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FEBRUARY 2021

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TRACK & FIELD NEWS



**Indoor World
Records For Ryan
Crouser & Hugues
Fabrice Zango**

**Grant Holloway Ties
His American Record**

**New Meets To Pump
New Life Into The
U.S. Calendar?**

**T&FN Interview:
Marathoner Sara Hall**

**Special Focus:
U.S. Women's
Pole Vault Scene**

**Special Focus:
U.S. Men's 800 Scene**

**Ryan
Crouser**
**Launches Shot
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FROM THE EDITOR

— T&FN’s Publication Schedule Returns To Normal

ON BEHALF OF the whole T&FN crew, I’d like to thank all you loyal subscribers who hung with us through the annus horribilis that was 2020.

You surely noticed that with so little hard news to report during the aborted “Olympic Year” we double-monthed the naming of the ‘20 issues from March/April through November/December. As a result, the year had only 7 editions instead of 12, spread out across the calendar accordingly.

What was behind this decision? With “news” being such an important part of our name, we wanted to be sure you got what you signed up for. Accordingly, you’ll still get — to steal a line from the *New York Times* — all the news that’s fit to print. You’ll just get it farther down the road.

And in case you’re worried that you might get cheated on your investment with us, I hasten to clarify that for every doubled issue you received your subscription was extended by a month.

We’re actually very proud of our 2020 content. Writing feature material, good feature material, is immensely harder than the news, but the expanded timeframe allowed us to dive into more long-form journalism. Even with the reduced number of issues published, the overall production of deeper stories was our highest ever, and we hope you enjoyed it.

A special tip of the editor’s proverbial hat to Managing Editor Sieg Lindstrom and Associate Editor Jeff Hollobaugh for doing such yeoman work in crafting the many fine profiles and interviews which graced our pages. I’m sure you’ll agree that their work was over-the-top exemplary, particularly in such trying times.

Their deep analyses of the U.S. scene in many events have made for no end of fabulous reading. In case you missed any of them, since the January ‘20 edition was published we have produced deep looks at 13 events: men’s 100, 800, 5000, 110H, PV, TJ & SP; women’s 400, 800, 1500, 100H, PV, LJ.

And now we’re back to having single-named issues for the first two editions of ‘21, with every expectation that we’ll continue that way through the Olympic year.

Look for us not only to be on top of all the news, but also to continue to explore more long-form stories on our sport’s greatest stars. Plus more of our always-entertaining T&FN Interviews, which in the last year have featured Rai Benjamin, Emma Coburn, Sara Hall, Grant Holloway, Michael Norman, Keturah Orji & Kara Winger.

Kudos To U.S. Meet Promoters

Of all the stories we have published in the last year, arguably the most important of them is the one that follows this column, regarding some enterprising meet promoters taking things into their own hands in providing more domestic competitive opportunities for the nation’s pros.

There’s a banding-together of a mix of meets old and new for a 7-meet outdoor circuit and the creation of a new 4-meet indoor circuit.

As I write this, we’re on the cusp of meet No. 2 in Paul Doyle’s indoor creation, the American Track League, and USATF has chimed in with an announcement that it will “provide resources” for the last three meets of the series.

That’s a great bit of news, but as our Last Lap item (“A Little Late To The Dance?”) on this development said, “While we are hesitant to be critical of any levels of support, we have to ask where the federation has been the last year as this nasty crisis has played out.”

Expanded definition of “crisis”: in a health-of-the-sport frame of reference, there has been a crisis in play regards a dearth of competitive opportunities in the domestic sport for many years, not just since C19 arrived.

Spending other peoples’ money is quite easy to do, but it certainly seems to me that the 20th-century (or is it 19th?) business model no longer works. The national federation, while it has sponsored some good initiatives in recent years, needs to get even more into the meet-promotion business, top to bottom.

Doyle shouldn’t have to be pitching his ATL series to ESPN on his own. The Pro Series meets shouldn’t be out looking for streaming packages on their own.

USATF — here I go spending Indy’s money — should have a specialized department that does nothing but work on creating/maintaining a viable circuit of meets.

Kicking in some cold, hard cash would never be a bad thing, of course, but I’m speaking of providing a concerted effort to market the high end of the sport as a whole, with all the attendant benefits that come from banding together.

Finding national-level sponsors as well as helping meet promoters find backers at the local level. Ensuring that the product finds its way to the airwaves in as many ways as are possible.

The U.S. still produces more world-class performers than any other nation, but they increasingly find themselves in the all-dressed-up-but-no-place-to-go category. That’s just not acceptable. □

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Track & Field News was published continually as a print magazine since its inception in 1948 through the December 2017 issue. 2018 issues (January through December) were produced in digital only format.

Will New Meets Pump New Life Into The U.S. Calendar?

JEFF CORICORAN



Ryan Crouser was an integral part of Drake's Blue oval pop-up meet last summer and keyed an explosive start to the new ATL indoor series.

by Jeff Hollobaugh

PERHAPS THE BIGGEST CRISIS facing our next Olympic team is the lack of meaningful competition. Not every athlete — or every discipline — gets invites to Diamond League meetings. With most colleges adhering to strict COVID-19 safeguards, their meets are now generally restricted to student-athletes only. And not many post-grad pros have the resources to put on their own events, à la Nike Bowerman.

So where are many of these Olympic Trials hopefuls going to go to get their qualifying marks?

They say that nature abhors a vacuum; we're not sure that applies to track & field, a sport that all too often is short on opportunity for athletes and the funds to make it happen. Luckily, some of the nation's creative meet promoters have stepped into the void in an attempt to remedy the situation.

The biggest of several promising developments came with the December announcement of an entity called — for now — Pro Track Series. The circuit brings together new meets and old in a setup that ideally will make a U.S.-based series a thriving reality.

The Pro Track Series venture is not a pandemic-only thing, says one of the instigators, Jesse Williams of Sound Running, who adds that all of the directors expect this to be an ongoing arrangement. "It's not a one-off. We don't want to just do it this year and see what happens," he clarifies. "We want to build it every single year higher and higher: more prize money, more in tune with the athletes, more in tune with broadcasters. It's something that we want to make a staple on the U.S. domestic circuit.

"We have meets already on the calendar that people have used for years," he explains. "How

can we take those and really move it to the next level for the sport? We have to have matchups, we have to have continuity. We have to have a way the fans can follow.

"The idea behind the series is you're going to have a 7-8 meet series every year. You can count on that. Athletes are coming, there's prize purses, there's going to be matchups."

The 7-meet lineup for '21:

- 5/14 – Los Angeles
- 5/29 – Portland Track Festival, Portland
- 5/31 – Iowa High Performance, Des Moines
- 6/05 – Music City Carnival, Nashville
- 7/10 – Under Armour Sunset Tour, Los Angeles
- 7/17 – Under Armour Sunset Tour, Los Angeles
- 8/14 – Ed Murphey Classic, Memphis

Williams, who directs the three LA meets, adds, "It builds a schedule that people can count on every year. Not only that, but they're professional meets. In the U.S. it's mostly the college meets now. There have been a lot of pop-

ups recently, but in the regular schedule of a normal year, there's really not any professional meets outside of the Pre Classic."

So far, understandably, some of the details are in pencil. The directors have promised more information in a major release in the coming weeks.

C19 Got The Ball Rolling

Blake Boldon, director of the Drake Relays and the new Iowa High Performance Meet, credits Williams and Music City director Dave Milner with firing up the conversation over pandemic challenges: "We started talking best practices, how we were handling COVID testing, what we were doing. We had agreed we should continue this conversation because we each have our own area of expertise and our own strengths."

Williams confirms, "The pandemic helped us all take a step back and start talking to each other. And yeah, it's early and this year is still

ATL Already On The Air

Not to be overlooked is the American Track League's new brainchild, created by athlete agent Paul Doyle. Televised by ESPN, the 4-meet indoor series, with all of the meets sans fans at Arkansas, took off with a bang in the form of Ryan Crouser's World Record. The series gained some international cred when WA folded it into the World Indoor Tour at the Silver level.

Originally founded in '13, the ATL is still looking for a title sponsor of its own, and till it finds one will be operating on a tight budget. That hasn't scared athletes away. "Everyone is so hungry to compete," Doyle says. "Athletes that would typically be getting \$20,000 to \$30,000 to show up and race are coming just because they want to race. They're actually thankful for the opportunity."

He continues, "We are extremely excited to be able to pull this off despite the challenging times. Olympic sport needs exposure to thrive and these athletes need these competitions to prepare and qualify for the 2021 Olympic Games."

Doyle promises more to come outdoors, though details aren't available yet.

going to be a weird year as far as anybody knows. Like, are we going to be able to have fans at these events?"

Says Craig Rice, director of the Portland Track Festival, "It's good for the athletes to know that from week to week, the protocols are going to be the same, the resources are going to be the same. It's going to look and feel like a series. To be on that path along with the other meets can only strengthen our position. We don't see any downside to it. Only upside for us and for the athletes."

The Drake organization, already primed by the success of its pandemic-inspired Blue Oval Showcase last August, liked the idea of a permanent addition to their calendar. The Iowa High Performance meet is the culmination of discussions with USATF Iowa about creating a "launching point for national-class athletes."

Joining the series, says Boldon, "immediately elevates the event. It's very infrequent that you launch an event and in the inaugural year, you get a call from *Track & Field News*. This is a huge benefit immediately. What makes it exciting is the joint collaboration between these existing events is helping us create a new one."

Nick Dwyer, one of the directors of the Ed Murphey Classic in Memphis, which includes youth competitions, says, "We're really pumped about furthering those opportunities for kids to see world-class track & field. Fan involvement is something that we're excited about."

Prize Money The Key

Notes Rice, "It's going to take a coordinated effort among athletes, agents, coaches and meet directors to bring in enough resources to put on a strong domestic series. Prize money is going to be a big determinant over time. We want to provide as much as we can."

"The idea," says Williams, "is that every meet will have its own prize money and there'll

Fast Distances At Texas Qualifier?

Another new event promises some fast racing in Austin. Set for the weekend of February 26–27, the Texas Qualifier will be set up to facilitate Trials and Games qualifying marks for middle and long distance runners, and already some notable performers have signed up.

The event, directed by Dave Alfano, will be USATF sanctioned and like the other meets on tap, will observe USATF anti-COVID protocols.

The races on the Friday night program will target Trials qualifying paces in the 800, 1500, 5000 and 10,000. Saturday's schedule will feature developmental competitions before running 800, 1500, 5000 and 10,000 races at — hopefully — Olympic Games qualifying paces.

Live spectators won't be permitted and the site, for now, will remain undisclosed. Live streaming of the event will be free on YouTube.

be series prize money on top of that. Theoretically, if you're someone who could go and win your individual event or place high, you have quite a few earning opportunities between the 7 meets and the overall purse.

"We could probably get all these athletes to show up without prize money, but it's part of professionalizing the sport that we want to take it to the next level.

"That's what's been missing. There's not enough earning opportunities in the U.S., so people go to Europe. There's not enough money shared with the athletes."

Dwyer agrees, "They shouldn't have to travel across any ocean to participate in a high-level meet in order to get what they need to get done in order to prepare for the Worlds or Olympics."

Having to go to Europe to compete, he adds, "creates a certain amount of stress. It certainly is expensive for athletes, which makes an already non-lucrative sport even less lucrative. So it really takes a lot of the load off the U.S. athlete if they know they can get a series of high-quality opportunities to compete within the States."

Sponsors Needed

The name "Pro Track Series", Williams admits, screams out "This space for rent." It

really is. There are some pretty creative people in the group and they had a million fun names. We just kept coming back to wanting a title sponsor. Why come up with a crazy name that we're going to have to change in a couple of weeks or months?

"So 'Pro Track Series' says exactly what it is, and we are hopeful that someone wants to share in this journey. This is not an every-4-years sport. The Olympics have shown that track & field is very popular and it's the most participated high school sport between track and cross country. So why aren't we able to get more eyeballs on it in a non-Olympic year? I know there's companies out there that would love to support it."

Says Dwyer, "We have a lot of really nice corporate opportunities [in Memphis]. I feel confident somebody's going to listen to us and give us an opportunity."

How To Broadcast The Series?

If a major network doesn't spring for televising the series, the directors are considering an entirely new model of live streaming the events.

Says Rice, "In Portland [last summer] we ended up putting on a series of smaller meets. We were between contracts with streaming platforms anyway. So we said, 'Let's take the summer and see what we can do with our own broadcast.'"

For the series, he explains, "We're going to try to provide a live stream at a low entry cost for anyone that wants to watch. The small amount that you pay for live stream is going to go to athletes as part of the end-of-season prize money."

How likely is it that all of the meets will opt for a unified live-streaming platform? Very, says Dwyer. "We're going to band together and do as much as a unit as we possibly can while maintaining our individual identities. We look forward to being on the same channel essentially, so that people know where to go and it creates a nice following."

Various entities have tried to boost domestic track in the U.S. summer season since it started losing much of its prominence decades ago. Could it be that a cooperative effort from meet directors across the country — in a nation traumatized by a pandemic — is a big step in the right direction?

Says Williams, "We're going to take a shot."

"We're thrilled to help grow the sport in the U.S.," concludes Dwyer. "We couldn't be more happy with the situation that's been laid down in front of us, which is turning something bad with COVID into something good." □



Agent Paul Doyle is the motivating force behind the American Track League's indoor series.

Records Highlight Debut Of The American Track League

SHAWN PRICE



Grant Holloway ripped off a pair of fast hurdle flights, in the final equaling his American Record of 7.35.

by Sieg Lindstrom

FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS, January 24 — The first stateside elite meet of the young '21 season, American Track League #1, got off the mark with a spectacular bang: a first-throw 74-10½ (22.78) World Record by Ryan Crouser, who also sent his third heave longer than the previous global standard, 74-4¼ (22.66), set by Randy Barnes 32 years ago this month.

There was no mistaking the quality of the throw, which arced fully past the far edge of a black mat laid in the center of the Tyson Center infield positioned in the target zone for mortal throwers. Crouser spun through the throw with no trace of a hitch and hit the release with marked power.

Clearly, he harbors no intention to back down from the intensity of his history-making '20 campaign, even as the coronavirus continues to challenge normalcy in training and travel. He lofted his second throw out to 69-0 (21.03), then hit another monster on his third: 74-5¾ (22.70), also over the old WR. He whirled two WR-territory fouls in rounds 4 and 5 and finished with 73-9 (22.48).

The indoor WR has “been a goal,” Crouser declared with a smile, “but it’s almost more like a stepping stone to the outdoor World Record I’m kind of always looking forward. I’m really happy to throw an indoor PR and be so close to my outdoor PR in the very first meet of this season.”

“That first one was a great first-round throw,” continued the Olympic champion, now in his second year as a Razorback volunteer assistant coach. “I would critique myself a little bit going forward from there. It’s difficult to [in] early season build on a throw like that. So I executed really well in the first round, which is one of the things that I tend to have a little bit of trouble with. So I did that really well and, but it put a lot of pressure on myself to build from there.

“So the second round I actually was really happy with that. They impounded my shot ‘cause we had to weigh it [for WR certification]. I like to

throw a soft shell and I went to throwing a hard shell, which I haven’t done really at all. And so I missed it off my hand, but I felt like that one was really good. By round 3, I got my own shot back and kinda got rolling again.... That [second throw], I felt like technically I set it up even better than the first and just missed it. I mean for any shotputter, you miss it off your hand, it’s not going to go far. So that one was kind of the one that got away, but I’m really content with overall

coming back and later in the series throwing a 22.70-plus, another one at 22.40.

Grant Holloway, too, was in record form. Record-equaling, that is. In his 60 hurdles heat, the 23-year-old outdoor world champion streamed over the barriers in 7.38 to equal the second-fastest clocking of his life from a year ago and set expectations for the final.

Holloway delivered, dominant again in the final and over the 5 barriers in 7.35 to equal his own American Record from '19. He finished 0.19 clear of runner-up Michael Dickson.

“Coach [Mike] Holloway challenged me to execute the first hurdle to the best of my ability and I tried to do that as best I can,” Holloway told ESPN’s Lewis Johnson, adding, “Always expect a little faster. Job’s not finished, still have a whole lot of meets to go to. But this is a good start to the season.”

Dashing down the 60 straight on the flat, 100 Olympian Trayvon Bromell confirmed the comeback signs he showed distinctly last summer. He led the prelims with 6.58 and sprinted 6.48 in the final, just 0.01 off the PR he earned winning World Indoor gold in '16, and 0.17 ahead of Divine Oduduru.

Fred Kerley took the 400 in 45.03, the third-fastest indoor clocking of his life and best since '17.

Harvard alum Gabby Thomas did some ATL rewriting in the 300. Her 35.92 took the timed-sections final from Jenna Prandini (36.68) and a solid field, and moved her to No. 7 all-time world and No. 2 American in the rarely run event. and, you know, have a chance. I’m very excited.” □

AMERICAN TRACK LEAGUE I MEN'S RESULTS

200m banked—

60: 1. Trayvon Bromell (US) 6.48 (0.01 off PR); 2. Divine Oduduru (Ngr) 6.65; 3. Andre Ewers (Jam) 6.67; 4. Marvin Bracy (US) 6.68; 5. Chris Belcher (US) 6.69; 6. Omar McLeod (Jam) 6.70; 7. Demek Kemp (US) 6.71; 8. Brandon Carnes (US) 6.72.

Heats: I-1. Oduduru 6.70; 2. McLeod 6.73; 3. Kemp 6.73; 4. Christopher Belcher (US) 6.75; 5. Senoj Givans (Jam) 6.77; 6. Davon DeMoss (US) 6.79; 7. Andre De_Grassie (Can) 6.79; 8. Keitavious Walter (US) 6.92. II-1. Bromell 6.58; 2. Bracy 6.72; 3. Carnes 6.74; 4. Ewers 6.74; 5. Tyquendo Tracey (Jam) 6.75 PR; 6. Rodney Rowe (US) 6.78; 7. Adam Gemili (GB) 6.81; 8. Cordero Gray (US) 6.84.

400: I-1. Travean Caldwell (US) 46.25 PR; 2. Nick Hilson (US) 47.47; ... dnf—Quincy Hall (US).

II-1. Fred Kerley (US) 45.03; 2. Christopher Taylor (Jam) 45.73 PR; 3. Amere Lattin (US) 46.53 PR; 4. Kyle Clemons (US) 47.30.

60H: 1. Grant Holloway (US) 7.35 =AR (=AR Holloway [Florida] '19) (=3, =4 W);

2. Michael Dickson (US) 7.54 PR; 3. Ruebin Walters (Tri) 7.65; 4. Chad Zallow (US) 7.71; 5. Eddie Lovett (VI) 7.84; 6. Wellington Zaza (Lbr) 7.87; 7. Trey Holloway (US) 8.10.

Heats: II-1. Holloway 7.38 (x, =9 A).

