

Jordan Hasay

by Sieg Lindstrom

“We’ve been through some things together. With trunks of memories still to come.” Sure, it’s a cliché but if the opening lyrics of Neil Young’s Long May You Run apply to anyone in our sport, they surely do to Jordan Hasay, whose 2:23:00 for 3rd at Boston was the fastest ever by a U.S. marathon debutante.

The California native is just 25, but she has been making headlines on the hoof since the fall of ‘05 when—then a little girl in the 9th grade with long blonde hair flowing behind—she won the first of two Foot Locker Cross Country titles.

Track wins rapidly followed: a USATF Junior 3000 title the next summer at age 14, 4 more

coach Alberto Salazar.

Plantar fasciitis, her first major injury, hit in ‘15 and hurt her preparation for last year’s Olympic Trials. Somewhat dejected by her OT placings in the 5K and 10K, Hasay decided to try the 26-miler.

Nothing could prepare her, though, for the sudden, unexpected death of her mother last November.

“I have a lot to live up to,” a grieving Hasay told oregonlive.com at the time. “And she has given me the tools to do it—to try to spread love in the world.”

And to honor her Mom with a brave, elated first marathon in Boston.

In May, when Hasay had her first two post-recovery workouts booked near her central California home, T&FN queried her on that race.

T&FN: Congratulations!

Hasay: Thank you! It’s kind of had some time to sink in now and I’m just thrilled that everything came together. I had really good buildup races leading up to it [the Houston and Prague half-marathons] and I felt really confident and in good position, but that said, you never really know how it’s going to translate to the full marathon.

T&FN: Was there any session or moment in your buildup that told you you were ready?

Hasay: To be honest, it was kind of just a culmination of the whole buildup. It really started after the Trials in September. We just sat down and said, “OK, we need to change things up a bit and I need to start doing some longer long runs and longer tempos.”

I remember in September I did my very first 20-miler cuz we were really only doing 18-milers before that point. I think I ran it at 6:45 or 7:00 pace but felt so accomplished for the next few weeks. But my training just really progressed and now a 20M long run would be an easy day for me.

We added in some 25-milers starting in January after the Houston Half. I think what really helped was having those different target races to shoot for. I really wasn’t thinking about the marathon specifically until after Houston.

We were doing the long long runs and longer tempos but I just tried to break it down to getting back to racing well. I really needed to do that for my

Hasay In A Nutshell

•**Personal:** Jordan Melissa Hasay was born September 21, 1991, in Fontana, California; 5-4¼/99 (163/45)

•**PRs:** 2:08.32 (‘12), 4:07.70 (‘14), 8:46.89 (‘13), 15:28.56 (‘14), 31:39.67 (‘14), 67:55 (‘17), 2:23:00 (‘17)

•**Schools:** Mission HS (San Luis Obispo, Ca) ‘09; Oregon ‘13; now represents Nike Oregon Project

•**Coaches:** Armando Siqueiros high school, Maurica Powell college, Alberto Salazar pro (agent Ricky Simms)

•**Major Meets:**

1500/Mile—1)USJ, 2)WYC ‘07; 1)USJ, 10)OT, 4)WJ ‘08; 10h)US, 1)USJ ‘09; 4)NCi, 3)NC, 1)USJ, 4)WJ ‘10; 1)NCi, 8)NC, 9)US ‘11; 3)NCi, 3)NC, 11s)f)OT ‘12
3000/2M—1)USJ ‘06; dn)f)NCi, 2)USJ, 9)WJ ‘10; 1)NCi ‘11; 4)NCi ‘12; 2)NCi ‘13; 3)USI ‘14; 2)USI ‘15
5000—4)NC ‘11; 4)NCi, 3)NC ‘13; 13)OT ‘16
10,000—2)US, 12)WC ‘13; 2)US ‘14; 9)OT ‘16
Mar—3)Boston ‘17

XC—18)NC ‘09; 3)NC ‘10; 2)NC ‘11; 3)NC ‘12

•**U.S. Rankings:** (10,000) ‘13—2; ‘14—3

national U20 crowns thereafter in the 1500, the distance at which she took World Youth silver at 16. Once Hasay got to Oregon a pair of NCAA Indoor victories followed in ‘11, her soph year.

“I’ve been lucky to have really good coaching throughout the years,” she says of the high-expectations life of a teen and young woman prodigy, “and then my parents knew nothing about running so they were just very supportive and just said, ‘You can quit at any time, do what you want to do,’ but then they obviously helped tremendously through all the ups and downs.

“And then in college, just having team support was huge, having those girls because that helps you through the difficult times.

