

## Longmont track star transfers to CU Buffs

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When Matt Butcher headed for Eugene, Ore., in the fall of 2008, he had visions of winning races and picking up speed.

Nearly four years later, he's starting over.

Butcher, who starred in track and field at Longmont High School, is in his first year with the Colorado program after three years at Oregon.

"Definitely glad to be back," he said. "I have better connections and more support. That always helps."

Butcher graduated from Longmont in 2008. That spring, he won two state titles (200 meters and 1,600-meter relay), finished second in the 400 meters and third in the 100. That all helped the Trojans win a team championship.

Throughout his prep career, Butcher won four individual state championships, had two runner-up finishes and reached the podium in all 12 state meet races. He was the Longmont Times-Call track and field athlete of the year in 2007 and 2008.

For all of his success in high school, he earned a scholarship to Oregon, but his three years as a Duck didn't go as planned.

"The whole process was humbling," he said.

Butcher actually got slower in college. To this day, his personal records (47.01 seconds in the 400 and 21.28 in the 200) came during high school. His best 400 time at Oregon (48.66) was slower than what he ran as a sophomore in high school.

"Just running poorly for that long was definitely humbling," he said. "It was hard. A lot of people had expectations for me."

Oregon's track program has a great reputation for producing stars. Unfortunately, the training philosophy didn't fit Butcher well. Oregon has endurance-based training for its 400-meter runners, and Butcher said his body needed sprint-based training.

"I wish I would have run better, but I was doing everything I could," he said. "It wasn't that I wasn't putting in the effort; it was that the system just wasn't working there for me. The training wasn't what I needed. It was definitely frustrating. It was hard to fall back that much."

With his performance slipping, Butcher lost his scholarship for his final year at Oregon. At that point, he made the decision to come home. He's now living in Longmont and enjoying his time as a

Buffalo.

"I'm building a lot more confidence," he said. "I have a lot more confidence in my speed."

CU assistant coach Drew Morano has allowed Butcher to train with the 100- and 200-meter runners and that has made a difference, Butcher said. He ran for the Buffs during the indoor season, but is redshirting this spring and running unattached. That leaves him with one more outdoor season, in 2013.

During a recent meet at Colorado State, Butcher ran the 200 in 21.89 seconds, his best non-wind-aided time as a collegian. He also ran 48.66 seconds in the 400, matching the best time he had at Oregon.

"This early in that season, that is pretty promising," he said.

Butcher, who has always had a grounded perspective on his talent and expectations, isn't dreaming of NCAA titles and record-breaking times in 2013.

"I just want to get back my speed and come back next year and be able to help the team," he said.

Rolling along

The Northwestern women's lacrosse team, which is assisted by new CU coach Ann Elliott, improved to 12-0 with a pair of wins last week.

The Wildcats, ranked No. 1 in the country, defeated No. 8 Penn and No. 12 Penn State. They are the only undefeated team in the country.

Elliott, introduced as CU's first head coach on March 26, is finishing her season at Northwestern before pouring her full time into establishing CU's program.

Notable

CU thrower Alex Kizirian had two personal bests on Saturday at Air Force. He recorded PRs in the shot put (50 feet, 9.25 inches) and the hammer throw (196-11). ... At the same meet, Kajsa Bank of the women's team had a PR in the shot put (34-10.5). ... CU's track and field team will host the CU Invitational at Potts Field on Friday and Saturday. ... The CU tennis team dropped to 0-7 in Pac-12 play (7-11 overall) with a pair of losses to Oregon and Oregon State last weekend. The Buffs have lost 14 consecutive conference road matches.