Field Event

SP: 1. Ryan Crouser (US) 74-10½ (22.82) WR, AR (old WR, AR 74-4¼/22.66 Randy Barnes [US] '89) (in/out: x, 9 W; x, 5 A) (74-10½, 69-0, 74-5¾ [x, 2 W, A] f, f, 73-9 [x, 7 W]) (22.82, 21.03, 22.70, f, f, 22.48);

2. Chuk Enekwechi (Ngr) 67-9 (20.65); 3. Payton Otterdahl (US) 67-7 (20.60); 4. Nick Ponzio (US) 65-6¾ (19.98).

ATL I WOMEN'S RESULTS

60: 1. Blessing Okagbare (Ngr) 7.17 PR; 2. Christiana

Williams (Jam) 7.18; 3. Kayla White (US) 7.20; 4. Morolake Akinosun (US) 7.20; 5. Gabby Thomas (US) 7.21 PR; 6. Teahna Daniels (US) 7.24; 7. Darryl Neita (GB) 7.29; ... dnc—Keni Harrison (US).

Heats: I-1. White 7.18 PR; 2. Daniels 7.23; 3. Thomas 7.24 PR; 4. Caitland Smith (US) 7.33; 5. Brittany Anderson (Jam) 7.43 PR; 6. Sha'Keela Saunders (US) 7.63.

II-1. Williams 7.18; 2. Okagbare 7.19; 3. Akinosun 7.23; 4. Harrison 7.26; 5. Darryl Neita (GB) 7.29.

300: I-1. Jenna Prandini (US) 36.68 PR; 2. Ashley Henderson (US) 36.95 PR; 3. Cassandra Tate (US) 37.74 PR; 4. Ashley Spencer (US) 38.29.

II-1. Thomas 35.92 PR (7, 8 W; 2, 2 A);

2. Shakima Wimbley (US) 36.78; 3. Kyra Jefferson (US) 36.97 PR; 4. Sage Watson (Can) 37.90.

III-1. Harrison 36.83 PR; 2. Kori Carter (US) 37.53 PR.

IV-1. Kendall Baisden (US) 37.71 PR; 2. Daniels 38.52 PR; 3. Saunders 38.67 PR.

400: 1. Quanera Hayes (US) 51.76; 2. Shamier Little (US) 52.63; 3. Wadeline Jonathas (US) 53.10; 4. Lina Nielsen (GB) 53.27; 5. Sparkle McKnight (Tri) 55.13.

60H: 1. Tonea Marshall (US) 7.86 =PR; 2. Christina Clemons (US) 7.88; 3. Tiffany Porter (GB) 7.89; 4. Brittany Anderson (Jam) 8.06; 5. Tallyah Brooks (US) 8.07; 6. Spencer 8.25; 7. Isabelle Pedersen (Nor) 8.52.

Heats: I-1. Marshall 7.98. II-1. Porter 7.96; 2. Clemons 8.01.

Field Events

HJ: 1. Vashti Cunningham (US) 6-2¾ (1.90); 2. Rachel McCoy (US) 6-1½ (1.87); 3. Jelena Rowe (US) 5-11½ (1.82); 4. tie, Brooks & Ty Butts-Townsend (US) 5-11½; 6. Amina Smith (US) 5-9¾ (1.77).

PV(jumpoff): 1. Megan Clark (US) 14-9 (4.50); 2. Katie Nageotte (US) 14-9; 3. Marissa Kalsey (US) 14-1¼ (4.30); 4. Chloe Cunliffe (US) 14-1¼; 5. Jill Marois (US) 13-9¼ (4.20); ... nh—Robin Bone (Can).

Ryan Crouser Crushes World Shot Put Record

SHAWN PRICE



A 74-10½ by Ryan Crouser added 6¼ inches to the all-time undercover best.

by Sieg Lindstrom

THE OLYMPIC YEAR is young, pandemic realities are still testing athletes and there is much rust to be shaken off for most. But Ryan Crouser, with his World Record at the first installment of the 4-meet American Track League series showed his early-season shot form to be on a par with the fabulously long-bombing consistency the Rio champion showed in '20.

"There's really good things there," said Crouser — visibly not shocked though pleased with his 74-10½ (22.78) — "and I'm sure most excited to kind of put this all together here over the next month, because in any early-season meet, mostly you're doing it to learn and improve.

"There's some really good takeaways. A, I've got a lot of power in the ring, and B, there's still a lot to improve on just in consistency. We're still in heavy training. We haven't really backed off too much. We haven't really started tapering at all. We're lifting heavy in the weightroom, throwing a lot and throwing heavy shots. So as I started to work in some light balls and get used to throwing fast, that's the farthest I've thrown any ball really since the summertime.

"So I'm excited to get in some speed work because that speed that I was kinda trying to find wasn't really very developed today. So a really good indicator and really excited moving forward of the possibilities."

With the depth of experience the 28-year-old '11 High School Athlete Of The Year, and was our top-rated-American last year, has laid on over many seasons, Crouser derives feedback that fuels him from early-phase work with weightier shots.

"I've been throwing the 18 [8.16kg] quite a bit," he said. "That's what I've predominantly

been throwing. And I have gone up to the 20 [c9kg] and I threw a big personal best with that. I posted on my social media I threw 20.20 [66-3¼] with the 20lb. And so for me, that was a phenomenal throw and really a good indicator of where I'm at kind of coming off of heavy, heavy lifting, heavy throwing.

"For me, when I'm at very peak shape and I've been throwing the light ball and doing sprints and plyometric work 1 pound is about a meter for me. So you can kind of do the math on that from a 20-pound dropping down to a 16. If I can get over 20m with a 20-pound, that kind of shows me the potential that is there."

With travel the ordeal it is right now, Crouser is stoked that three of the four ATL meets — on each of the next three Sundays in Fayetteville,

where he lives — will include the men's shot.

"When we set the schedule, U.S. Champs in Albuquerque was still on the table," he explained. "We'll have shot put at the first and the second [January 31]. So today, next Sunday, and then the third one is off and I'll be back on for the fourth meet here [February 21]. That one was meant to be a tune up for U.S. Champs, but I'm still gonna stick with that schedule.

"So yeah, happy to have three meets here through the American Track League, and it's been a really successful event, I think. I mean, it's been run safe. We've had PCR tests, all of us yesterday, and really extensive wearing of masks. So I'm really happy with how the meet has gone, the energy we are still able to have with no crowd, and I'm excited to continue to have the opportunity to compete here in two meets."

Crouser also came away with a lagniappe victory from the meet, as girlfriend Megan Clark took the vault at 14-9 (4.50), which height she needed to clear three times in order to prevail in a jumpoff with Katie Nageotte. A jumpoff which Crouser mostly missed — for an essential reason.

"From what I could see, Megan looked good," he said. "I mean, she's been jumping well in practice and I know it was kind of a first real opener for her. So proud of the way she jumped in mostly to compete like that. I know they were moving the bar up and down, up and down so I imagine she's pretty tired. I saw the first jump of the jumpoff as I was heading to drug testing so I missed most of that.

"But with any World Record, it was a relief to have drug testing there because that's been a challenge in World Records in the past. You have to have drug testing on site and certifying it, otherwise it doesn't count. So I was really happy to see the USADA guys here in the stands and there on the infield to get that certified.

"I unfortunately missed the vault because of that, but it was a relief. I guess, if I'm going to miss her for a reason, it was good to be missing it for drug testing. 'Cause now we can certify the World Record." □

Crouser Rewrites The All-Time Indoor List

With his amazing series in Fayetteville, Ryan Crouser claimed all-time indoor puts Nos. 1, 2 & 7. The Top 10 (! = secondary mark in series):

22.82 74-10½	Ryan Crouser (US)	Fayetteville	1/24/21
22.70 74-5¼	----Crouser !	Fayetteville	1/24/21
22.66 74-4¼	Randy Barnes (US)	Los Angeles	1/20/89
22.60 74-1¼	----Crouser	Albuquerque	2/15/20
22.58 74-1	----Crouser	Manhattan	12/05/20
22.55 73-11¼	Ulf Timmermann (East Germany)	Senftenberg	2/11/89
22.48 73-9	----Crouser !	Fayetteville	1/24/21
22.40 73-6	Adam Nelson (US)	Fayetteville	2/15/08
22.33 73-3¼	----Crouser	New York City	2/09/19
22.31 73-2½	Tom Walsh (New Zealand)	Birmingham	3/03/18

Focus On The U.S. Men's 800 Scene

JEFF COHEN



The last time the U.S. staged an outdoor nationals the 800 podium was filled by Clayton Murphy, Donovan Brazier & Bryce Hoppel.

by Jeff Hollobaugh

HIGHPOINTS & BIG VALLEYS: That's what a history of U.S. men running the 800 internationally looks like. A good number of heroes, including 8 Olympic golds (see chart). But not since Dave Wottle's memorable come-from-behind run in Munich has the United States captured Olympic gold in the men's 2-lapper — a drought going on 50 years. Now, things may be looking up.

With '19 and the emergence of Donovan Brazier, the U.S. won its initial 2-lap gold at the Worlds. His subsequent No. 1 was the first in the World Rankings for an American 800 man since Don Paige 39 years earlier.

The ascendance of Brazier is the most obvious marker of a resurgent corps of American two lappers. Several others have made it clear that they're already forces to be reckoned with at the international level, or may be soon.

The Lead Pack

Brazier is currently on top of the heap. With his 1:42.34 win at Doha and his 1:43.15 list leader last season, the 23-year-old Michigander is

the most confident man in the event. He's won his last 7 finals, his most recent loss coming in — ironically — Doha, where he placed 3rd in the DL race in May '19. In terms of obvious potential, he is arguably the most promising practitioner of the event since World Record holder David Rudisha.

Clayton Murphy, 25, cannot be overlooked. The Rio bronze medalist with his best of 1:42.93, he still holds down the No. 4 spot on the U.S. all-time list. He earned the No. 6 global ranking that year. His upward trajectory has hit some bumps since then, though he pulled down a pair of No. 8s in '18 & '19 after failing to make the USATF final in '17. In '18 he bounced back with the USATF win and his No. 2 time ever, 1:43.12. In '19 he lost at USATF to Brazier and finished 8th in the Doha final. Since the breakup of Nike Oregon in the fall of '19, Murphy has been training in Akron with his college coach Lee LaBadie. We were unable to reach Murphy for an interview.

Bryce Hoppel is the new kid on the scene. Only 23, his breakthrough in '19 came within the fabric of a long collegiate season; he closed the year by kicking to a stunning 4th at the World Championships. Last season, he improved his best to 1:43.23 in finishing a close 2nd to Brazier in Monaco. A skilled and passionate racer, he

has already marked himself as a podium threat internationally.

At 23 **Devin Dixon** still has an outdoor season remaining at Texas A&M, where he was the NCAA runner-up in '19 to Hoppel. He has speed to burn, backed up by a pair of NCAA relay titles and history's fastest-ever indoor split, 44.24. Given his proclivity to race from the front, he is likely to fare best in a fast race and as likely as anyone to be in the lead of the Trials at halfway.

The '18 NCAA title went to Penn State's **Isaiah Harris**. The next year he just missed the Doha team, finishing 4th at the USATF meet. Well-noted for his range, he was a prep state champion at 200 and has run 4:00.10 for the mile. Now 24, he continues to be coached by Nittany Lion coach John Gondak.

In a career of conspicuous consistency, '16 World Indoor bronze medalist **Erik Sowinski** has U.S.-ranked every year from 2012–19, 4 times at No. 3 or higher. His PR of 1:44.58 came in '14. The 31-year-old Brooks Beast is now assistant coaching at Iowa. Though he hasn't raced in a year, a 1:15.8 time trial over 600 last July says much for his '20 fitness. Through sheer dint of experience, he can't be counted out of any team qualifying situation.

The Chasers

Isaiah Jewett, 23, started out as a 400 man at UC Irvine. Now a Pac-12 champion for USC, he still has one season to go for the Trojans. In his last full campaign, after winning Mt SAC in a PR 1:46.11 he failed to make the NCAA final but placed 5th at USATF.

The OTC Elite's **Harun Abda** has broken into the U.S. Rankings twice. The 31-year-old's best of 1:45.55 dates from '14. He hasn't been under 1:46 since '16, when he placed 7th in the Trials finals.

Brandon Lasater, 28, is now running for the Atlanta TC after a collegiate career at Georgia Tech. He ran his PR of 1:45.85 in 2018, the year he ranked No. 6 among Americans and placed 4th at USATF. Competing in the 1500 is also on the table, should he qualify (his PR is 3:41.13 from '17).

Drew Piazza, 25, ran his PR 1:45.69 in placing

5th at the '17 USATF. He placed 5th again the next year, but in '19 failed to make the finals. The Virginia Tech alum is now running for New Balance Boston after training with the Oregon Track Club into '20.

A Pac-12 runner-up for USC, **Rob Ford** also placed 7th in the NCAA in '18. That same year he ran his best of 1:46.43 in the heats at USATF before making 6th in the final. Now 24, he trains with Isaiah Harris and represents Hoka One One.

Jesse Garn, 27, hit his PR of 1:45.04 in '17 a few weeks after missing out on the finals of the USATF Championships. Coached by the legendary Frank Gagliano, the Binghamton alum is a self-described "injury-prone runner", but if he is healthy, he could factor.

Talk about a meteoric rise and fall. **Boris Berian** stunned in '15 by lowering his PR from 1:48.89 to 1:43.34. The next year he captured World Indoor gold and made the Rio final. Then Achilles problems cropped up and it has been nearly three years since he raced, but at 28 he reportedly is back healthy and training in Colorado with coach Joe Bosshard.

Drew Windle, 28, ran his best of 1:44.63 in '17 and the next year won silver at the World Indoor. He said last summer on Instagram, "It's no secret I've struggled since I earned the silver medal at World indoors in 2018. I've spent the last two years trying to figure out how to return to that form." He reports that training is going well now.

Joe White, 25, ran to 3rd in the NCAA for Georgetown with his 1:45.73 PR in '17. He won more All-America honors as a senior in '19. Now training with Harris and coach Gondak, White is hoping to make the next big jump.

Anyone else?

On the Trials schedule, the 800 comes before the 1500, so that means candidates like **Brannon Kidder**, 27, might do both. Among U.S. 800 men he ranked No. 6 in '19, but with a 3:35.27 PR that year, his credentials are equally solid for the longer race.

In contrast, it would be a major news item if **Craig Engels** decided to try the 800 (he has a 1:44.68 PR); most would expect him to laser-focus

The U.S.'s Olympic Men's 800 Medal Haul

Overall, American men have won 21 Olympic medals: 8 golds, 4 silvers & 9 bronzes. But it has been 49 years since the last gold and more than 100 since the last silver. The chart of U.S. medals:

Year	Gold	Silver	Bronze
1900	—	John Cregan	David Hall
1904	James Lightbody	Howard Valentine	Emil Breitkreutz
1908	Mel Sheppard	—	—
1912	Ted Meredith	Mel Sheppard	Ira Davenport
1920	—	Earl Eby	—
1924	—	—	Schuyler Enck
1936	John Woodruff	—	—
1948	Mal Whitfield	—	—
1952	Mal Whitfield	—	—
1956	Tom Courtney	—	—
1968	—	—	Tom Farrell
1972	Dave Wottle	—	—
1976	—	—	Rick Wohlhuter
1984	—	—	Earl Jones
1992	—	—	Johnny Gray
2016	—	—	Clayton Murphy

on the 1500 where he has a solid shot.

Intriguing news from the early indoor season is that **Ryan Martin** is back racing. The UCSB alum opened eyes in '12 when he won the Big West with his PR 1:44.77. He placed 4th in the Trials that year. After a 6-year pro career during which he made the USATF final twice — finishing 5th each time — he retired in '18. Now 31, he may have decided he has more in the tank.

Up-and-comers? This is a category that's been thwarted badly by the pandemic. With the virtual elimination of every opportunity to emerge, we haven't seen much in the way of emerging talent that could challenge the big names. It takes serious development to go from 1:46/1:47 to Trials finalist — which is not to say it can't happen, but if it is happening, we haven't had the chance to see it, not being privy to every athlete's training sessions.

That being said, racers like Texas A&M's

Carlton Orange (1:46.40 '19) and Indiana's **Cooper Williams** (1:46.06 '18) bear watching, along with **Vincent Crisp** (1:46.29 '20) and **Sam Ellison** (1:46.10 '19).

As for the battle for team spots, Harris summed it up well: "The U.S. is deep. We have a good field. There's a bunch of good guys out there. I think it's just going to be who runs the smartest race.

"Obviously, Donovan's the guy to beat and Hoppel looked amazing last year and the year before. Murphy, there's another guy you can't sleep on. He's got the experience."

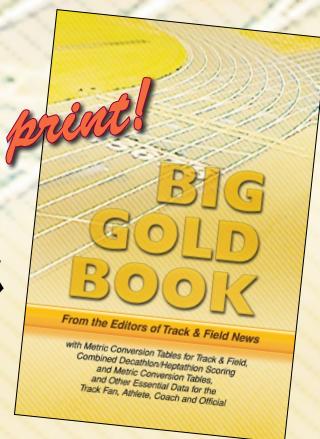
He adds, "You know what? We're all young and we're all just getting better every year. I think that Brazier is definitely going to have some company, and hey, that's not a bad thing for him. If anything, that's going to push him to be even better too, so we can all make each other great." □

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Donavan Brazier Looking For Big Numbers Beyond The 800



He's the fastest American 2-lap runner ever, but Donavan Brazier is bullish on his prospects in the 1500 and 4x4.

by Jeff Hollobaugh

WITH HIS DOMINATING '19 World Championships win in an American Record 1:42.34, followed by the world's fastest '20 time, 1:43.15, Donavan Brazier is sitting pretty in the 2-lapper. Yet as serious as he is about staying at the top of that heap — very serious indeed — the 23-year-old Michigander plans to spring some surprises on the track world this year.

"I'd like to make a relay team for America," he tells us. "That's one of my biggest things. Obviously, I've got to take care of business in the 8, do everything I need to do to establish myself as the best American 800 runner, possibly even world. That's my No. 1 goal; that's just an obvious one.

"But besides that, I'd like to be making

these relay teams for America, either on the 4x4 or the mixed 4x4, whatever it might be to be a part of the 1600m relay and potentially be in the finals for America for that."

Bold words for a man with a 46.91 PR in the 1-lapper. But longtime watchers of the lanky Brazier have always known there was more under the hood — they saw him clock a 45.92 anchor on a 4x4 as a high schooler.

He explains, "I ran that 46.91 three years ago now at an indoor meet at Texas A&M, so you know, I'm hoping there's a little more room to grow."

He adds, "We're going to go the 400m route before we go up to the 15. Ever since we had Raevyn Rogers join the group, the prospect of "fast races and fast 400s" has increased. "It's a lot easier to try to talk [Nike coach Pete Julian] into doing more speed stuff. We're trying to get to that."

And yes, Brazier also mentioned the 1500, long a point of curiosity. Last season he ran it once, flying away from his competitors on the final lap for what looked like a very easy 3:35.85 PR.

"Given the training that we'd been doing, the mileage that I'm at, it felt like I had more potential in the race than it showed. So, it's a goal to do the 1500 one day, but that'll be a last resort-type thing. That's kind of my insurance once I get older. I have potential and maybe I'll start exploring it a little bit more."