“Without having those experiences, it’s hard to transition to the professional level so I definitely learned a lot in college.”

Among the lessons was the realization her future was in the longer distances—proven in ‘13 when she ran herself on to the World Champs 10,000 team in her first month with Nike Oregon Project



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BRUCE WODDER/PHOTO RUN

confidence.

So the workouts luckily had gone really well. For me, the way that my mind works and maybe the way that my body works, I just feel more comfortable having done stuff that more so equates to the length of the race, if that makes sense.

So I really like the longer tempos and having those 25-milers really gave me the confidence that I could run the marathon, I knew I was going to finish, so it wasn't this huge unknown.

I just didn't know what pace. I mean we thought I could run 2:25 so we had sort of an idea.

T&FN: You talk about tempos and 25-milers in the same sentence. Is a 25-miler just a run or do you do them at close to race pace?

Hasay: Throughout the fall we had done a lot of 20-mile, long runs you could call them, but really it was a workout so I was averaging 5:35–5:40 pace.

In January, though, we started saying, "Those 20-milers are great, we can progress them to 5:30 or below," but Alberto said, "Those last 6 miles your legs are going to feel like wood."

I said, "Yeah, yeah, whatever," because I really kind of liked the 20-milers and I liked finishing the workout saying I finished the workout at X pace. It sounds a lot better than a bit slower for the 25-miler.

But after having run the marathon, those 25-milers were really key in that I ran the first half of those just as a progression run but the last 10 miles were at marathon pace, finishing around 5:00 pace, so those really gave me the confidence.

T&FN: And your experience in the race bore that out?

Hasay: Yes, once we got to halfway I was pretty confident that, "OK, I can run another 13M at least at this pace."

T&FN: You've said you prepared both for Boston's uphills and its downhills, that you "pounded the quads a bit" on cooldowns after workouts. Was the concern the section after Heartbreak Hill or the early downhill miles?

Hasay: Actually I got a little bit nervous because about 6–7M in I was already feeling really fatigued in my quads and I thought, "Oh, man,

you don't want to be feeling this already.' But it was interesting because after about 10M it maybe doesn't get flat but you get a little bit of a break, so luckily some of that soreness kind of eased off so I got more confident after we got to halfway.

I'm a really good hill runner but I was already quite fatigued in my quads from the

The Parental Influence

Jordan Hasay, whose parents Joe and Teresa met at a Gold's Gym, started running tagging along for 4M stretches of her mom's regular 6M loop. Then on Christmas when she was 13 Jordan got to run the whole route.

A star was born, but before that, although never proportioned to be towering timber on the hardwood, she says she was crazy for basketball, her dad's sport.

"My dad played in college so we were huge Lakers fans, the Kobe and Shaq eras, we went to a lot of those games, and I still support them even though they're not doing too well these days.

"We went to the games, got to go on the court and high-five the players. One time we got to go in the area where all the players were driving in and we got to see Shaq pulling up in his Corvette. We were all jumping up and down waving. He gave us a wink and a wave and we were super-excited."

Based on her current height did she ever think she'd be a hoops player?

"You know what? I wasn't tall but I was really good. I played club and I won the [Elks] California Hoop Shoot, 25 out of 25 [free throws] in fifth grade. So I had dreams of playing in the WNBA. I just wasn't quite tall enough, wasn't quite aggressive enough. If anything, I was the one who'd just run up and down the court as fast as I could. If I would get the ball no one would even try to go after me."

The running talent, it would seem, came from Teresa, a swimmer during her youth in England.

"She would run 6M every day and one day she signed up for the local half-marathon. She had run the course the week before just to check it out. I think she ran really slow, like 2:30 or something for the test run.

"So we took her to the race, and during the race my brother, my dad and I just went out for brunch. We went to the finish line and she'd already finished and we missed it because she ran like 1:35! And she couldn't walk the whole next week, she was so sore and pushed herself.

"I think that's where I got my toughness and competitive nature, from my Mom."

downhill so I understand what people mean when they say the downhill can really impact the uphill.

I'm not sure what I'd change specifically in training, but I think just having run it before is just going to give me more confidence because I know what to expect mentally. As I get more experienced I think I'll be able to cover those moves on the hills a bit better.

T&FN: You finished really strong, negative-splitting the halves. How did you feel over the last 5M after the hills?

Hasay: I was actually feeling pretty good.

Hasay — continued

After halfway it broke down to maybe 8 of us, then 6 of us, and the whole goal was just to run my pace. So, rewinding, if the leaders were going to go out at 2:20, 2:21, I was instructed to run my own race and go 2:25 pace. So I was excited that we were going my pace so I could run with the ladies.

