meters in a windy 21.7. Aztec Marty Krulec apparently took second in the 100, but the meet officials gave the three second-place points to Long Beach's Horace Berry.

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Long Beach jinx sinks Aztecs again

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The officials who usually supervise college meets were not present, apparently because of the weather, and the meet was run by Long Beach administrators including the 49ers' distance coach.

Hill was irate at the nonchalance with which the officials took second place from Krulee, as the 100 was the first of several crucial events for SDSU. So instead of taking three points in the event to six for Long Beach, the split went 1-8.

James Perry, who had an excellent afternoon for SDSU, and Krulee came back to grab second and third in the 200. But the Aztecs could manage just a third in the 400 as 49er Hubert Beasley won in 47.3, a faster time than any Aztec has recorded this season.

Perry's second place finish in the 200, the first he has run all season, was the beginning of a long and successful day for him.

The 5-foot-11, 145-pound senior missed his lifetime best in the 200 by just five-tenths of a second, then long-jumped 23-9½, anchored the winning 400-meter relay and the mile relay crew that turned in a superb 3:11.8 to win.

"Vernon Mayweather was going to anchor the mile relay," Hill said, "but he felt tight and James jumped up and volunteered to run. It is tough with guys like Ned Armour, Krulee and Perry to put them in three or so events and then just ask them to come back and run again, but James has always been a great competitor."

Perry said he had felt tight after the 200, but decided to run in the relay anyway.

"I just said to myself that this is for me and the team," he said, "I knew the guy who was running the anchor against me had just run the intermediate hurdles and was tired, so when I took the pass with the lead, I just put speed and mind together and took it to the wire."

Perry's long jump was an inch shorter than the third place jump, but he was optimistic he could improve.

"My step was just off a little today," Perry said. "I think I could have gone 24 feet otherwise, but I am really going to work on that for the PCAA championships."

Armour won the long jump, his first dual meet victory for SDSU, with a leap of 24-4. His earlier season dual meet leaps, of 24-6 and 25-0, brought him only third and second place finishes, respectively.

Hurdler Tony Hicks pulled off his first sweep of the season, winning the 110-meter hurdles in 14.0 and the 400-meter intermediates in 52.5. The short race time was his best of the year, but was wind-aided. The intermediate time was a tenth of a second off his season's best.

The long races hurt SDSU also as Long Beach took first and second in the 1,500 and first in the 5,000.

"Brian Hunsaker not being able to run made a big difference there," Hill said. "But, he should be back soon."

Bill St. John recorded his lifetime best time in the 5,000 to take second place and he won the 3000-meter steeplechase even though he ran 21 seconds slower than his best.

On the field event side, John Barr took second with his best javelin throw ever and Long Beach's two 17-foot pole vaulters failed, giving the Aztecs a sweep in the event.

This was the Aztecs' last dual meet of the season leaving them with an 0-3 dual record. After seasons of 9-1 and 7-1 dual records, Hill has de-emphasized the dual meet in favor of preparing his athletes for the PCAA and NCAA championships, as well as high quality open meets.

The Mt. San Antonio College Relays, which SDSU would have competed in this year, have been cancelled, so Hill will try to get his athletes into open meets being held this weekend at UCLA and UCSB.

TRACK NOTES — Long Beach's Keith Taylor pulled off what Hill called "the class performance of the whole meet" with a 53-2½ triple jump that could have been used as a textbook illustration on how to triple jump. The leap was 3½ inches short of his lifetime best. In the 800 Donohue had to fight off several Long Beach runners who seemed to be just trying to jostle him and keep him off stride. They couldn't prevent him from winning, but two of them did take SDSU's Dan Stewart down in a collision at the halfway point of the race. Hill said sprinters David Russell and Michael Brown and hurdler Rhan Sheffield are still suffering from various injuries and will be red-shirted. Russell was the California high school champ in both the 100 and 220 last year and Sheffield is the defending intermediate hurdles champ in the PCAA. Brown is another promising freshman sprinter.



— Photo by Tom Gagner
BILL ST. JOHN won the 3,000-meter steeplechase for the Aztecs in their dual meet with Long Beach Saturday. He also placed second in the 5,000-meter run with his best time ever.