The 800 will remain his bread-and-butter event. He became world champion at 22, the same age as his idol Muhammad Ali was when he ascended to the world heavyweight boxing title by knocking out favored Sonny Liston in a much ballyhooed fight in '64.

Says Brazier, "In my case, I don't think I was an underdog, but I was still the young guy

in the field and I still had to prove something.

"Now I'm looking to have the confidence [Ali] had. I think that's a big thing as well. What I'm kind of realizing with myself is I just have such a deep belief in myself that, if I've got me with me, then nobody can be against me. I like that kind of mindset."

Brazier thinks back to the Monaco race last summer where he ran his world-leading 1:43.15, just barely holding off Bryce Hoppel. "I was watching the screen. I was comfortable, but not as comfortable as I'd like to be finishing that home stretch because I knew he was on me. It definitely shows you've got to stay on the pedal and never let up."

Turns out Brazier was dealing with a minor injury at the time. As soon as he had arrived in Europe, he had gotten a PRP (platelet-rich-plasma) shot in his foot to speed recovery from a case of plantar fasciitis. "Even getting to the plane, I was limping, it really didn't look great. Pete and my strength coach thought I wasn't going to run Monaco, but I was pretty stubborn. I really wanted to run. I never ran Monaco and I heard so many good things about it.

"So we evaluated the risk factor and we realized that it was nothing that's really going to create anything major from this one race." The foot didn't trouble him on the track and as his European tour continued, "it was improving, but it definitely wasn't improving at the rate that we'd like. So after Stockholm [a win in 1:43.76], we were happy with how everything turned out. We decided to call it quits at that point."

Brazier has steadily progressed since he

started working with Julian in the fall of '18. "Every year we learn something new about each other and we're starting to get a familiarity of what we're able to accomplish in workouts. He's getting to know what I like, what I don't like, what my strengths are, what my weaknesses are, and trying to limit the weaknesses I do have."

He admits that there have been fleeting moments when he's wondered what it would be like to leave the sport. "It would give me an easy escape. And I don't want that. I want to be 10 toes down when it comes to this stuff. I want to be the best I can possibly be. So when eventually I do hang up my spikes, I'll look back on it and know I did everything I possibly could."

It hasn't always been that way. "There have been a lot of ups and downs. I failed to make the Olympic team in 2016 [after setting an American Junior Record 1:43:15 in winning the NCAA]. I failed at winning indoor nationals in college and I failed at making a World final [in '17].

"There were years, up to even 2019, I was handicapping myself. I would say things like, 'I wish I was doing this, I wish I was doing that, I could be so much better if I did this...'"

His transformation was a mental one, he admits: "I started doing those things instead of talking about them. Just being disciplined on top of being motivated and just the willingness to do the work and being around a group of guys that make it easy to do it helps a lot.

"That's why I love being in a household full of like-minded and goal-oriented guys. We're all focused and just trying to tap as much potential as possible."

A number comes up — 1:39. Is it possible? "Definitely," he quickly answers, even though it will require PRing by almost 2.5 seconds. "I don't doubt it one bit. It will happen sooner rather than later, too. That's not putting any disrespect to David Rudisha. I firmly believe he was the guy to run 1:39, if he had the right race and the right rabbit and the right time. He would be that 1:39 guy. But he wasn't able to do it. I don't know if I'm going to be the one to do it, but I definitely do see it happening."

With a future full of possibilities in the sport, Brazier sees his Doha performance as just another stepping stone: "I don't think that's going to be the pinnacle of my career."

Someday he'll have more time for his getaway place in Florida, his boat, his plans to run fishing charters once he's done with track. For now, he says, "I'm definitely in the sport through 2022 Eugene. That's what I keep telling Pete. I'll be 25 and we'll see how my body and my mind feels. If I'm running track, I want to put 100% into it. I'm not going to just be one of these guys that makes U.S. finals and not any teams. If I'm running, I want to be making teams, I want to be running for medals.

"If I still have the energy and the fire and the passion for the sport, I'll run until I'm 35, like Johnny Gray. But only time will tell with stuff like that."

One thing Brazier knows. He has to be all in for his dreams to become real: "I can't let up on the sport because this sport will humble you real fast if you don't put everything you've got into it." □

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Bryce Hoppel Is A Racer Who's Dying To Race

KEVIN MORRIS



The reigning national indoor 800 champ, Bryce Hoppel hasn't had a lot of racing opportunities since he turned pro.

by Jeff Hollobaugh

IT HAD BEEN 6 MONTHS since he had raced at all, so Bryce Hoppel had no idea what to expect in Monaco last August. It would be his first big 800 in his first full year as a pro.

"In college, I was used to a race every weekend and you just kind of slowly improve with each and every race," he explains.

"This is the first time I'm just hopping into one of the biggest races of my life, against Donovan Brazier in the Diamond League. I was like, 'Hell, man, I'm just going to go out there and do my best.' And before I knew it, I was just feeling good following those guys. The atmosphere in Monaco was insane and the PR just came along with that."

His scintillating kick brought him just 0.08 off the shoulder of the world champion. A 1:43.23 that made him the No. 7 American ever, it crushed his career best by more than a full second. "I was like, 'Wow! I guess this works too.'"

While 2020 will forever be remembered by many as one of the worst of years thanks to the pandemic, for Hoppel it was inevitably a year of discovery.

Coming off a standout 3-year NCAA career at Kansas, the Texas native had ridden the express elevator to the sport's top levels in the '19 season, starting out with an undefeated streak in the college ranks and finishing up just a place shy of a medal at the World Championships.

He captured both NCAA crowns, kicking his way to the outdoor title in a PR 1:44.41. He made the Doha team at USATF and then, many months after he started his campaign, he closed it out with a stunning 1:44.25 come-from-behind 4th at the Worlds.

"Everything came so quickly," he recounts. "It feels like yesterday that I was hoping, 'Oh man, I hope I do good at the Big 12.' And then I was like,

'Maybe I have a shot to do well at the NCAAs.'

"I mean, everyone's goal is to run professionally. But I guess it kind of snuck up on me. It never became a reality until I was there in those big races. I'm still trying to understand that I can do that."

So yes, 2020 was always going to be a new experience for Hoppel, now 23. First, he had to answer the question of how to be a successful pro. Then it became, how to be a successful pro in a pandemic?

"One of the things that I kept consistent is training with Michael Whittlesey, my college coach. He just kept me on the same thing. With the Olympics coming up so quickly, I'm going to stay with what works and just keep rolling with that."

His brief '20 indoor season showed he was on the right track, with a 2:17.41 kilo in Boston (moving to No. 3 in U.S. history), followed by a 2nd behind Brazier at Millrose in 1:45.70. Then he won the USATF crown in 1:46.67.

When the shutdown came, Hoppel found that the biggest challenge was training in solitude. "That was probably the biggest difficulty of all," he says, "but for the most part, I feel like I've been doing well." A big plus, he adds, is the extra time he was able to spend with his family back home in Texas.

Fitness-wise, it all worked. "I'm used to developing slowly with races and seeing my progress through that. I was going into it a little blind, but as for training, it was phenomenal. I was expecting to do the best I ever had, but it was just weird, I didn't know where I was."

So now he continues to look ahead to Tokyo and points beyond. Some of the lessons he's learned will no doubt shape his pathway.

For one, look at his breakout '19 campaign, some 27 individual races including heats. For a world-class 800 practitioner, it's a heavy load. Yet it reveals something fascinating about the man.

When asked whether it was tough to recover from that season, he replies, "Not necessarily. Once the season ends, I take two weeks off. I feel like I'm really good at recovery and that's how I get the best of training. Even day-to-day I can recover. Me and Whit see that as a strength with the championship racing where we go through three rounds. I've already done well with that. Every day, I feel back at 100%."

"Other guys might feel beat up and stuff, but I don't know, I feel like it wasn't bad. That's why I love to do as much as I can."

Quick recovery through the rounds certainly showed in Doha, where over 4 days he churned out times of 1:46.01, 1:45.95 and his 1:44.25 PR. No sign of long-term fatigue either, as he had run races in each of the 8 previous months.

The only regret Hoppel has about the Worlds — and it's probably too strong to call it a regret; let's call it a second guess — has to do with his blazing finish. The Jayhawk alum had the fastest final 100 (13.18) and 200 (26.87) in the field. Mid-point on the final turn, he was far back in 7th. And by "far back" we mean, well, add "freaking" to it. Make it an 820m race and Hoppel might have copped silver.

"That was one of the things that kept me up at night after the race. It was like, 'Man, I was feeling great coming down that last stretch. If I would have just kicked it in sooner.'

"So yeah, there's always those little things in the race. Hindsight, like I wish I would have done a little better or just done this or that. When you start thinking about that, it can be tough on yourself."

"Probably going forward, it's something I need to work on. At the same time, maybe I left a little in the tank, but it's kind of an advantage that I'm trying to get on when other people aren't. It gives me an edge at passing at the last second and they might not be ready for it."

"It's a trade-off. I still need to find... I guess we're all looking for the perfect tactic of how to race and use our energy to the fullest. Definitely a hard thing to balance."

What's on tap now? Hoppel is a racer who's dying to race. He plans to hit the boards soon as well as point for the new Austin Qualifier meet in late February.

There are also side goals: he'd like to take down the American Indoor Record in the 1000 (David Torrence's 2:16.76 from '14). And then there's the mile: "Throughout my career, coach Whit has always kind of had this hidden agenda, like, 'You're going to be a miler someday.' I don't know how I feel about that, but I definitely would like to get in a mile sometime soon and see how that goes. Like every runner, breaking the 4:00 mile is a huge dream."

"I'd like to accomplish that one day when the opportunity is right, and when there's plenty of races. It's weird with this virus, because you just don't have that many racing opportunities, so whenever we do get them, I've got to get in my main event."

Watch out then. Hoppel notes he has gotten in his best strength base ever. "I'm excited to start moving into the speed work and start racing. This is the strongest I have ever been." □

Isaiah Harris Is Swimming With The Big Fish



An NCAA 800 win in his junior year led Isaiah Harris to join the pro ranks early.

by Jeff Hollobaugh

WHAT WAS IT LIKE for Isaiah Harris, jumping from the small pond of Maine high school track — where he typically won everything — to the big Div. I pond at Penn State?

He says, “I remember talking to my dad one day my freshman year and being like, ‘I don’t know if I can do this. My body hurts.’ I was so sore. I was getting dropped every day.”

The transition to the pros, in contrast, has gone much better. Harris credits that to staying with his college coach, John Gondak.

“This is my sixth year with Gondak,” he explains. “He knows how I am and I know how he is, and how he likes to coach.” The partnership has flourished since that rocky first year.

Back in Lewiston Harris had won Maine State titles in the 200, 800 and 1600. PRs of 21.82, 46.8, 1:49.63 and 4:18.92 gave Gondak some indication of his potential. But getting him there wasn’t easy, at least at first.

“When I finally started getting my summer training from him before my freshman year, I realized that I was nowhere near the shape that he expected me to be in,” Harris admits. “It was kind of a shock once I got out there. I was getting dropped every day in every run, in every workout.”

“Once we got through all that and got to racing, I realized I was running well and everything was paying off. I could see the results. It makes it a lot easier to trust the training and be confident and go out there and do it every day.”

To say the process worked is an understatement. As a frosh, he placed 4th in the NCAA with a PR 1:45.76. As a soph, 4th in the NCAA Indoor, runner-up outdoors, and runner-up at the USATF meet with his PR 1:44.53, qualifying for the London Worlds at age 19.

In ‘18, Harris capped his junior year with his first NCAA win in 1:44.76, shortly thereafter signing a contract with Nike. Then, in his first race on the pro circuit he ran a PR 1:44.42 in Paris. One more race in Barcelona and he headed home.

“It had been a really long year,” he explains. “I had done a couple of meets with the cross country team. At our home meets the team would go 10K or so and I would drop out at 5K. That was back in the fall and then you have indoor track and outdoor track. And then I went over to Europe and once I had that PR in the bag, it was call it a season before an injury happens, you know?”

All looked good for a strong ‘19 campaign and perhaps a return to the Worlds. Then when Harris returned to the grind after a break that fall, minor disaster struck in the form of an inflammation of his sacroiliac joint: “That was something new. It was my first serious injury that kept me out for more than two weeks.”

Forced to skip the ‘19 indoor campaign, Harris — now a pro — worked with Gondak to be a force in the outdoor season. At USATF, he just missed the team, placing 4th, only 0.14 away from a plane ticket to Doha. His best time of the year, a 1:45.55, came in a small meet in Rovereto, Italy.

“I was happy under the circumstances,” he says. “I didn’t get that base training and I felt like I had to race my way into shape and it just wasn’t the ideal training cycle. It was my first year since I started running that I didn’t PR, and now PRs started to get harder and harder.”

“I wasn’t too upset with myself. If I had a full year of training, I still could have got my time a little faster. So it left me more motivated to get into the fall training and get a good cycle.”

The off-season went well this time around. Harris, who is training with former USC star Robert Ford (1:46.43 PR) as well as Georgetown alum Joseph White (1:45.73), came through the

winter in solid shape, hitting an indoor PR 1:46.01 at Millrose and finishing 2nd at the USATF meet in Albuquerque.

He also chased one of his bucket list items. “It’s been a goal of mine to break 4:00 in the mile and I haven’t had a lot of opportunities to actually run a mile. So I begged my coach to let me have one and if there’s any place to do it, it’s gotta be Boston. That track’s kind of a springboard or a trampoline. I figured that would be my best bet.”

He just missed, running 4:00.10 for 3rd. “I think I’ll run it again,” he says. “It’s kind of nice to switch it up, especially during indoor season and get something other than an 800 in the legs. Going back to the 800 after running a mile makes it seem a little bit easier.”

After indoors came the C19 shutdown. “I think everyone was saying this, but I truly believe that I was in the best shape I had ever been in. So it’s kind of a bummer that I didn’t really get to race.”

Yet there’s been plenty of training. Currently Harris is in Phoenix with his cohort: “The weather is just perfect; it makes for perfect training.”

“Gradually over the years, we’ve ramped up the mileage slightly, but it’s more the intensity of the workouts — I’m better able to handle more intense workouts now. I understand my body a little better than when I was 18 or 19 in knowing what I need to do to get in shape and stay healthy.”

“I like to think that what I’ve been doing has been working, so long as I continue to stay healthy.”

One thing the shutdown has given Harris is more time. He’s an avid gamer, so that’s where some of it has gone. Much of the rest has gone toward reading. Latest recommendation: *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*.

The other side of more time — the Olympic postponement — might have worked in his favor, he thinks: “You never know, because it’s months away. Hopefully the body holds up until then. Being young, it could be an advantage in a way. You never know when your prime years are until you’re past them, but I would say I’m still on the upside. Every year is another year to get stronger and better than I was, or would have been, last year.”

“So, I’d like to look at it as an advantage but I’ll knock on wood for now and just make sure everything goes smoothly and I stay healthy.”

He’s planning on a few indoor meets before racing at the new outdoor meet in Austin at the end of February where various luminaries are scheduled to be chasing Olympic standards. “That’s where I’ll try to get after it,” he says.

His ‘17 experience in London, he adds, shaped much of his thinking about his place in the sport. “When you get to that level, you just kind of realize everyone is good. Everyone has a kick, everyone’s fast and you can’t underestimate any runners. I learned to never, never doubt anyone in the race because on any day, anyone can have a shot at winning.”

“That prepared me well for the pro circuit. Being able to get that experience at a young age, it opened my eyes to the type of talent that’s out there and the type of people I’ll be racing for hopefully the next 6, 7 years.” □

Devin Dixon Definitely Isn't A Follower

by Jeff Hollobaugh

"LIKE MY DAD SAYS, run like you've got dogs chasing you." Solid advice from frontrunner Devin Dixon, who in '19 took his NCAA competitors through the first half in 50-flat, only to lose on the final stretch to Bryce Hoppel of Kansas.

Dixon, who ran 1:44.84 in that race, just missed the PR of 1:44.76 that he had set in winning the SEC title a few weeks earlier.

Now a Texas A&M senior, Dixon says he wasn't always a frontrunner: "I remember during my first two years in college, I was more in the middle. I was afraid to lead the pack because I wasn't really confident in my abilities. But as I got older, the front has been a lot more efficient.

"It worked out for me and it has pushed me to be in uncomfortable positions and that way I can get better results. I really understand that I'm more than meets the eye and I need to be more confident in my abilities."

Dixon, 23, boasts world-class 400 speed: a 45.22 PR from '18, along with a blazing 44.24 relay leg indoors — the fastest ever recorded.

That speed wasn't readily apparent when he started out in McDonough, Georgia, at Eagle's Landing High. In fact, the only thing that he says was completely apparent was his lack of basketball skills. "I played basketball in high school. To say the least, I was trash. I was ... not as good as the rest of the athletes. So the coach got me to think about track. I had been doing track since I was little, but I kind of fell away from it.

"My origins were in sprinting when I was a little kid, and then as I grew older and taller, it slowed me down a little bit because my legs were a little bit longer. I couldn't really move as quickly as the other kids, so they moved me to distance.

"Since then, I've been doing cross country and miles and 1000s and whatnot." He found a welcome home in the 2-lapper. In his first season, he won the Georgia 4A title in 1:55.66. "That's when I knew that God was definitely trying to show me that, yeah, this is your sport."

By the time he had graduated, he had run 46.91 and 1:49.52, adding the state 400 title to his three at 800.

At A&M, working with Pat Henry and assistant coach Milton Mallard, Dixon has flourished: 8 SEC crowns (3 in the 4x4) and 9 All-America finishes, including wins on the 4x4 indoors and out.

A year ago, he looked like he was ready to improve his résumé even more: indoors a PR 1:15.16 for 600 and a 1:47.88 prefaced a third-straight SEC 800 title. Then, a familiar refrain as his season stopped dead amid the pandemic



ERROL ANDERSON/THE SPORTING IMAGE

"It's more like I'm a wolf and I'm running and leading the pack behind me," says collegiate 800 star Devin Dixon.

and he was left wondering what to do. "I was gearing toward my best," he says. "It's been tough, but honestly, you have to adapt to different sceneries to get your training in. I was able to do that and still able to see my family, which I was okay with."

He had felt that he was on track to do something at the '20 Trials. "The training we're doing is geared toward running beyond nationals and beyond that to pro territory." But he adds that the delay will probably work in his favor.

"Sometimes you really have to be more of a glass half-full guy. You've got to look at the positives. It gave me extra time to get ready, to get to my peak conditionally and physically and also spiritually. It ended up working out for me in the end."

He has always felt at home in the 800, even though he has that 400 speed to make a go of the shorter event. He explains, "The 800 is more of a challenge, and you can only get better from things that challenge you and push you to the limit. And that race definitely does every time I run it, but it feels good to conquer it. It feels good to move past my limits and to really put myself in those uncomfortable positions; that way I can get used to it."

That concept of being comfortable being uncomfortable is not just a catchy line; it's something Dixon has worked on extensively with Mallard, himself a 44-point relay runner while at UTEP. When Dixon started trying to lead races, he says, "It was definitely frightening, but I try to look past that. I try to sit in the

nervousness, and sit into hearing the audience cheering and all that. You've got to sit in it so you can be able to do it — like I said before — being comfortable in uncomfortable positions.