Then when it broke down to 4–5 of us, I even thought, “I might win this thing.” But I think I have a little bit of inexperience there. I told myself, “I’m all in, I’m going with any move here, this is great.”

T&FN: When did you tell yourself that?

Hasay: That was about 15M because the way that I broke down the 25-milers [in training] was that the first 15 were progressive, a lot of times on the treadmill because it was quite cold in Portland, and then I’d go on land for the last 10.

So at that point I was really confident, I thought, This is just the last 10, now you’re running marathon pace and you’re closing.

Then at 18, though, Edna [Kiplagat] made that real hard move up the hill and it felt like she was sprinting. It’s funny because I’ve studied marathons and obviously I knew she was just going to throw in that surge and there’s no way she’s going to sprint the whole rest of the way.

She ran that mile real quick. Yeah, it was really impressive running, looking back at her splits. There was nothing in my training that indicated I could close in—I think she ran around 32:00 for the last 10K and just made it look effortless. It’s very humbling, it gives me something to shoot for to know where I need to go, so to speak.

I just said, “OK, I’m having a great one. I just need to stay calm here.” And I did, I continued to run very relaxed and was proud that I was continuously just focusing on 2nd place. At one point [eventual runner-up Rose Chelimo] was 25 seconds ahead, and I finished only 9 seconds back. We were all picking it up; it’s just that

Edna picked it up a great deal more.

But I was really pleased, I definitely felt really strong at the finish. And that was the plan, to really try not to squeeze down until the last mile to go. We wanted to walk off the line saying that I want to run another one and

T&FN: Since you’ve had some free time while resting up after Boston, what do you like to do when you’re not training or racing?

Hasay: I really like Adele’s music so I went to an Adele concert in August and that was fun. I enjoy watching *Grey’s Anatomy*, and



Hasay has found long-distance success under Salazar’s tutelage

not the other way around.

I think in terms of that it was the perfect, perfect scenario.

T&FN: You’ve found your calling. While you’ve said the immediate focus will be some shorter road races and then a fall marathon rather than rushing into shape for the USATF track Champs, will we see you on the oval again?

Hasay: I think so, if you look at someone like Paula Radcliffe. She actually messaged me after the marathon, and I was freaking out because she’s my idol.

It was just really cool to hear from her, but she said, “I bet your track times will improve after having the marathon training under your legs,” and I know that it really helped her when she went back to the track.

then my brother and I are big surfers. We did Junior Lifeguards on the beach and such. So I love being back in California and being by the ocean, and he does a lot of that standup paddleboard, actually.

T&FN: So you tear up the big waves?

Hasay: Yeah. I’m OK, not anything great like my brother. I’m best with the longboard. I was always good having that little extra help to stand up. But I enjoy it.

T&FN: With your distance runner’s build, I’d have thought a smaller board would be easier to move around.

Hasay: No, no, I’m pretty strong. I mean we do a bunch of weightlifting so I guess in a way it’s just like a strength workout doing the paddling. □

Not Done On The Track Yet

Although Jordan Hasay now trains toward a future in the marathon—having got to the 26-miler ahead of the schedule she once imagined—in keeping with coach Alberto Salazar’s philosophy that saw Galen Rupp race both the big roadie (bronze medal) and the 10,000 (5th) in Rio, she says we’ll see her on the track again, too, eventually.

When she rejoins her NOP teammates for altitude training in June, Hasay will put in sessions with track stars Shannon Rowbury and Sifan Hassan of the Netherlands.

“Shannon, I’ve jumped in workouts with her occasionally and Sifan just joined us. Sifan’s quick but she’s pretty good at the tempos and such and she’s jumped in on some of my 8-, 10-mile tempos. So when I join them in Park City, the plan is to go through a little bit of a training segment with them.

“We won’t be doing all the same workouts together, obviously, but that’s what I like about our training: we’re always bringing speed into the picture so I’m still doing a lot of 200s and 600 breakdowns and quick stuff.”

Fondly remembering stirring moments at Hayward Field—setting a 1500 HSR in her ‘08

Olympic Trials semi, then a roaring “Come To Oregon!” chant from the crowd, and big races as a Duck in the famed stadium—Hasay mulls an oval-related possibility.

“Talking about going back to the track, we’re thinking 2021, obviously, is the World Championships there, and I’m thinking, yeah, a permanent move to the marathon, but it’s a little bit enticing maybe to be back in the stadium. I might want to choose track that year.

“The marathon, I’m sure, is going to be great too, but running on the track at Hayward is unlike any other place.”