

CC grad Nugent aims for NAIA crown

By C.J. Rieck
staff writer

Few college students would list Dayton, Ohio, as the place they'd most like to visit two days after graduation.

But that's where Mike Nugent was happily traveling to Monday. Of course, while Nugent's academic career at Hillsdale College was over, he wasn't finished with school quite yet.

Next week Nugent will run a race as important as any in his collegiate track career. He will compete in the NAIA track and field championships May 23-25 on his home course at Hillsdale. His trip to Dayton was to train.

"I'm really excited about it," said the 1981 Redford Catholic Central graduate and Farmington native of the NAIA meet. "It's going to be great fun

because it'll be on our home track and all my relatives and friends will be there. Hillsdale isn't that big of a community, but they'll all show up.

"Everyone's really looking forward to it."

One reason for the people of Hillsdale to get excited. He has a solid shot at a national championship. His current best in the 5,000-meter run is 14:30.69, the third fastest clocking in the NAIA this season.

That outdoor time comes after Nugent became the first NAIA runner ever to win back-to-back indoor titles in the 3-mile. Nugent pulled that off in 13:58.81 earlier this year. He also won as a junior.

NUGENT IS still riding the crest from his second-straight indoor title. "I missed the national (NAIA) indoor

people in sports

record by a second," he said. "I was really excited to come that close."

For most college athletes, after the senior year that's it for intense competition. Nugent.

"I'm definitely interested in continuing my running," he said. "I'm just starting to come around, getting good times."

One reason for Nugent's desire to continue competing was Hillsdale, which he said viewed student-athletes as just that: "Students first and athletes second."

"Especially here, running was sec-

ondary to school," he explained. "Now that I'm out of school I'll be able to concentrate on my running."

HIS DAYTON trip was planned so that Nugent could train with the Bob Schuyl racing team, which operates out of Troy, Ohio. Nugent became acquainted with the team from a friend he trains with and through his college coach, Bill Lundberg.

The Schuyl team will travel to Europe this summer to compete in a series of track meets that Nugent said "for me, it's going to be a learning ex-

perience. I've never participated in something like this before."

But before his 17-day European tour, Nugent will compete in an event familiar to him: the NAIA finals. It will be his third — and last — championship meet.

"I never placed before," Nugent said of his past NAIA experiences. "I probably overtrained."

He may also have hurt his chances by running the 10,000-meter race as well. This year, Nugent will focus on his specialty.

"I've really been concentrating on the 5,000," he said. "It combines speed with endurance. I'm not strong enough for the 10,000."

IT WON'T be easy, nevertheless. Robbie Hipwood of Adams State College (Colo.) has the season's best time,

12 seconds faster than Nugent. And Hipwood runs to the thin air of the Rocky Mountains.

"I think I can drop 15 seconds off my time," Nugent estimated. "It depends on the race. I haven't had a good one since the Dogwood Relays. But I ran the 1,500 in a meet last week and dropped seven seconds off my previous best, so I think I'm ready."

Nugent is banking on the home track advantage working in his favor, too. "I felt a lot of pressure at the indoor meet because I was the returning national champion," he said. "This one I'm more relaxed. I'm not the favorite, he's 12 seconds faster than me. So there's less pressure, and that's the way I like it."

Of course, a victory in his final race — as a collegian, anyway — would make Nugent that much happier.

Mercy moves along; North run stopped

Farmington Hills Mercy, by virtue of its impressive 6-1 victory against Dearborn Monday, has advanced to the quarterfinal round of the state regional soccer tournament.

Mercy will play at 3 p.m. Friday at Livonia Ladywood.

"This was the best game the kids played all year," said Mercy coach Gene Fogel. "Dearborn is a good team. It was our best offensive game of the year, for sure."

Annette Ruggiero continued her goal scoring pace notching four more. She now has 28 goals on the season, the most in Observersland.

Amy DeMatia contributed mightily with a goal and three assists. Amy Stock added a goal and Julie Hale had a pair of assists.

Mercy, ranked No. 4 in Observersland and Catholic League regular season champs, are 10-2 on the season.

NORTH FARMINGTON was knocked out of the state tournament

soccer

but not before putting up a valiant struggle against Plymouth Salem on Tuesday.

Salem, behind four goals from Dena Head, edged the Raiders 6-4.

"I feel real bad for the kids," said Raider coach Cathy Cole. "This was our game. We played so well. Just one mistake, and it cost us. We shouldn't let that happen."

Kristi McMin scored a pair of unassisted goals for North. Suzie Mattoon had a goal and an assist. Mo O'Brien added a goal and two assists.

North had earned the right to play Salem by defeating Bishop Borgess on Monday, 6-0, in a pre-regional qualifier.

North, with one game left to play, is 8-7-1.

Local pros pin hopes on qualifiers

By Marty Budner
staff writer

The long trail to participation in the prestigious 1985 U.S. Open, to be hosted by the opulent Oakland Hills Country Club, begins Monday with local qualifying.

Because of the tremendous home-state enthusiasm, Michigan will host two, 36-hole qualifying tournaments.

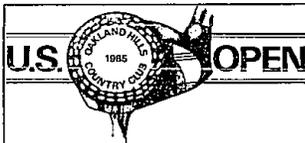
The larger tournament will be played at the Washnaw and Travis Pointe country clubs in the Ypsilanti-Ann Arbor area. Officials expect 182 players to compete at those sites for a mere 18 berths to sectional competition in early June.

The Muskegon Country Club will play host to 45 golfers vying for four sectional-qualifying berths.

According to state officials, the 227 golfers competing for the 22 sectional berths represents the largest field ever assembled in Michigan for U.S. Open qualifying. The field includes 100 amateurs and 127 professionals.

John Traub, current Michigan PGA champion, and Jeff Roth, who played the Tournament Players Series satellite tour last season, are two area professionals scheduled to tee off at Washnaw and Travis Pointe.

TRAUB IS a veteran participant in local qualifying.



The head pro at Great Oaks Country Club has made it through local qualifying on three different occasions.

And, in 1982, Traub participated in the Open at California's renowned Pebble Beach Country Club. Although he failed to make the cut (he shot a 155 and missed by four strokes), it was a rewarding experience.

"Just to play out there in the Open was a great experience," said Traub. "I got a chance to practice with people like Tom Watson and Seve Ballesteros."

Traub says he hasn't had much practice time this season because of the heavy demands around Great Oaks.

"It's been a really busy spring for me like it has for a lot of the other players around the area," said Traub. "My game isn't in top shape right now."

"I think the toughest thing is the stamina ... getting into condition. Walking 36 holes on one day, playing two rounds of golf takes a lot of conditioning."

"(Playing two rounds on one day) makes a difference. I think it gives the young players a definite advantage," he said.

LIKE TRAUB, Roth, an assistant pro at West Bloomfield's Tam O'Shanter Country Club, has had a busy spring.

"My game takes a back seat right now, but I'll be ready," he declared.

Roth was enthused by his recent showing at a Michigan Section PGA tournament in Grosse Ile where he was the low-pro with a round of 68.

"I'm hoping they have room for me at the sectionals," he quipped.

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