"Even though I might have been afraid, I still pushed through and still do what I do best. I'm not going to stop myself because I'm afraid."

Dixon knows that to be in the mix for the Trials, fast race or slow, it will mean being in 1:42 shape. He has been working on strength, spending a lot of time on repeat 1000s, for instance: "It's a challenge every day, an experience gained for my body and for my mind. I'm stretching my endurance out, if that makes sense."

That's how he will get his body ready. The rest is the mental game. He says, "One of my coaches told me to, when I get to the line, just think of static, like a TV when you hit that channel, it just makes that noise. Just think of nothing. Don't think about what you have to do and who's running in the race and all that stuff. Just focus on running. Just try to be the first one past the line at the end.

"That's what I really try to do. Run at my own pace. Don't worry about who's shifting behind me and who's trying to move around me — even though people might get a little rough with them elbows and whatnot."

It's not fear he feels anymore when he's at the front of a race. "It's more of — I don't want to sound disrespectful — it's more like I'm a wolf and I'm running and leading the pack behind me. I don't know if that sounds weird, but that's my philosophy." □

Focus On The U.S. Women's Pole Vault Scene

KIRBY LEE/IMAGE OF SPORT



Early in the last Olympic campaign, Jenn Suhr (r) & Sandi Morris earned gold & silver at the World Indoor.

by Sieg Lindstrom

IN THE EVENT where competitors rocket themselves over crossbars off long sticks, the U.S. women's picture from the head of the metaphorical runway to the Tokyo Olympics looks something like a tale of three stately trees in the forest.

There's **Jenn Suhr**, the ageless sequoia; **Sandi Morris**, the sturdiest American oak in the woods of late; and **Katie Nageotte**, the — any foresters reading this? Let's go with hybrid poplar, which the Arbor Day Foundation reports grows at 5 to 8 feet per year.

All three are familiar names. Suhr's an Olympic gold medalist, twice a medalist, now 38. Morris is the world indoor titlist and silver medalist at the last 3 outdoor majors: Rio '16, London '17, Doha '19. Nageotte, with her 15-5 (4.70) clearance for =7th in Doha in '19 is the highest American flyer ever at a Worlds or Olympics save Morris and Suhr.

They, not that coincidentally, are the top 3 Americans on the all-time world list in spots 2, 3 & 6, and the only U.S. vaulters so far over 16-0 (4.88) as well as the metric 4.90 barrier.

Any other vaulter seeking to join Team USA for the Games will need to outjump at least one of them in the Olympic Trials final.

The fun news — though a pandemic has fogged the lead-up in many respects — is that a deeper corps of challengers than ever before is rising to take their shots. There is evidence

aplenty but one simple comparison says a lot. The '15 season which preceded the last OT saw 6 Americans at 15-1 (4.60) or higher. By contrast, the would-have-been pre-Olympics season of '19 saw 8 at that altitude. In fact, 9 if you count Lexi Jacobus, who has since retired. And '20, dismal competition year though it was, tallied 7.

As of the end of January, the U.S. claims a total of 13 active vaulters (see chart) who at some point in their career have scaled the OT-qualifying height.

A rundown on the field:

The 4.90-Plus Trio

Sandi Morris, 28 years old, 5-8½/143 (1.74/65). No. 3 on the world all-time list at 16-4¾ (5.00). World indoor champion, silver medalist Rio Olympics & World Champs '17 & '19. USA champion 2017–19; 2nd 2014–16. Five-time World Ranker 2015–19 (7, 1, 2, 1, 2). 2020 T&FN Podium "gold medalist." Coach: Bryan Compton.

Jenn Suhr, 38, 5-10¾/141 (1.80/64). No. 2 all-time world at 16-6 (5.03i) from '16. Olympic champion 2012, silver medalist '08, 7th in Rio. World Indoor champion '16. Outdoor Worlds placings: 10th '07, 4th '11, 2nd '13, =4th '15, dng '17, =7th '19. 17-time USA champ in & out. 9-time No. 1 U.S. Ranker ranked each year 2006–19. 11-time World Ranker 2006–18 (6-'06, 8-'07, 2-'08, 8-'09, 1-'11, 1-'12, 3-'13, 3-'14, 4-'15, 3-'16, 4-'18). Coach: Rick Suhr.

Katie Nageotte, 29, 5-6/135 (1.67/61). No. 6 all-time world at 16-1¾ (4.92) from '20. 5th

World Indoor Champs '18, =7th World Champs '19. USA Champs placings: 6th '13, 4th '15, 7th '17, 2nd '18, 2nd '19. U.S. Rankings 2014–19: 7, 6, 7, 2, 3, 2. World Rankings 2017–19: 6, 4, 7. Coach: Brad Walker.

The 15-5 And Above Crowd

The bar height of 15-5 — 4.70 metrically — sets a line in the sky vaulters need to be above, or certainly near, to vie realistically for Tokyo berths. That setting is the Olympic qualifying standard and at both the '16 OT and '19 USATF Champs getting over it was required to place top 3. Among active American vaulters, these 4 women own PRs at or above it so stand out as possibles to knock one or more of the 4.90 trio off the plane to Tokyo.

Kristen Brown, 28. Nageotte's training partner and =6th at the '19 USATF, the San Diego State (and Virginia Tech) alum climbed over 15-5 a few weeks before the '16 Trials, where she placed 8th at 14-9 (4.50).

"She's dealt with some injuries, but she's a 4.70 girl," says Nageotte, "and I mean, she's been looking great."

Olivia Gruver, 23, 5-9/150 (1.75/68). Two-time NCAA champ for Kentucky transferred to Washington in '19 and at the Stanford Invitational that year cleared 15-6¼ (5.73). With that jump, she surpassed Morris as the highest-ever outdoor collegiate vaulter and moved to No. 8 all-time U.S. At the '20 USATF Indoor hit 15-5 (4.70) for 3rd. Opened the '21 season as a guest at her alma mater's January intrasquad comp with 15-1 (4.60).

"I'm very focused on just jumping high," Gruver says, "and I think once I can do that and have the chance to do that hopefully something will come."

Emily Grove, 27. Placed 4th at the '19 USATF Champs, raising her lifetime best to 15-3 (4.65). The next week she raised that PR to 15-5 (4.70) to hit the Tokyo Olympics standard. Placed 6th at the '12 World Juniors as a South Dakota frosh, and her =3rd at the '17 USATF earned the Illinois native a World Champs berth that year. A 4-time U.S. Ranker, her high of No. 4 came in 2019.

"I think 2021 is super-exciting just because of opportunity," Grove says. "There's an opportunity for all of us vaulters who've been working so hard for so long to kind of show ourselves what we can do. I think girls are gonna jump really high."

Morgann LeLeux, 28, Our HS Girls AOY in '11, she hit her collegiate stride as a Louisiana-Lafayette senior in '16, tying for 2nd at the NCAA and notching a 15-1 (4.60) PR to place 4th at the Olympic Trials.

"When I made my attempt at 4.60, I thought for sure it was going to be my day," she told the *Acadiana Advocate*. "I thought I had plenty of

A Healthy U.S. Field Of 15-Footers

With virtually a whole domestic season still to go before the Olympic Trials, the U.S. is already blessed with a baker's dozen of active 15-foot vaulters. They're all also over the OT qualifying height of 15-1 (4.60). The list (affiliations are as at time of clearance):

Mark	Athlete	Site	Date
5.03 16-6	Jenn Suhr (adidas)	Brockport	1/30/16
5.00 16-4¾	Sandi Morris (Nike)	Brussels	9/09/16
4.92 16-1¾	Katie Nageotte (Nike/New York AC)	Marietta	8/01/20
4.73 15-6¼	Olivia Gruver (Washington)	Stanford	3/29/19
4.70 15-5	Kristen Brown (Nike)	Chula Vista	6/26/16
	Emily Grove (unattached)	Omaha	8/01/19
	Morgann LeLeux (unattached)	Baton Rouge	2/21/20
4.65 15-3	Kristen Leland (unattached)	Portland	3/12/16
	Annie Rhodes-Johnigan (unattached)	Torrance	4/20/19
4.63 15-2¼	Megan Clark (Duke)	Durham	4/23/16
(A)	Kortney Oates (RP)	Albuquerque	2/19/19
4.61 15-1½	Bridget Guy (unattached)	Blacksburg	2/22/20
4.60 15-1	Daylis Caballero Vega (unattached)	Des Moines	7/28/19

height for 4.65 [15-3], but it just did not happen. I had the height [on her third attempt] but went into the bar because I was too deep into the pit.

"It started to hit me how much of a chance I had," she added. "I really thought it was my time. It was a really good feeling. I've definitely come a long way. I'm definitely going to keep working and not give up my dream. I'll be back in 4 years."

Make that 5 years due to C19. Certainly in year 4 she looked to be on track, clearing a PR 15-5 indoors in her final '20 meet before the pandemic shutdown. She tied for 5th at the '20 USATF Indoor.

Watch Out For These Vaulters

Rachel Baxter, 21. She soared 14-5½ (4.41) as a California prep to win the '17 Pan-Am Junior title. Now a Virginia Tech junior and the top returning collegiate American vaulter, she PR'd last February with 14-10¼(A) (4.53).

Megan Clark, 26. Training partner of Sandi Morris and winner over Nageotte at the first ATL meet this year. Her 15-2¼ (4.63) best dates from 2016. As a Duke senior that season Clark placed 2nd at the NCAA Indoor, 5th at the outdoor NCs and 6th at the OT. Last February she earned 4th at the USATF Indoor.

Bonnie Draxler, 25. Top still-active vaulter from the '19 NCAA (2nd). Her 14-11½ (4.56) best is from that year's NCAA Indoor. No meets in '20 or so far in '21.

Bridget Guy, 24. A '19 Virginia grad and 4th at that year's NCAA, she upped her best to 15-1½ (4.61) indoors in '20 before the shutdown. Back strong in '21 with 14-11 (4.55) in January.

Annie Rhodes-Johnigan, 25. The Baylor alum U.S.-Ranked No. 5 in '19, placed 2nd at the USA Indoor, =6th at outdoor USATF and PR'd at 15-3.

Kristen Leland (née Hixson), 28. 4-time U.S. Ranker (high of No. 4 in '18). Emerged to elite status out of Div. II Grand Valley State in '14. Flew over 15-3 twice in '16 and placed 3rd at the USATF Indoor. No meets in '20, opened

'21 at 14-3¼ (4.35)

Kortney Oates, 28. The former Miss Ross, a San Diego State grad now married to 18-8¼ (5.70) man Tray Oates, lifted off to a PR 15-2¼ (4.63) indoors in '19, tied for 4th at the undercover nationals and U.S.-Ranked No. 10. Managed 14-19 (4.52) last summer and opened this season at 14-9 (4.50) in January.

Daylis Caballero Vega, 32. A '12 Olympian for Cuba. In '19 after 3 years away from vaulting, she opened her first season as a U.S. citizen at 14-9 (4.50), a centimeter below her 8-year-old PR. Then in Des Moines at USATF she improved to 15-1 for 5th. U.S.-Ranked No. 6 in '19.

Keep in mind also, because they've improved so rapidly, the precocious youngsters who in the past two seasons claimed the highest

prep vaults indoors and out: **Chloe Cunliffe** (14-9 in '19) and **Leah Pasqualetti** (14-8¼/4.48). Cunliffe is now a Puma pro, Pasqualetti an Akron frosh.

They've Hung Up Their Poles

Three prominent names from seasons past have retired. **Lexi Jacobus**, the third Rio Olympian, and her '19 NCAA champion sister **Tori Hoggard** — known during stellar prep careers and through most of their time at Arkansas as the Weeks Twins — have moved on from the sport to pursue careers in pharmacy.

Kylie Hutson, the '11 USATF titlist and 6-time U.S. Ranker whose 15-7 (5.75) PR from the '13 USA Indoor still has her equal-No. 5 on the U.S. all-time list, left the sport after 2017. To do what? Well, Hutson's Instagram handle is @ratherbhiking.

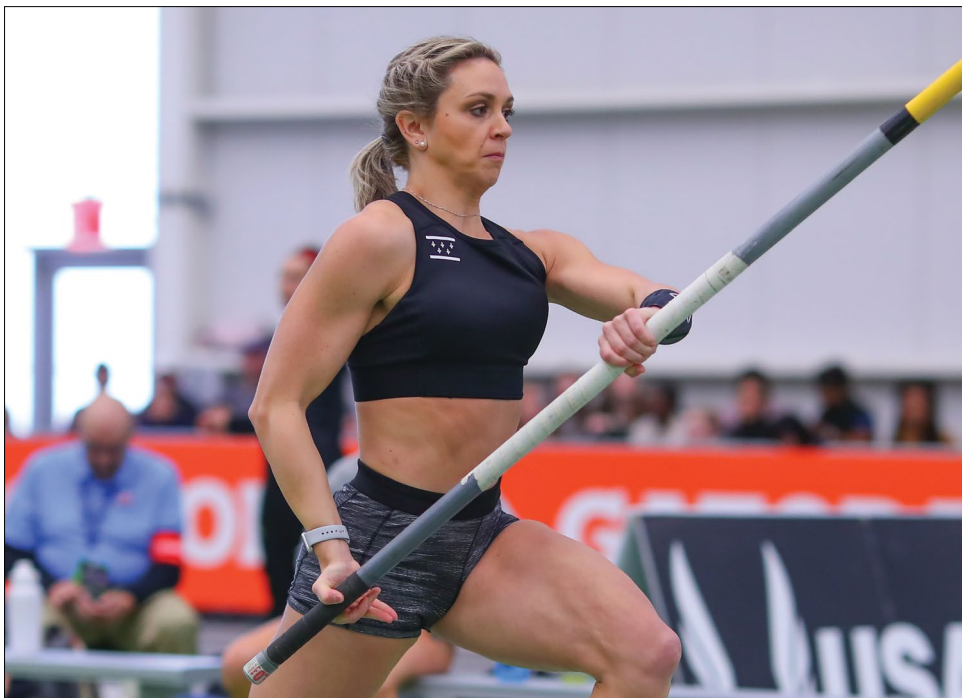
What To Expect?

How'bout what he said. Asking around in a January following a strange year — thanks, COVID-19 — we touched base with former men's AR holder **Jeff Hartwig**, now an agent, who got as many looks at the field in '20 as anyone.

"Definitely an opportunity for someone to step up and try to disrupt the big 3: Sandi, Katie and Jenn," Hartwig observed. "I think Olivia Gruver can get in the mix and then there will be a slew of women around 4.65, 4.70 possibly, and hard to say who might break through to go higher."

We see it that way too. Keep your vault vision tuned. Also, Eugene weather — wind and/or rain — has been known to throw a cat among the pigeons during Trials comps. The '12 edition won by Suhr comes to mind. Yet no one knows how Hayward Field's new semi-enclosed bowl might alter conditions. □

RICH GRAESSLE/IMAGE OF SPORT



Morgann LeLeux came away from the '16 Olympic Trials with a frustrating 4th.

Sandi Morris Staying Busy During Trying Times

MIKE SCOTT



Her bout with COVID-19 behind her, Sandi Morris is back to working on adapting to new poles.

by Sieg Lindstrom

BUILDING A BACKYARD VAULT FACILITY, training on longer poles and most recently a thankfully mild case of C19 (see update at story's end) have kept Sandi Morris's plate heaping full throughout the 11 months since her regular competition schedule screeched to a pandemic halt last winter.

Targeting Tokyo gold, the 28-year-old World Indoor gold medalist, who vaulted to silver in Rio and at the outdoor World Championships of '17 and '19, yearns to competition test-drive the strategy she has set in motion to scale higher heights than she ever has before. Keep in mind that only Yelena Isinbaeva and Jenn Suhr have ever jumped higher than her PR 16-4¾ (5.00).

Undeclared during her 4-meet '20 indoor season and 4 summer outdoor competitions, Morris set the pandemic standard as T&FN's "podium gold medalist" in a year without formal World Rankings.

Away from competition she was busier yet. Notably on a project she has been inching towards for 3 years. "I'm still trying to get on the next length of poles," she says, "and I need

jumps on them and high-adrenaline situations to really figure out how the timing of those poles is going to work for me when I've got adrenaline and I'm running really fast."

Her schedule after a January encounter with the coronavirus, which infected both her and long jumper husband Tyrone Smith, has Morris covering the high-adrenaline — read in-competition — part of the pole change with meets II through IV of the new American Track League series at her home facility on the Arkansas campus. The could-have-been-but-wasn't-lazy pandemic spring and summer of '20 was when she grooved her technique with the new sticks in practice.

As with many things vault-ish, it's best to let the expert explain. "It's all pretty complicated," Morris says. "The main goal, yes, has always been get on 4.60 [15-1] poles, but for a while there, [pole maker] UCS did make me some poles that are made more similarly to 4.45 [14-7¼], which is the current length that I'm on. But this past summer..."

At this juncture Morris weaves into her thesis the other new piece of equipment that forwarded her efforts in 2020. Facilities access in Fayetteville was on hold and so last April

her dad Harry, with Sandi adding copious sweat equity of her own, built a full-length pole vault runway in her parents' South Carolina yard — a field of dreams for an Olympian in a lockdown summer.

Morris hosted the mid-July Acadia Invitational on the facility, replete with its eponymously colored UCS pit, the "Pink Panther." She flew over 15-9¼ (5.81), her '20 outdoor best, in the meet, joined by friend and rival Katie Nageotte at that height.

"It helps when you have no bad conditions at all," says Morris, who used her 4.60 poles for the home meet and an ATL comp in Georgia 5 weeks later. "The venue where we built it, that field is kind of tucked down behind some trees and stuff so there's no wind. And we did it in the evening. So it was really beautiful. The sun was going down a little bit, so it wasn't super, super hot. You know, South Carolina summers can be deadly, so it was just perfect conditions, really awesome, fast runway.

"So all those things help and, you know, that contributes to jumping high also; just home field advantage, as they say."

Where the backyard runway equaled its weight in gold, though, was for practices.

"See, here's the thing when you're trying to switch anything or change anything in your technique or work on anything in your jump," Morris explains. "You need practices at home when you can go from full approach and you are in full-approach jumping form without having to worry about, 'Oh, I've got a meet in one week. I can't mess around too much.'"

"Cause you do end up going down before you go back up, if that makes sense. So this [unplanned pandemic interruption] has been kind of a blessing in disguise for me because this past summer, all I did was jump on these 4.60 poles to get used to them. And I had no worries about if I did [experience a temporary drop in heights]. It was really what I needed. I feel like it's just lots of jumps on these poles where I'm not worried about being ready for a Diamond League or something like that."

The unschooled observer might fancy that going up in poles is perhaps analogous to launching off diving boards as a kid. Those stubby models in motel pools were nothing like the bouncy slammers in some backyards. Yes and no. Pole vaulting is a more demanding skill than executing a cannonball without blasting a gallon of chlorinated water up one's nose.

"The longer poles, they're made a little bit differently," Morris explains. "So the bend feels different. So that's why it's taken so long. Even if you grip straight over, right — if you're gripping the same height, it feels slightly different because the pole is made to be gripped higher. So the bend, the timing, feels different."

Morris's conversion took time. "I had a crazy summer, going back and forth between here in Arkansas, where I live and own a house, and then my parents' house. The first [South Carolina] stint was 7 weeks. I went and stayed with my parents and that's when we built the

pit and the runway. I got some practice sessions on it, but then I hurt my knee and then had to take a couple of weeks off.

"I came back to Arkansas, did some short-approach training for a few weeks and then went back to Mom and Dad's for another 5 weeks — and that's when I really got probably 3 or 4 really good full-approach sessions on our brand new runway with the brand new pit and jumping on these new poles. And that's the first time I've really felt like I had enough practices consistently to get a feel for them.

"So we then held one last meet on my runway there in South Carolina and that's when I jumped really well on them and was like, 'OK, I think I've made this transition. I'm confident on them.'"

"This season, my goal is to not even touch my old poles. I'm just switching; I'm making the change."

Starting on the 31st of January, Morris intends to commit to that resolution in competition. She foresees a transitional period to work through on meet runways.

"It's funny how your technique sometimes isn't quite as good during a competition as it is during practice because you've got more adrenaline, more speed," she says. "Especially me. So figuring out how to grip higher can actually be more difficult in a meet situation when I'm high-adrenaline and I'm rushing through the takeoff phase, which is the most important part about the timing of a higher grip.

"You can't rush the takeoff phase, so what I'm personally working on right now is trying to raise my grip because I do believe that getting on the 4.60 poles and getting my grip up a few inches is going to be my ticket to the World Record.

"All of this time off from competing, I have

been really chomping at the bit still behind the scenes working on this part. Because I believe I've got more 5-meter jumps in me and I'm trying to figure out how to get them out."

A Pandemic-Induced Timeout

If the past year has been anything, it's been a time of shocks and surprises. So it is that days after being interviewed for this story, Sandi Morris and husband Tyrone Smith contracted COVID-19. Morris — since recovered though delaying her originally planned opener by a week to January 31 — went public with the news just as we were about to post this feature. Naturally, we checked in for an update. Morris's texted response:

"I feel really good! Fortunately I experienced symptoms similar to that of a cold. The most unusual part (and frustrating) was the loss of taste and smell. I had no motivation to eat during those couple of weeks, and of course nutrition is super-important for athletes. I'm really happy it's now come back so I can be properly nourished now that I'm back to training.

"But I am not experiencing any lethargy or anything, I actually feel pretty great! So I pushed my first competition one week and also I am not going to be going to France for [competitions in] Liévin and Rouen.

"I do hope to still make it to France in late February for [Clermont-Ferrand], and will likely be jumping on poles that belong to Renaud [Lavillenie]. It's so extraordinarily difficult to get to Europe right now, especially with poles. And he has the sizes I will need to compete.

"So, if everything goes as planned and I return negative tests by mid-February then I will proceed with going over for that meet following doing the ATL meets here." □



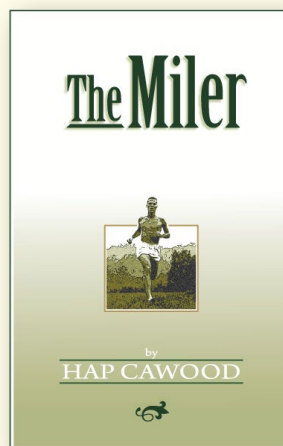
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A Still-Fit Jenn Suhr Going Strong At 39

KEVIN MORRIS



Jenn Suhr is looking to vault her way to a fourth straight Olympic Trials win.

by Sieg Lindstrom

FOR THE DOYENNE of American vaulters, Jenn Suhr — the world's No. 2 all-time performer, '12 Olympic champion and silver medalist in '08 — time and timing stack up as the most critical factors in her pursuit of a fourth career Olympic appearance and record-tying third medal.

The New York native — who nailed her PR 16-6 (5.03) indoors 5 years ago in season No. 11 in the event — will be 39 come Olympic Trials time this June. She is up to the challenge, she assures, and laser-focused on picking her spots. She has to be.

A year ago at the USATF Indoor, Suhr served emphatic notice she was not to be counted out in what was supposed to be the '20 Olympic season. As a gripping competition winnowed down to the 17-time national champion super-vet and World Champs silver medalist Sandi Morris, the pair each cleared 15-11 (4.85) on first attempts and Suhr led on misses as the bar was raised to 16-¾ (4.90) — a centimeter below Morris's then season-leading mark. Not until each had missed twice did Morris slip over on third time of asking and Suhr came up one bar short.

Even though she shut down her '20 season thereafter — explaining she wanted no part in any risk of spreading the coronavirus — Suhr's mark delivered her the No. 4 performer's spot on the '20 compilation.

She assuredly remains on the short list for

Tokyo podium consideration. No other woman vaulter has carried on at the peak elite level so deep into her 30s. Proud of that and having won three times at the Olympic Trials, Suhr looks toward her fourth OT with equanimity.

"I just try to think about what I've done and what I've accomplished and not put it all into another Olympic Trials, and, you know, 'this is redemption,'" she says. "I have to think about what I've already done and anything's a bonus."

Her "redemption" reference is, of course to Rio '16, to which she arrived with the world list lead, that third OT win in hand and favorite's status. Then calamity struck — a debilitating viral infection that racked her lungs and other systems. Does that ring a bell?

"I think that's another reason why I respect [COVID 19] so much," she says. "I mean, I have imaging to prove the scar tissue on my lungs, so I don't even know how I'd handle this virus. You know, it's just Rio definitely did some permanent damage."

Rick Suhr, her coach/husband, remembers, "That's the only time she was ever ranked to win, and we didn't win, we didn't take a medal. But look, here's the bottom line. If you saw the respiratory virus she took in Rio, I know what it's like to be with a very critically ill athlete out on the road. And I would not wish that experience on anybody.

"Jen was extremely sick and it took her 6 weeks to recover. I can't even tell you how brutal it was. I still to this day, can't believe she even

made a bar, but she went out there and jumped 15-1 [4.60] on an opener. I don't know how you take 7th in the Olympics and she didn't even know really what was going on. She was actually kind of delusional. Fever, coughing.

"You know, I'll tell you what: If you take COVID symptoms; exact, exact. Coughing out of comprehension, pneumonia, couldn't breathe, coughing up blood. Didn't sleep for three nights. The only way she could get through the night was in a hot shower. She'd just sit in a hot shower to breathe. We just couldn't do anything. We couldn't do anything.

"When she went out for the final, she was done, I mean, it was ridiculous. It is what it is. It's just, it was a horrible thing to watch."

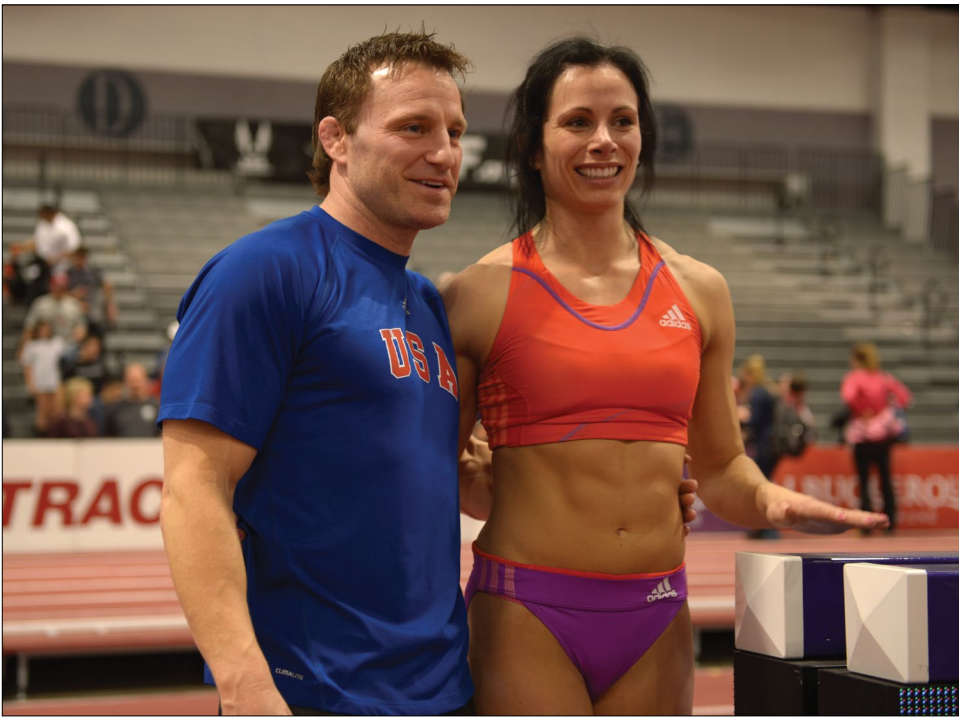
Jenn has left Rio in the past. Her immediate concern now is preparing as optimally as she can with an almost-40 body: "One thing with me is there's only so many impacts my

body has off of a long run. So what we've done is we've been really technical and stayed on shorter runs and really tried to refine things that I'm not good at. So it's been a lot of focus.

"Last workout I told Rick, 'I focused harder on this than any SATs I ever took.' It's kind of funny that I've done it all these years, but still there's so much to refine and to improve. You learn your body a little more and you also learn, you know, I don't have the same amount of speed coming in that I did maybe 15 years ago so maybe I gotta use my levers a little differently. And so we work on things like that just to be ready — I mean, I haven't been timed on the laser and a full run in a while, so I'm not sure of my speed — but just to be ready for anything that might happen.

"With lifting too, we don't lift the 1-rep max anymore because that's just when something goes wrong. So we'll definitely rep out 6, 8, but we won't do that '1-rep let's see what you can lift' anymore because you have no bailouts at that point. On rep 4, if I feel something I can stop, but we don't do that heavy lifting on my body anymore."

Rick Suhr is a man who speaks his mind — at once the staunchest believer in Jenn's ability after 15 seasons and a steely-eyed analyst. Parsing the Olympic picture he says, "Look, there's basically 6 athletes here that are going to [compete for] the medals. There are 6 athletes in my opinion that are better than the rest. Those 6, I really don't believe there is much of an edge



“I don’t think there is a more fit 39-year-old anywhere in the world,” says husband/coach Rick Suhr.

for any of them — for whatever reason, whether that be age, speed, experience, what their PRs are. All 6 of these girls are pretty close. In other words, on any day, any of the 6 — and 3 of them are Americans.”

Assessing further, Suhr the coach says, “Some people are really fast. Some people are really fearless. Some people have a knack staying healthy. You know, our advantage that we have is we’ve been over 5-meters [16-4¾] three times. No one else has done that. Jen is the most experienced. She is a very good technical vaulter. She’s got years behind her. That’s her strength, no bar really scares her.

“The weaknesses? Look, I’m rolling in here

with a 39-plus-year-old, and everybody at age 40 is 10 years retired. Her biggest challenge would be to get to the Trials healthy and to the Games healthy. And the odds of that are probably not good. They’re a whole heck of a lot less than everybody else’s. Pole vault is a rough event and it’s not an event for a 40-year-old to be doing. I mean jogging on a Masters runway is one thing. But when you’re jumping with the top 3, 4 in the world it’s a lot easier for something to pop.”

This is where timing comes in. “We’ve learned that medals are handed out in July and August,” Rick says. “So really you’ve got to direct your training to coming out at Trials and then going from there, and all the meets

before Trials here just don’t mean anything. And I think it’s a mistake to push the throttle there.

“So yes, we train. Jenn is a freak when it comes to fitness. Let me tell you, I don’t think there is a more fit 39-year-old anywhere in the world. I really believe that there isn’t. That I know of. She is that fit. So she is always dangerous. If she’s healthy, Jenn can jump 4.95 [16-2¾]. Anytime she’s healthy, she’s capable of jumping that. She’s only better than she’s ever been. She’s more experienced than she’s ever been.”

Suhr the vaulter has faith in all that. However, she admits to minor internal struggles amid the uncertainty around when it will be clear the Trials are a go. “I think the hardest thing is you sit here and you’re waiting and they are running some street meets or meets here or there, and you’re trying to make a decision. You know, you kind of get that feeling of, ‘There’s something going on. Should I be there?’ You kind of get that anxiety, like, ‘Wait, everyone else jumped and I should be jumping.’ Like, no, that’s not a good idea. So you get that feeling of missing out.

“But at the same time, I think if you take it day by day and you plan what you want to do in terms of your workout maybe four days ahead and not weeks and months, it’s easier that way. And so that’s what I started to do. We started to just plan maybe four days at a time instead of looking at months and counting down from there.”

Patience, grasshopper: Rick says Jenn is “healthy and firing on all cylinders. She can jump with anyone in the world. No question, no question. So it’d be a great ending to her career if she could get in there and medal. She’s very well capable of it. She’s got as good a chance as anyone.

“But on the other hand, yeah, nobody beats Father Time. Nobody. I mean, I don’t care how good you are. Father Time is the great equalizer. If Jen is healthy and feeling good, she’s dangerous. And people know that and it’s great that she’s in that position at her age, because no one’s ever been in that position.” □

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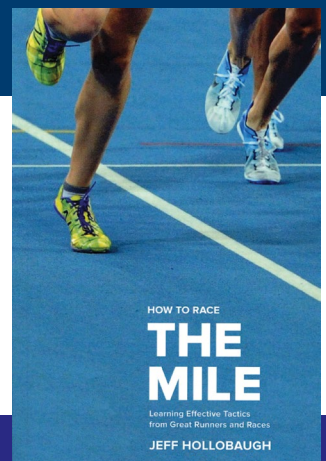
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Katie Nageotte Bouncing Back From COVID Hit

by Sieg Lindstrom

HER 2020 SEASON finished on a high of rarefied distinction, as Katie Nageotte catapulted herself to No. 6 on the all-time world vault list with her 16-1¾ (4.92) leap on August 01. That also reaffirmed her position in the thick of the fray for Olympic medals in Tokyo. But her 2020 year and the leadup to her 2021 campaign also ended with a C19 diagnosis — concerning, no matter one's age or health status before the illness.

Thankfully, as of mid-January she is well on her way back to full fitness and gathering steam for the runup to the Olympic Trials although the coronavirus did punch her with several of the strange symptoms and after-effects we've become familiar with anecdotally or in many painful cases through experience.

"I was definitely sick. That's why I got tested," the 29-year-old Ashland alum says. "The worst of it for me was headaches, body aches, congestion. The congestion was definitely the worst. But I only felt really bad for a couple of days and I'll say I've felt sicker before, but it was definitely one of the worst I've felt. But then after that it was just mostly the congestion that lingered and I did lose my taste and smell for probably about a week. So it was so weird. I love to eat, so eating without taste was awful. It was so horrific."

Unmistakably not as horrific as for many who have suffered, or even died, from the disease, she admits: "While I was sick it wasn't that bad, and that's why I didn't really make a big thing out of it because obviously other people are experiencing it so much worse. For me, coming back, that's where I felt the biggest difference.

"I'm at about the month mark; my first symptoms were like December 7th, I want to say. And just now I feel like I'm starting to finally feel the same in terms of power and mind/body connection, the sharpness. I just felt flat and off in every sense of the word. And then — which is crazy because I didn't feel that bad — it really did have an effect on me, and even still my endurance. I'm so winded so fast in sessions.

"So it's taking time to come back — and it is coming back. But that's definitely the biggest difference I've noticed versus any other sickness that I've experienced."

Nageotte, who lost her father to a heart attack when she was 16, underwent cardiac testing and received medical clearance before she resumed training. Then over the Christmas holiday "did some really easy runs just to kind of get my heart rate back up, get the body moving again.

"Then the week after I did my first vault session and I felt like Bambi. It's like I was all over the place. For a few weeks pushing out of the back and the first couple of steps, there was no power to it. And then trying to process everything coming into the takeoff was — I just wasn't able to see it.

"It's hard to explain, but normally when I'm running down [the runway] I'm very in control of what I'm doing, and I just felt like it was happening so fast. I couldn't tell my arms

to move fast just to jump and to go.

"I was anxious there for a little bit, but it's coming back and all you can do is just stay patient. I just said to myself, 'You were sick and given the circumstances it's normal and just be patient with yourself.'"

Her bounceback is real, Nageotte says: "Definitely the last two sessions I've definitely felt more like myself. It was just everything about me was kind of lethargic. Like I said, the power output, everything, was just a little flat. That included the mind/body connection, and with what we do, you just gotta be a bit sharp. So that's all that was. And then of course, as a vaulter when things feel wrong, you naturally want to panic.

"But you know, it was just kind of humbling to say, 'OK, let your body tell you. You are not a bad vaulter, you didn't revert. This is just how it's going to be for a little bit. And that's OK. Just do what you can, stay focused, and now more than ever really focus on the technique and what you can control.'"

Perceiving the transition of her arms and legs from wobbly fawn back to sharply reflexed doe to be nearly complete, Nageotte and Brad Walker — the '07 men's world champion who has coached her since the last Olympic campaign — have scheduled some indoor meets.

"I feel like, 'OK, competitions are starting to come up,'" Nageotte says, "but in the grand scheme of things, no, if I was still sick, if I was still really off, it's not a do-or-die kind of situation like the Olympics or World Championships. So, yeah, it's not a ton of [immediate] pressure, but I think it's the right amount of pressure, stress, to say, 'OK, yes, we're going to be patient and your body's going to tell you how you're feeling, but let's try and do as much as we can with what we've got because we've got things coming up you want to do well for.'"

First up, the American Track League opener at Arkansas's facility (January 24), where Nageotte's opponents will include Sandi Morris on the World & Olympic silver medalist's home track.

"That'll probably be from a short approach," says Nageotte. "We're just gonna play it by ear. But I definitely wanted to get at least some bars and a competition feel under my belt before I went overseas."

When she spoke to T&FN for this story, Nageotte had plans for a series of February competitions in France. Those plans have since changed. "After speaking with several USATF med-

ical staff, I have decided I will not travel to Europe this indoor season," she explained via Instagram. "I'm currently in a 90-day window where I can continue to test positive, even without being 'sick.' It made more sense to stay and compete in the States this indoor season."

She says, "The thing that I love about indoors is that there's no elements and you can get into a rhythm really nicely. I'm excited as long as my body recuperates and I can kind of get back to normal. I think this indoor season could be pretty special."

After steadily raising her game for more than a decade from the 13-0 (3.96) she cleared in '09 as a prep in Olmsted, Ohio, Nageotte finds herself at No. 3 on the U.S. all-time list. Of course, three vaulters will represent Team USA in Tokyo. What's her siren call, records or the podium?

"I would say both have a very similar weight in my mind," she says. "I think making the Olympic team is the No. 1 priority, but along the way I'm definitely training to attempt and hopefully break American Records.

"You know, the indoor World Record [Jenn Suhr's 16-5½/5.02] is a little bit lower than the outdoor one — and I attempted that back in 2018. So those are definitely huge goals, as well. But by training and pursuing those diligently, it will set me up to be in a good spot for the Trials. I think it's kind of nice because it is allowing me to keep the focus away from the stress that is the Olympic Trials. It's just a very stressful situation, and so I think it's kind of helping me to stay focused along the way and not get overwhelmed by the stresses of that meet."

Nageotte opts for balance as she looks ahead to the OT. She says, "I definitely am confident in myself and I know that I'm in the top 3 as of right now, but the U.S. — if I have learned anything, it's that people show up when it counts....

"Kind of the beauty of this sport and the way they pick the team is, it really keeps you honest and, you know, gunning for it." □

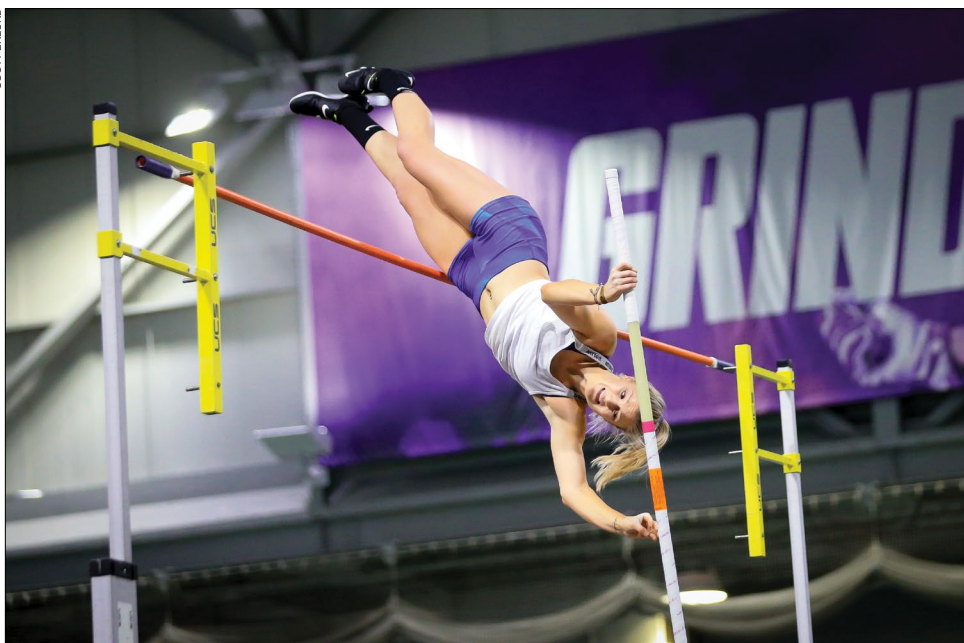
GIANCARLO COLOMBO/PHOTO RUN



It's a matter of numbers as Katie Nageotte had an impressive '20 then was struck by C19 and now readies for '21.

Vaulter Olivia Gruver Is Packing Extra Motivation

SCOTT EKLUND



“Last year I was on kind of a great roll,” says Olivia Gruver of her truncated 2020.

by Sieg Lindstrom

TWICE AN NCAA CHAMPION, the high-flying outdoor collegiate vaulter all-time with her 15-6¼ (4.73) PR, and T&FN’s Indoor Collegiate AOY for ‘20, first-year pro Olivia Gruver carries extra motivation into the Olympic season, born of understandable exasperation with the way her collegiate competition at Washington ended last March.

“Well, definitely last year I was on kind of a great roll, a great start in indoor season,” she says. “I had my highest opener ever [15-3½/4.66], and then obviously I did really well at USA Indoors. So I was very excited for NAAs. And obviously that got canceled.”

Gruver, No. 4 on the U.S. list and 3rd at the NCAA in ‘19 after following vault coach Toby Stevenson west from Kentucky the previous fall, soared last year to 3rd at the USATF Indoor behind Sandi Morris and Jenn Suhr. Her first-attempt 15-5 (4.70) clearance lifted her to No. 2 all-time on the collegiate indoor list and she returned to Albuquerque for the NCAA 3 weeks later bullish about what was to be the last meet of her final collegiate season.

The clear favorite going in, Gruver looked forward to adding a third collegiate crown to her collection, this time as a Husky, and she says, “I wanted another chance to break the indoor Collegiate Record [Demi Payne’s 15-7/4.75 from ‘15]. I felt that I was really, really close and it was just out of my reach and then, you know, everything happened.”

And happened fast, as it did for every athlete in town for the NCAA when the seriousness of C19 hit home. “We were doing our premeet and then I was heading back to the hotel and I got the call that they were canceling [the meet],” Gruver recalls. “And so they booked us all flights and we

went home that day. It was pretty crazy. It was sad. It was hard to get over, but you know, I was pretty ready to go onto my next journey of being a pro athlete. So it definitely hurt, but I was ready.”

Gruver continues to train at Washington, where she is a volunteer assistant coach. In the pandemic’s early months, like so many athletes, she had no facility access due to the lockdown. The Mountain Pacific Indoor Champs at the end of February “was my last time jumping,” she says, “and then everything got shut down here. So there was nowhere for us to jump. I couldn’t get into Dempsey, U-Dub, anything.”

Last July Gruver traveled to Georgia for a couple of meets in the Atlanta area and one in South Carolina on the new runway in Sandi Morris’s parents’ yard. “A week before I left,” she says, “we found a place so I could get a couple of jumps in. When I got to Georgia, I was just by myself for the first time and kind of just trying to put everything together. I just didn’t have enough time when I was there” to shake the rust off. Her highest clearance on the short trip was 14-3¼ (4.35) but she got a taste of mixing it up with the pros in small fields including Morris, Katie Nageotte and Megan Clark — happy to be competing at all.

In Seattle, now 10 months into the pandemic, Gruver says, “You have to follow some rules, but we’re able to practice pretty normally right now. I’m doing what I’ve been doing, jumping, working out, making sure I’m strong and healthy. Yeah, just trying to work around some things, but it’s pretty normal.”

Vaulting found Gruver — who prepped at Franklin High in Reisterstown, Maryland — through a not uncommon path. “I was a gymnast for a very long time,” she says, “and I kind of just got very tall and I kept breaking things and getting stress fractures. So once I got into high school, I was kind of just over with it and I was trying to find something that I was good at.

“I’ve always been an athlete. So I tried basketball, volleyball, and I was like, ‘No, I’ll just go to track.’ I started off with long jump, triple jump, high jump, some sprints. And my friend, Naomi, her brother volunteered or worked at DC Vault, which is a vault club in DC, and he was like, ‘You know what? You look like you could be a great pole vaulter. Why don’t you come down and try?’ So I took the trek from Maryland to DC, like hour and a half drive away, and I tried it and it just kind of clicked with me.

“It was something that I was like, ‘Oh, I think I could be good at this.’ And I just did it throughout high school and kind of just blossomed. It was something that I was good at and it felt natural. So I just stuck with it.”

Gruver won State Indoor titles in ‘14 and ‘15 plus a Penn Relays title and headed off to Kentucky with a 13-4½ PR from the indoor season of her 11th-grade year. Two years later she won her first NCAA crown as a Wildcat, PRing at 14-9 (4.50) in the process.

The link between gymnastics and pole vaulting? “It’s the body awareness,” she says. “It definitely helps just to know where you are in the air — and obviously the fear aspect. You know, as gymnasts we have to fly out our bodies everywhere. So it kinda just helps with that in vault as well.”

As she gears up for the Olympic Trials this summer, Gruver will certainly remember what it felt like to produce collegiate competition’s highest outdoor vault at the ‘19 Stanford Invitational.

“I think I just was ready to jump high that day,” she says. “I mean, I didn’t put any expectations on myself. The week before I had no-heighted so I was like, ‘I just want to jump a bar.’ I just went to jump something to open up my season, and I just went in there and took every bar as it came. Finally, I don’t know what bar I jumped before that, but I was the last person in and I was talking with Toby and he’s like, ‘You just want to put it up to 4.73 and get the [outdoor] Collegiate Record?’ I was like, ‘You know what, might as well.’ So we did it and I cleared it.

“I mean, I think we were all ready for me to jump the Collegiate Record. I just didn’t expect it to be at that meet. But you know what? When you don’t pressure yourself incredible things can happen.”

As for her technical focus in training, Gruver says, “We’re definitely focusing on my plant. I have a tendency to kind of pull in my bottom arm and not kind of push through that last step. So we’ve taken the time to really just hone in on that. And it’s becoming very natural now, so I’m definitely starting to get the rhythm and everything and put everything together. So I’m excited to kind of open up my season eventually.”

Gruver also chooses to view the nearly lost ‘20 season in a positive light. “Last year I felt ready for it,” she says, “but in a sense I was happy that I had another year because I felt like I could work on a lot of things. And I think with this time, and kind of hopefully getting a couple of meets before as a pro that I’ll truly be ready for the Olympic Trials and, you know, have a chance. I’m very excited.” □

For Emily Grove, Getting Her Q Was A Big Deal



Jumping 15-5 for the first time got Emily Grove's goal of an Olympic qualifying standard out of the way.

by Sieg Lindstrom

HER FLIGHT OVER the Olympic standard back in 2019 has vaulter Emily Grove in high spirits as the postponed Olympic season lifts off, we hope, toward the Trials in June and Games in July.

The 27-year-old South Dakota alum, who ranked No. 4 among Americans in '19, has moved steadily in the right direction since her time at Pontiac High in Illinois, where she vaulted 13-5 (4.09) as a senior in '11 and earned T&FN All-America status.

Jumping as a Coyote under the expert eye of '08 Olympic men's bronze medalist Derek Miles — her coach to this day — Grove saw her steady elevation accelerate: 14-2 (4.32) as a frosh, a USATF Junior win and 6th at the World Juniors in '12.

Her junior season saw 14-9½ (4.51) for 6th at the USATF Indoor and then 2nd at the NCAA Indoor. And in Grove's redshirt senior campaign of '17 she cleared 15-1 (4.60), placed 3rd at USATF and competed in the World Championships in London.

As a first-year full-time pro in '18 Grove got her first taste of the Diamond League vaulting in Doha that May and added another half-inch

to her PR. Yet as an Olympics approached, hitting the Games standard was paramount.

Grove got close, really close, at the '19 USATF. She PRed again at 15-3 (4.65) and just missed going over 15-5 (4.70) on one of her vaults at that Tokyo-standard bar. It looked from the stands like a timing issue. Grove had the height, brushed the crosspiece on the way down. Though she'd have needed to go higher still to pass uber-vet Jenn Suhr to make the team, Grove knew she had reached a consequential threshold, for 4.70 is the ante altitude at which World and Olympic finalists play.

Four days later in a street vault in Omaha, Grove joined that club. "Yeah, I was super happy," she says. "I knew that it was coming. My practices were kind of — I was jumping around that same bar. So every time out I was getting on the bigger end of my series

of poles in practice. So I knew if I would just execute what I was doing in practice in a meet with adrenaline and competition I was ready for a PR. So I think at USA's I was ready for it. You know, I just didn't quite time up the next pole that I had never been on before. So that was definitely a learning experience. And so when I went to Omaha I had some kinks kind of figured out and went ahead and jumped 70."

If one is a fan and has never flung oneself 15-feet into the air to coax out inches, vaulters' translations can illuminate one's dim bulb, as Grove's does.

Of her 15-5 attempts at USATF, Grove says, "Very biggest pole that I had even touched. I had that pole in my series; I had just never had the opportunity to use it. So when we were in Des Moines, at 4.65 [15-3] I kind of — it's called a 'blow through.' The pole was a little bit small, but I kind of snuck over it. So Derek and I were like, 'Well, that pole isn't going to hold me for 4.70. Let's kind of try and figure out this new stick here.' And so we did. It's like going from third gear to fourth gear.

"So when I shifted to that pole at 4.70, I think a little bit of 'It's 4.70, this is a PR, this is the Olympic standard' was in there. And I just missed the timing at impact at the takeoff, just

by a hair, which is why I kind of brushed it on the way down a little bit. I had a lot of throw height, but I didn't get into the pit as deep as I probably should have. Does that make sense?" Yes, it does.

"In Des Moines," Grove continues, "I felt like the pole hit me. I didn't hit it. So in Omaha, I'm like, 'I'm going to hit the pole before it hits me on this one.' I was a little bit quicker on my timing and it made the jump smoother."

It also smoothed Grove's way, to the extent that's been possible for anybody, through pandemic 2020. She had the first key for the door to Tokyo, but no venue for optimal training. And no Olympic Trials until this coming June.

"For the most part, we didn't have a place to jump" she says. "So some of Derek's vaulters at USD and I trained at the high school track outside and we just worked on plyometrics, getting a little more explosive off the ground and sprinting mechanics until we could finally later in the summer get back on the pole vault runway.

"I kind of stayed to a little bit of a short run to kind of fix some takeoff timing issues that I have sometimes — a little bit late for the plant and things like that.

"So more technical work, I guess, for lack of better terms, [is what] we worked on in 2020. Derek and I decided we weren't going to try and push for a meet. We were just going to work on stuff. Since I already have the standard, we were more worried about really just ingraining good technique in my jump to make it more natural."

If 2020 had a silver lining for Grove, it was this: "In-season, usually you're just kind of hopping meet to meet, which is super fun. But this past year, we really got to work on just staying in shape and getting better at the things we're bad at. With plyometrics I was really working on trying to be more explosive off the ground and hopefully that will lead to higher jumps this 2021 season."

Grove is supplied with poles by UST-ESSX, a manufacturer she calls "awesome. [In 2019] I told you I had some new sticks that they sent me, so I really needed those and it paid off, I think, jumping the standard."

She has no shoe or apparel contract, though, so Grove works full-time in the South Dakota financial aid office. "I work until 4 o'clock and then I go and train after that every day," she says.

As she targets the Trials, Grove says, "I think that if I can keep bringing the speed that I have into the takeoff and not slowing down a bit, keep learning and teaching myself to attack the last three steps of the jump and time it up with my hands, I'll just need the right pole in my hand and I think I can jump something pretty high. So hopefully we'll all have the opportunity to do that."

Each and every vaulter. "You know," Grove concludes, "the pole vault community is cool because I feel there's good camaraderie around too. We're excited to see each other. We haven't seen each other in over a year, so I think that part will be exciting too." □

International Digest – World Record For Zango

IN A PERFECT EXAMPLE of the student becoming the master, Burkinabé triple jumper Hugues Fabrice Zango became the first 59-foot (or 18-meter) jumper ever indoors, bounding 59-3½ (18.07) to add 15cm to the World Indoor Record of 58-9½ (17.92) that his coach, Teddy Tamgho, set twice a decade ago. By all accounts, it's the first time ever a WR holder has coached his immediate successor. The two of them now dominate the event's all-time indoor list (see chart).

The big performance (Aubière, France, January 16) came on Zango's final attempt in a series that started with a foul, followed by 56-10¼ (17.33), another foul, 57-9½ (17.61), and a 58-1 (17.70) on his penultimate jump.

"It means a lot for me because since last year I have been thinking about this record, because it was my coach's record," Zango said. "For me the athlete has to beat the coach. We were teasing each other about the record."

Added the 27-year-old Zango, who won bronze at the '19 Worlds and has an outdoor best of 57-11¼ (17.66), "It gives me more confidence about my power and my abilities to do great things in the future. Yesterday the objective was to go to the Olympics and get a medal, but now the goal is to go to the Olympics and get the gold medal."

Finishing a far-back 2nd was France's Melvin Raffin at 55-8½ (16.98). On the women's side of the ledger, American Tori Franklin came out on top at 44-7½ (13.60).

Lavillenie Opens On High Note In The Vault

Renaud Lavillenie stole the show in his season opener at the Star Perche Officiel (Bordeaux, France, January 16) with a clearance of 19-5 (5.92). That equaled his highest season-opening mark ever, a feat he first turned way back in '11.

"I cleared 5.80 [19-¼] in training and the objective today was 5.90 [19-4¼]," he said. I still have four steps to add and this will give me more speed. The signs are good."

He beat little brother Valentin with his second-attempt clearance at 19-1 (5.82). He needed two tries at his final mark, then missed in three goes at 19-8¼ (6.00).



VICTOR SMAILER/PHOTO RUN

Hugues Fabrice Zango replaced his coach as the triple jump's WR holder.

The Usual Suspects In Women's High Jumping

Russia's Mariya Lasitskene opened her hoped-for Olympic campaign with a trio of

wins, two at 6-3½ (1.92) and then another at 6-6¾ (2.00). That didn't give her the early-season lead, however, as Yaroslava Mahuchikh, still only 19, equaled her Ukrainian Indoor Record of 6-7½ (2.02). She missed three times at a PR 6-8¼ (2.04). □

The All-Time Indoor Men's Triple Jump Top 10

Hugues Fabrice Zango and his coach Teddy Tamgho now own half of the 10 longest triple jumps ever. And France's dominance as a site for making such jumps increased, with 6 of 10 now having been made in that country. The Top 10 (! = secondary mark in a series):

Mark	Athlete	Site	Date
18.07 59-3½	Hugues Fabrice Zango (Burkina Faso)	Aubière	1/16/21
17.92 58-9½	Teddy Tamgho (France)	Paris	3/06/11
	-----Tamgho !	Paris	3/06/11
17.91 58-9¼	-----Tamgho	Aubière	2/20/11
17.90 58-8¾	-----Tamgho	Doha	3/14/10
17.83 58-6	Alecier Urrutia (Cuba)	Sindelfingen	3/01/97
	Christian Olsson (Sweden)	Budapest	3/07/04
17.80 58-4¾	-----Olsson	Gothenburg	3/05/02
17.77 58-3¾	Leonid Voloshin (Russia)	Grenoble	2/06/94
	-----Zango	Paris	2/02/20

Collegiate Digest — A Recordbreaking Start To Season

ERROL ANDERSON/THE SPORTING IMAGE



Texas A&M frosh Athing Mu here broke the American Junior 800 record and a week later claimed the Collegiate 600 best.

TEXAS WAS THE PLACE TO BE for collegiate track in January, with a spate of high-end meets.

Lightfoot Nails Collegiate Vault Record

It's dangerous to place much stock in practice marks, but on January 08 a social media video was posted of KC Lightfoot clearing a bar set at 6-meters (19-8¼). This didn't count one was indeed a good indicator of things to come as the Baylor junior flew to a Collegiate Record 19-5¾ (5.94) at the Corky Classic (Lubbock, Texas, January 16). That put to bed South Dakotan Chris Nilsen's 19-5½ (5.93) from last year.

Vaulting at 981 friendly meters of altitude, the 21-year-old Lightfoot opened with first-time clearances at 17-10¼ (5.44) and 18-8¼ (5.70) before having the bar raised to a PR 19-2¼ (5.85). That only took one try too and he had slotted himself as =No. 4 collegian on the all-time list. But he wasn't done with perfection as the record height also came without a miss. The only soundtrack being the cheers of fellow athletes in the otherwise nearly empty fieldhouse, Lightfoot had plenty of air as he arced over the bar without contact.

"Some things fell into place and the Collegiate Record stayed up there," he said after missing all three at the 6-meter barrier (19-8¼). "There are plenty of things to work on and I

believe a 6-meter bar will be coming sooner rather than later."

Baylor head Todd Harbour analyzed, "There's more to come, but what a way to start the indoor season."

His second appearance of the year was notable as well, as he cleared 19-4¼ (5.90) on his second attempt at the next weekend's Aggie Invitational in College Station. He missed thrice at a CR 19-6¼ (5.95).

Said coach Harbour, "KC again was very consistent. He was jumping big bars again."

Usoro Scares Collegiate TJ Record

Texas Tech's Ruth Usoro signaled that '21 might be a very special year, as the Red Raider senior became the No. 2 collegiate triple jumper ever indoors. The mark came on her first attempt of the season, with her 46-10¼ (14.28).

Competing on her home runway at the Corky Classic, the 23-year-old Nigerian, who also won the long jump at 21-4¼ (6.51), added more than 2½ feet to her old best of 44-3¼ (13.49).

"When I first saw the mark, I was really surprised," she said. "I had to look back and check that it was really my mark. I was so surprised when I saw it, because I wasn't really expecting it at this time. It came so early." She followed up with a second-round 46-2 (14.07) before passing her remaining tries.

Mu Slams American Junior 800 Record

Athing Mu didn't waste any time in college, tearing down the American Junior Record — and narrowly missing the WJR — at the Nelson Invitational (College Station, Texas, January 16) in her first race in an Aggie singlet. The night before, she had prophetically posted on Instagram, "The real fun begins tomorrow."

Her 2:01.07 beat the '17 record of 2:01.78 set by New York high schooler Sammy Watson. After passing halfway in 60.75, Mu accelerated through laps of 30.62 and 29.70 for a negative split of 60.32 for the second half. She came back later with a 53.69 third leg on the winning 4×4.

Said A&M coach Pat Henry, "She wants to be the best ever that stepped on the track. Watching her, you can see this kid has things not many can do."

Mu Episode 2: Collegiate 600 Record

Aggie frosh Athing Mu was again in record mode in her second meet of the year, lowering the all-time collegiate best in the rarely run 600 to 1:25.80 at the Aggie Invitational. The old mark of 1:26.56 was set by Delisa Floyd (Walton at the time) of Tennessee in '81.

Mu covered her 3 laps in 27.36, 29.82 (57.18) and 28.62 in producing the No. 10 time in U.S. history. Mu herself holds the American Record with the 1:23.57 she ran as a prep junior back in '19. □

Collegiate Recordsetter KC Lightfoot Aiming At 6-Meter Barrier

by Bret Bloomquist

WHEN THE WORLD went into lockdown early in the pandemic, two types of people emerged: there were those who got nothing done. Then there were the achievers who went to work.

Vaulter KC Lightfoot was in the latter camp, and the Baylor star showed all that work when he opened his season in Lubbock by clearing a Collegiate Record 19-5¾ (5.94) that topped Chris Nilsen's 19-5½ (5.93) from a year ago and moved him from the ranks of the up-and-comers to the top of the collegiate pile.

"What led up to a lot of it, during this whole pandemic I worked for months on short-approach vaulting, I fixed a lot that was a lesser part of my technique," Lightfoot says. "I fixed my top end a lot and that played a huge, huge role in getting some of these higher bars."

"I trained hard over the summer. I still am, I got a lot faster, I got a lot stronger. Add two and two together, it works and it's starting to show now when I run from a full approach. It all lines up together."

The '20 collegiate season shut down the day before the NCAA Indoor Champs, but for Lightfoot that just meant a transition.

"We were in Albuquerque, we got our shakeout done, we got back to the hotel, we got the message: It's canceled, we fly home in two hours," Lightfoot recalls of the fast-moving events of March 12. "Even after they canceled the outdoor season, I knew there was still a chance for the Olympic Games. I couldn't just stop training. I went home for 6 months, I kept training for the Olympics."



As the sign shows, KC Lightfoot is closing in on the magic 19-8¼ height.

"Then they got postponed, but you can't stop training. I had to finish out my year strong, I took a short break and rolled into this one in a high note. I was having fun."

Baylor head coach Todd Harbour has an analogy.

"Being an old miler, the third lap of the mile is the tough lap: if you can just get through that third lap you'll have a chance when that bell goes off," he says. "It's a struggle mentally every day to keep fighting, keep pushing, not knowing what the next week is going to hold. From one week to the next, are you going to compete, are you not going to compete, what's that going to look like?"

"The biggest challenge is coming to work every day with a smile on your face. KC has done it as well as anybody. He's persevered through some rough times."

The hope is that the worst of the rough times

are in the rear-view mirror, though the uncertainty factor in what might be an Olympic year is still high. The immediate goals are obvious: the magic 6.00 (19-8¼), Sam Kendricks' indoor American Record 6.01 (19-8½), NCAA titles indoors and out, making a run at an Olympic team.

And this: "Right now, what I'm looking forward to is having fun," Lightfoot says. "That's what keeps us going. The biggest goal is to have fun, work on small things and keep the bars going up."

The 6-meter bar is definitely in him; he showed that in Lubbock.

"I had some good jumps at 6m," he says. "People ask me, 'What happened? You blew up 94, what happened at 6m?' Man, it's a really high bar. It wasn't a bad jump, it just didn't stay up."

"I know there's more in there. Obviously I was very satisfied with the Collegiate Record, you can't not be. But there's more. I jumped a 6-meter bar in practice a couple of weeks ago so I know it's possible, I've done it, there's some left in the tank. I was satisfied, but there was a little bit of frustration. It just didn't happen on that day."

Says Harbour: "He was being humble and modest. I thought he had good attempts at 6m, he didn't miss it by much. He was over the bar all three times, whenever you can get your body over it, those are good attempts."

What's changed with Lightfoot is that for the first time in his Baylor career, the academic junior (he has used only one season of outdoor eligibility) is at the top of a perennially loaded event.

"It's a whole new world coming out of high school into college athletics," he says. "You see some of these people on top of the leaderboard, it's like, 'Man, how do I get there?' It takes time, but I guess I'm an example of what happens if you work hard. You get to the top."

"When I started out I was top 10 in the NCAA, but I'd look at No. 1 and that was Mondo and Chris. I saw Mondo jump 92 to break the Collegiate Record, Chris jumped 93 to break his. I was looking up to them. But now, you go through the years, you work hard and here I am." □

The All-Time Collegiate Indoor Vault List

When the '21 collegiate indoor season began, KC Lightfoot was =No. 5 on the all-time list with his 19-1½ (5.83) from last year. Now he's No. 1. The undercover Top 13:

5.94 19-5¾	KC Lightfoot (Baylor)	Lubbock	1/16/21
5.93 19-5½	Chris Nilsen (South Dakota)	Lincoln	2/21/20
5.92 19-5	Mondo Duplantis' (LSU)	Fayetteville	2/22/19
5.91 19-4¾	Shawn Barber' (Akron)	Fayetteville	3/13/15
5.85 19-2¼	Jacob Davis (Texas)	Indianapolis	3/06/99
5.83 19-1½	Lawrence Johnson (Tennessee)	Indianapolis	3/12/94
	Matt Ludwig (Akron)	Akron	1/25/19
5.82 19-1	István Bagyula' (George Mason)	New York City	2/07/92
5.80 19-¾	Russ Buller (LSU)	Atlanta	2/27/99
	Brad Walker (Washington)	Fayetteville	3/14/03
	Jake Blankenship (Tennessee)	Fayetteville	3/13/15
(A)	Branson Ellis (Stephen F. Austin)	Albuquerque	2/14/20
	Zach Bradford (Kansas)	Fayetteville	2/14/20

Virginia Showcase Highlights High School Scene

KIRBY LEE/IMAGE OF SPORT



Previously best known for her cross country exploits, Sydney Thorvaldson is now a track force to be reckoned with.

VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA, January 16-17 — The new banked 200-meter track at the Virginia Beach Sports Center proved its worthiness as a host of top prep performances came out of the Virginia HS Showcase.

Sydney Thorvaldson (Rawlins, Wyoming) chalked up a nice distance double, on Saturday easily capturing the mile 4:43.90–4:49.06 over Brooke Rauber (Tully, New York). On Sunday, Thorvaldson traded the 2M lead with Brynn Brown (Guyer, Denton, Texas) for the first half before setting out on her own to notch a 9:47.95–9:51.00 victory. They moved to Nos. 2-3 all-time (see chart).

The quest for the fastest Junior girls 4x8 (an event not recognized at the U20 level by either WA or USATF), brought together four of the top preps in the event, who on Saturday had hammered out a dazzling 800. Juliette Whittaker (Mt. De Sales, Catonsville, Maryland)

broke the junior-class record with her 2:02.07, moving to No. 3 all-time. That topped soph Sophia Gorriaran (Brown, Providence, Rhode Island), who ran 2:03.96 to move to No. 6 all time. Roisin Willis (Stevens Point, Wisconsin) followed in 2:04.31, then came Bailey Goggans (Marble Falls, Texas) in 2:07.84.

For the relay on Sunday, the four teamed up to go after the best in the rarely run event — the standard was the 8:37.71 that Vere Tech team from Jamaica ran outdoors at the '91 PennRelays.

Willis led off at 2:05.97, followed by Goggans (only 2:20.49, but on what was subsequently reported as a broken foot), Whittaker (2:05.25) and Gorriaran (2:05.49). That brought the foursome home 0.51 better than the record. Note that the mark is not eligible as a High School Record because T&FN doesn't consider all-star teams for such recognition.

On the boys side, a HSR was missed in the

300 when Jaylen Slade (IMG, Bradenton, Florida) almost stopped at the wrong line but had enough momentum to record the No. 2 time ever, 32.77, just 0.13 short of the record.

In the 500, Justin Braun (Worthington, Ohio) and Ashton Schwartzman (IMG) battled to the line in 1:02.67, sharing the No. 8 spot on the all-time list. Braun got first by virtue of an 0.008 margin.

VIRGINIA SHOWCASE BOY'S RESULTS

(200 banked)

55: 1. Udodi Onwuzurike (Rice, Bloomfield Hills, Mi) 6.25; 2. *Terrell Robinson (Mt Tabor, Winston-Salem) 6.26; 3. Laurenz Colbert (Roosevelt, Greenbelt, Md) 6.35. 200: 1. Colbert 21.14; 2. Schurr 21.32; 3. Harbor 21.46.

300: 1. Jaylen Slade (IMG, Bradenton, Fl) 32.77 (2, 2 HS); 2. *Justin Braun (Worthington, Oh) 33.24.

500: 1. Braun 1:02.67 (8, 10 HS); 2. Ashton Schwartzman (IMG) 1:02.67 (=8, =10 HS).

800: 1. Samuel Austin (Oviedo, Fl) 1:53.30. 1000: 1. Cole Piotrowski (IMG) 2:31.21; 2. ***Marcus Reilly (Northridge, Ma) 2:31.43 (frosch-class record). Mile: 1. Nathan Green (Borah, Boise) 4:13.25; 2. **Antonio Camacho-Bucks (Centennial, Ellicott City, Md) 4:14.50; 3. **Elliott McArthur (Mounds View, Mn) 4:15.34; 4. Reilly 4:15.51 (4:00.05 frosch-class record). 2M: 1. *Sam Rich (Catawba, Ft Mill, SC) 9:05.14. 55H: 1. Leonard Mustari (Dunbar, Ft Myers, Fl) 7.19;... 4. Johnny Brackins (Lees Summit, Mo) 7.43.

4 x 200: 1. PSC Panthers TC (Va) 1:27.52. 4 x 400: 1. IMG Elite 3:16.98. 4 x 800: 1. Satellite TC (Fl) 7:56.03. SpMed: 1. DeMatha, Hyattsville, Md 3:43.54. DisMed: 1. Loudoun Valley, Purcellville 10:30.95.

HJ: 1. *Brandon Pottinger (Florida Christian, Miami) 6-10. PV: 1. Nate Benson (Lafayette, Williamsburg, Va) 15-6. LJ: 1. Kaelen Mitchell (Piscataway, NJ) 24-3/4; 2. Mustari 23-11/2; 3. Brackins 23-9/4. TJ: 1. Brackins 50-1/4. SP: 1. Cooper Mack (Watertown, SD) 64-9/4.

SHOWCASE GIRLS RESULTS

55: 1. *Autumn Wilson (St Savio, Austin) 6.81. 200: 1. ***Avery Lewis (Friends Central, Wynnewood, Pa) 23.91; 2. Wilson 24.20. 300: 1. *Hali Murphy (St Savio) 38.93. 500: 1. **Sophia Gorriaran (Brown, Providence, RI) 1:12.95.

800: 1. *Juliette Whittaker (Mt de Sales, Catonsville, Md) 2:02.07 (3, 3 HS) (junior-class record); 2. Gorriaran 2:03.96 (6, 8 HS);

3. *Roisin Willis (Stevens Point, Wi) 2:04.31; 4. Bailey Goggans (Marble Falls, Tx) 2:07.84.

1000: 1. Brooke Rauber (Tully, NY) 2:49.29. Mile: 1. Sydney Thorvaldson (Rawlins, Wy) 4:43.90; 2. Rauber 4:49.06.

2M: 1. Thorvaldson 9:47.95 (2, 2 HS); 2. Brynn Brown (Guyer, Denton, Tx) 9:51.00 (3, 3 HS).

55H: 1. Eddiyah Frye (Aquinas) 7.81; 2. Lucheyona Weaver (Dunbar, Ft Myers, Fl) 7.92.

4 x 200: 1. South Dade Express TC (Fl) 1:37.41. 4 x 400: 1. Mvp League TC (Va) 3:47.68.

4 x 800: 1. 800 United All Stars 8:37.20 (WJR, AJR both indoors and absolute) (old world absolute best 8:37.71 Jamaica) (all-star teams not eligible for HS Records (*Roisin Willis 2:05.97, Bailey Goggans 2:20.49, *Juliette Whittaker 2:05.25, **Sophia Gorriaran 2:05.49).

4 x 1600: 1. Loudoun Valley, Purcellville 21:03.19. SpMed: 1. Real Training TC (Co) 4:05.43. 4 x 55H: 1. Cal Rising Stars TC (Ca) 32.51.

HJ: 1. *Alyssa Jones (Southridge, Miami) 5-8. PV: 1. Chloe Timberg (Central Bucks West, Doylestown, Pa) 13-4/2. LJ: 1. Lewis 20-8 (frosch-class record). TJ: 1. Stephanie Robson (Fauquier, Warrenton, Va) 40-1/2. SP: 1. Jayden Ulrich (East Alton-Wood River, Wood River, Il) 43-7/4. □

Thorvaldson & Brown To 2-3 On The All-Time 2-Mile List

Sydney Thorvaldson and Brynn Brown climbed way high on the all-time list with their fast times at the Virginia Showcase. The Top 10 (* = junior; + = converted from 3200m):

1.	9:38.68	*Mary Cain	(Bronxville, New York)	2013
2.	9:47.95	Sydney Thorvaldson	(Laramie, Wyoming)	2021
3.	9:51.00	Brynn Brown	(Guyer, Denton, Texas)	2021
4.	9:51.05	*Katelyn Tuohy	(North Rockland, Thiells, New York)	2019
5.	9:55.92	Melody Fairchild	(Boulder, Colorado)	1991
6.	9:56.06	Brie Oakley	(Grandview, Centennial, Colorado)	2017
7.	9:56.85	Aisling Cuffe	(Cornwall Central, New Windsor, New York)	2011
8.	9:58.22	*Marlee Starliper	(Northern, Dillsburg, Pennsylvania)	2019
8.	9:58.42	*Katelonne Hart	(Glenbard West, Glen Ellyn, Illinois)	2019
10.	10:01.33+	Erin Keogh	(Langley, McLean, Virginia)	1987

2021 NCAA Men's Top 10 Outdoor Eligibles

THIS NCAA DIVISION I-oriented compilation is by necessity not the same as we've done in recent years, thanks to everybody's favorite friend, the pandemic. Given the incertitude of class and meet scheduling, instead of the top 20 eligible performers for the '21 men's outdoor season, we've only gone 10-deep.

So here's who we believe the top 10 are, in order of their PRs. Marks are as of January 26. Only wind-legal marks are included. The column

on the right has traditionally been the athlete's finish in the previous year's NCAA Outdoor Championships. But with no Nationals last year, what we have instead listed is what they did in '19.

If the athlete didn't compete in the meet (which includes the rounds held in the Regionals), then the Indoor Champs finish ("i") is given. A slash followed by another number/letter indicates competition in a different event.

Symbols: h = heat; qf = quarterfinal; sf = semi; fs = false start; rs = redshirt; hs = high school; int = international; jc = junior college; inj = injured; dnf = did not finish; dnc = didn't compete at Nationals/Regionals; dncq = didn't advance from Regionals field-event qualifying; (A) = altitude-aided mark (over 1000m); ' = not eligible for Team USA.

Classes (outdoors): *** = frosh; ** = soph; * = juniors; all others are seniors. Note that there is no end of confusion over classes at this point because not all schools are reporting classes the same way. Some are using academic standing, others athletic eligibility. The classes we list represent what we believe to be the athlete's remaining outdoor eligibility.

Notre Dame's Yared Nuguse won the '19 NCAA 1500 title by a mere 0.003; he'll be back to defend that crown.

KIRBY LEE/IMAGE OF SPORT



100 METERS			
9.96	Raymond Ekevwu'	(Florida)	4qf
10.01	Joseph Amoah'	(Coppin State)	8
(A)	Samson Colebrooke'	(Purdue)	5qf
(A)	Waseem Williams'	(Purdue)	4
10.06	**Bryand Rincher	(Florida State)	5
10.09	Raheem Chambers'	(Miami)	5sf
10.11(A)	***Matthew Boling	(Georgia)	hs
10.12	Maxwell Willis	(Baylor)	6h
10.16	*Emmanuel Yeboah'	(Texas A&M)	jc
10.19	TJ Brock	(TCU)	6qf
	Travis Collins	(Houston)	7sf
200 METERS			
20.08	Joseph Amoah'	(Coppin State)	6
20.09	*Micaiah Harris	(Texas)	5
20.27	Trevor Stewart	(North Carolina A&T)	2/400
20.31(A)	***Matthew Boling	(Georgia)	hs
20.33	*Marcus Parker	(Clemson)	5sf
20.37	Akeem Sirleaf'	(North Carolina A&T)	dnc-sf
20.39	*Eric Harrison	(Ohio State)	inj
	Akanni Hislop'	(LSU)	5sf
	Maxwell Willis	(Baylor)	7h
20.41	*Terrance Laird	(LSU)	jc
400 METERS			
44.25	Trevor Stewart	(North Carolina A&T)	2
44.55	*Dwight St. Hillaire'	(Kentucky)	4sf
44.63	**Jonathan Jones'	(Texas)	4
44.99	**Jamal Walton'	(Florida State)	rs
45.02	Derrick Mokalleng'	(TCU)	4sf
45.03	**Jonathan Sacoor'	(Tennessee)	5qf

45.09	**Dashawn Morris'	(Maryland)	inj
45.18	Bryce Deadmon	(Texas A&M)	6
45.19	Sean Bailey'	(UTEP)	6sf
45.20	*Zach Shinnick	(USC)	inj
800 METERS			
1:44.76	Devin Dixon	(Texas A&M)	2
1:45.05	Festus Lagat'	(Iowa State)	3
1:45.98	Takieddine Hedeilli'	(Texas Tech)	int
1:46.06	Cooper Williams	(Indiana)	5
1:46.11	Isaiah Jewett	(USC)	3sf
1:46.40	Carlton Orange	(Texas A&M)	4
1:46.59	***Allon Clay'	(Texas A&M)	int
1:46.88	Roshon Roomes	(Iowa State)	8sf
1:47.02	***Jason Gomez	(Iowa State)	-+!
1:47.06	Daniel Nixon	(Iowa State)	inj
1500 METERS			
3:35.74	James West'	(Oregon)	fs-qf
3:36.44	***Sam Tanner'	(Washington)	int
3:37.88	Takieddine Hedeilli'	(Texas Tech)	int
3:38.32	*Yared Nuguse	(Notre Dame)	1
3:38.64	*Sam Worley	(Texas)	9
3:38.72	*Waleed Suliman	(Mississippi)	9sf
3:38.76	*Reed Brown	(Oregon)	12sf
3:39.33	*George Kusche'	(Nebraska)	6sf
3:39.36+	Mick Stanovsek'	(Washington)	10
3:39.52	Luis Grijalva'	(Northern Arizona)	15/5K
STEEPLE			
8:27.90	*Ryan Smeeton'	(Oklahoma State)	2
8:30.10	Aidan Tooker	(Syracuse)	inj
8:32.59	*Matt Owens	(BYU)	8

8:34.50	*Alec Basten	(Minnesota)	7sf
8:36.25	Clayton Shumway	(BYU)	10
8:38.28	Kigen Chemadi'	(Middle Tennessee State)	3
8:38.29	John Rice	(Texas)	8sf
8:38.53	Nathan Mylenek	(Iowa)	9
8:38.90	Albert Kosgei'	(Louisville)	8sf
8:40.36	*Noah Affolder	(Oregon)	inj
5000 METERS			
13:16.75	Luis Grijalva'	(Northern Arizona)	15
13:17.13	*Cooper Teare	(Oregon)	22
13:24.04	Edwin Kurgat'	(Iowa State)	5
13:28.55	Alex Masai'	(Hofstra)	dnc
13:29.73	*Conner Mantz	(BYU)	7
13:31.50	*Morgan Beadlescomb	(Michigan State)	13
13:32.95	***Cole Hocker	(Oregon)	hs
13:32.81	Thomas Ratcliffe	(North Carolina)	3
13:33.64	Amon Kemboi'	(Arkansas)	rs
13:34.91	Kasey Knevelbaard	(Florida State)	6/1500
10,000 METERS			
28:11.05	Alex Masai'	(Hofstra)	22h
28:18.18	*Conner Mantz	(BYU)	4
28:22.76	Blaise Ferro	(Northern Arizona)	dnc-h
28:25.15	Gilbert Boit'	(Arkansas)	9
28:36.07	Clayton Shumway	(BYU)	10/St
28:42.13	*Emmanuel Cheboson'	(Arkansas)	20h
28:42.31	Jacob Choge'	(Middle Tennessee State)	inj
28:48.38	Robert Brandt	(Georgetown)	7
28:53.69	*Adriaan Wildschutt'	(Florida State)	19
28:54.33	**Tibebu Proctor	(Washington)	25h
110 HURDLES			
13.44	*Damion Thomas'	(LSU)	dnc-sf
13.47	*Trey Cunningham	(Florida State)	4qf
13.49	**Eric Edwards	(LSU)	dq
13.57	**Tai Brown	(Kentucky)	3sf
	William Session	(Indiana)	inj
13.59	Raleigh Adams	(Long Beach State)	dnf-sf
13.60	Robert Dunning	(Alabama)	4sf
13.61	Mason Weh'	(Iowa State)	6qf
13.62	*LaFranz Campbell'	(Clemson)	inj
	Jaylan McConico	(Iowa)	5sf
400 HURDLES			
48.68	*Norman Grimes	(Texas Tech)	2
49.09	*Cameron Samuel	(USC)	6
49.67	**James Smith	(Texas A&M)	5
49.75	Travean Caldwell	(Arkansas)	4sf

49.92	Nick Hilson	(Arkansas)	5sf
49.96(A)	*Kenroy Williams'	(Kentucky)	jc
50.05	Jonathan Harvey	(Oregon)	7sf
50.11	*Quivell Jordan	(Houston)	5sf
50.12	**Thomas Burns	(Florida State)	inj
50.16	*Malik Metivier'	(Auburn)	rs
HIGH JUMP			
2.33 7-7¼	Darryl Sullivan	(Tennessee)	dnq
	*Vernon Turner	(Oklahoma)	rs
2.30 7-6½	*Earnie Sears	(USC)	=12
2.29 7-6	*Tejaswin Shankar'	(Kansas State)	2
2.28 7-5¾	*JuVaughn Harrison	(LSU)	1
2.27 7-5¼	**Roberto Vilches'	(Missouri)	=9
2.26 7-5	Darius Carbin	(Georgia)	=7
	Brenton Foster'	(Virginia)	16
	Jonathan Wells	(Illinois)	inj
2.25 7-4½	Clayton Brown'	(Florida)	/TJ
	Eric Richards	(Southern Mississippi)	5
	Justice Summerset	(Arizona)	=12
POLE VAULT			
5.94 19-5¼	**KC Lightfoot	(Baylor)	4
5.80 19-¼	**Zach Bradford	(Kansas)	6
(A)	**Branson Ellis	(Stephen F. Austin)	=11
	**Sondre Guttormsen'	(Princeton)	9
5.75 18-10¼	*Clayton Fritsch	(Sam Houston State)	3
5.70 18-8¼	Brandon Bray	(Texas Tech)	7
	***Zach McWhorter	(BYU)	mission
5.65 18-6½	Adam Coulon	(Indiana)	10
5.53 18-1¼(A)	Antonio Ruiz'	(Houston)	dnq
5.52 18-1¼	*Joel Benitez'	(Virginia Tech)	rs
	Chase Smith	(Washington)	=15
LONG JUMP			
8.25 27-¾	Steffin McCarter	(Texas)	10
8.20 26-11	*JuVaughn Harrison	(LSU)	1
8.19 26-10½	**Carey McLeod'	(Tennessee)	Div. II
8.13 26-8¼	*Ja'Mari Ward	(Missouri)	dnq
8.10 26-7	Fabian Edoki'	(Florida State)	dnq
8.09 26-6½	Rayvon Grey	(LSU)	21
8.05 26-5	Justin Hall	(Texas Tech)	4
	***Wayne Pinnock'	(Tennessee)	int
8.02 26-3¼	**Jakub Andrzejczak'	(Indiana)	inj
	Laquan Nairn'	(Arkansas)	dnq
TRIPLE JUMP			
17.13 56-2½	*Chengetayi Mapaya'	(TCU)	1
17.08 56-½	Jordan Scott'	(USC)	2
16.82 55-2¼	O'Brien Wasome'	(Texas)	5
16.68 54-8¾(A)	*Isaiah Griffith	(Oregon)	jc
	**Carey McLeod	(Tennessee)	Div. II
16.58 54-4¼	Clayton Brown'	(Florida)	13
16.37 53-8½	*Christian Edwards	(Alabama)	rs
16.36 53-8¼	*R'Lazon Brumfield	(Tennessee State)	11
16.35 53-7¾	**Owayne Owens'	(Virginia)	dnc
16.34 53-7½	*Ja'Mari Ward	(Missouri)	dnq/LJ
SHOT			
21.59 70-10	*Jordan Geist	(Arizona)	3
21.15 69-4¼	Andrew Liskowitz	(Michigan)	8
21.12 69-3½	*Tripp Piperi	(Texas)	1
20.81 68-3¼	*Turner Washington	(Arizona State)	rs
20.63 67-8¼	*McKay Johnson	(USC)	rs
20.50 67-3¼	Jonathan Tharaldsen	(Georgia)	dnq
20.35 66-9¼	*Daniel McArthur	(North Carolina)	dnq
20.33 66-8½	***Kristoffer Thomsen'	(North Dakota State)	int
	**Jordan West	(Tennessee)	rs
20.25 66-5¼	*Jalil Brewer	(Purdue)	dnq
20.20 66-3¼	**Josh Sobota	(Kentucky)	dnq
60-4	Dustin Hyde	(Area, Somerset, Pennsylvania)	



Tripp Piperi won the '19 NCAA shot title in his home circle; to defend he'll have to win in Eugene.

DISCUS			
61.43 201-6	David Lucas	(Penn State)	rs
61.36 201-4	**Roje Stona'	(Clemson)	13
61.22 200-10	*Jeremiah Evans	(Michigan State)	9
60.65 198-11	**Elijah Mason	(Washington)	7
59.84 196-4	*George Evans'	(Kansas)	dnq
59.61 195-7	**Sam Welsh	(Harvard)	6
59.07 193-9	*Iffy Joyner	(Cal)	18
58.76 192-9	Charlie Vernoy	(Long Beach State)	dnq
58.64 192-5	*Jamir Gibson	(Army)	dnq
58.58 192-2	Charles Lenford	(Kentucky)	15
HAMMER			
78.29 256-10	Gleb Dudarev'	(Kansas)	2
73.24 240-3	*Jake Norris'	(LSU)	dnq
73.10 239-10	*Thomas Mardal'	(Florida)	4
71.07 233-2	*Kevin Arreaga'	(Miami)	10
70.21 230-4	**Alencar Pereira'	(Florida State)	jc
69.09 226-8	**Bobby Colantonio	(Alabama)	16
68.70 225-5	*Georgios Korakidis'	(Tennessee)	13
68.01 223-1	*Kieran McKeag	(Alabama)	14
	*Aléxios Prodanás'	(Virginia Tech)	19
67.40 221-1	*Jordan Geist	(Arizona)	3/SP

JAVELIN			
85.23 279-7	*Ahmed Magour'	(Georgia)	rs
80.91 265-5	Sindri Guðmundsson'	(Mississippi State)	4
78.78 258-5	**Tyriq Horsford'	(Mississippi State)	3
78.10 256-3	***Arthur Petersen'	(UT Arlington)	int
77.15 253-1	**Marc Minichello	(Penn)	17
76.95 252-5	***Tzuriel Pedigo	(LSU)	rs
76.48 250-11	Nils Fischer'	(Auburn)	Div. II
76.04 249-6	**Ethan Dabbs	(Virginia)	7
75.91 249-0	Werner Bouwer'	(Texas Tech)	12
74.78 245-4	*Liam Christensen	(Stanford)	dnq
DECATHLON			
8445	*Johannes Erm'	(Georgia)	1
8130	**Ayden Owens'	(Michigan)	dnf
8101	**Karel Tilga'	(Georgia)	dnq
7964	**Max Vollmer'	(Oregon)	5
7876	TJ Lawson	(Kent State)	dnf
7722	*Markus Ballengee	(Arkansas)	rs
7596	*Denim Rogers	(Houston Baptist)	7
7587	***Fynn Zenker'	(Texas Tech)	int
7451	**Isaiah Martin	(Purdue)	10
7427	Will Daniels	(Iowa)	Div. III

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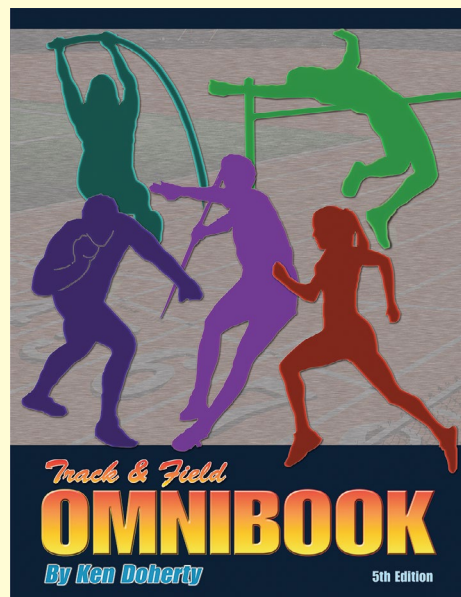
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2021 NCAA Women's Top 10 Outdoor Eligibles

THIS NCAA DIVISION I-oriented compilation is by necessity not the same as we've done in recent years, thanks to everybody's favorite friend, the pandemic. Given the incertitude of class and meet scheduling, instead of the top 20 eligible performers for the '21 women's outdoor season, we've only gone 10-deep.

So here's who we believe the top 10 are, in order of their PRs. Marks are as of January 26. Only wind-legal marks are included. The column

on the right has traditionally been the athlete's finish in the previous year's NCAA Outdoor Championships. But with no Nationals last year, what we have instead listed is what they did in '19.

If the athlete didn't compete in the meet (which includes the rounds held in the Regionals), then the Indoor Champs finish ("i") is given. A slash followed by another number/letter indicates competition in a different event.

Symbols: h = heat; qf = quarterfinal; sf = semi; fs = false start; rs = redshirt; hs = high school; int = international; jc = junior college; inj = injured; dnf = did not finish; dnc = didn't compete at Nationals/Regionals; dncq = didn't advance from Regionals field-event qualifying; (A) = altitude-aided mark (over 1000m); ' = not eligible for Team USA.

Classes (outdoors): *** = frosh; ** = soph; * = juniors; all others are seniors. Note that there is no end of confusion over classes at this point because not all schools are reporting classes the same way. Some are using academic standing, others athletic eligibility. The classes we list represent what we believe to be the athlete's remaining outdoor eligibility.

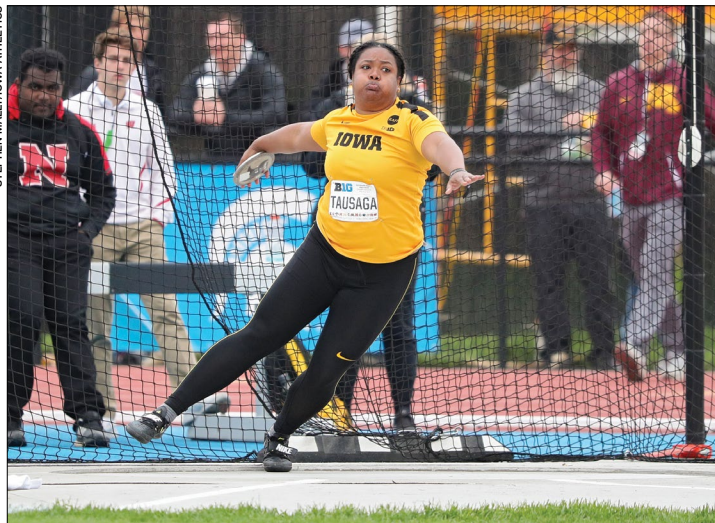
USC's Angie Annelus will be going for a third straight national title in the 200.



100 METERS			
10.98	*Twanisha Terry	(USC)	3
11.02	*Tamara Clark	(Alabama)	7sf
11.04	*Jada Baylark	(Arkansas)	rs
	*Kiara Grant'	(Norfolk State)	6
11.06	Angie Annelus	(USC)	7
11.11	*Ka'Tia Seymour	(Florida State)	8
11.13	Taylor Bennett	(Houston)	rs
11.16	*Celera Barnes	(Kentucky)	5sf
	***Kevona Davis'	(Texas)	int
	**Lanae-Tava Thomas	(USC)	3sf
200 METERS			
22.16	Angie Annelus	(USC)	1
22.40	**Cambrea Sturgis	(North Carolina A&T)	3
22.53	*Tamara Clark	(Alabama)	3sf
22.54	*Anavia Battle	(Ohio State)	4sf
22.55	*Ka'Tia Seymour	(Florida State)	dns
22.59	**Abby Steiner	(Kentucky)	4sf
22.65	**Lanae-Tava Thomas	(USC)	6
22.62	*Edidiong Odiog'	(Florida State)	6qf
22.71	Taylor Bennett	(Houston)	rs
	**Kynneddy Flannel	(Texas)	5sf
400 METERS			
51.03	*Kethlin Campbell	(Arkansas)	4
51.13	Aliyah Abrams'	(South Carolina)	5
51.17	*Syaira Richardson	(Texas A&M)	7
51.21	**Alexis Holmes	(Kentucky)	inj
51.22	***Yinka Ajayi'	(Drake)	int
	Kyra Constantine'	(USC)	6
51.25	*Kaelin Roberts	(USC)	dns-qf

51.35	Takyera Roberson	(Alabama)	5qf
51.51	Aaliyah Birmingham	(Oklahoma State)	8sf
51.52	Jaevin Reed	(Texas A&M)	7qf
800 METERS			
2:00.85	**Caitlin Collier	(Stanford)	inj
2:00.99	Sage Hurta	(Colorado)	rs
2:01.01	***Carley Thomas'	(Washington)	int
2:01.07	***Athing Mu	(Texas A&M)	hs
2:01.14	*Avi'Tal Wilson-Perteete	(UNLV)	3
2:02.41	Aaliyah Miller	(Baylor)	8sf
2:02.49	*Lauren Ellsworth-Barnes	(BYU)	4sf
2:02.53	Danae Rivers	(Penn State)	4sf
2:02.65	*Kristie Schoffield	(Boise State)	6
2:03.01	*Ruby Stauber	(Vanderbilt)	inj
1500 METERS			
4:08.71	*Christina Aragon	(Stanford)	rs
4:09.08	Katie Rainsberger	(Washington)	8qf
4:09.37	*Sage Hurta	(Colorado)	rs
4:09.51+	Danae Rivers	(Penn State)	4sf/800
4:09.78+	Whitni Orton	(BYU)	8
4:11.06	*Jessica Lawson	(Stanford)	10
4:11.70	Ella Donaghu	(Stanford)	6
4:12.46	Dillon McClintock	(Michigan State)	5
4:12.71+	*Lauren Gregory	(Arkansas)	dnf-h/5K
4:13.02	Lotte Black	(Rhode Island)	4
STEEPLE			
9:29.74	*Adva Cohen'	(New Mexico)	4
9:46.08	*Hannah Steelman	(NC State)	3
9:46.48	Madie Boreman	(Colorado)	rs
9:47.84	Gabbi Jennings	(Furman)	9

9:48.35	Devin Clark	(Arkansas)	7
9:51.60	*Alissa Niggemann	(Wisconsin)	11
9:52.48	*Joyce Kimeli'	(Auburn)	7sf
9:52.71	*Krissy Gear	(Arkansas)	8sf
9:52.89	Sarah Edwards	(Virginia Tech)	7sf/1500
9:53.92	Rebekah Topham	(Wichita State)	8
5000 METERS			
15:13.09	Katie Izzo	(Arkansas)	10h
15:22.98	Whitni Orton	(BYU)	8/1500
15:25.33	*Bethany Hasz	(Minnesota)	10
15:25.35	*Dorcas Wasike'	(Louisville)	inj
15:25.41	Carmela Cardama Baez'	(Oregon)	7h
15:31.01	*Adva Cohen'	(New Mexico)	dnf
15:31.97	Elly Henes	(NC State)	rs
15:34.76	Jessica Pascoe'	(Florida)	9
15:37.12	***Katelynn Tuohy	(NC State)	hs
15:37.35	**Mercy Chelangat'	(Alabama)	inj
10,000 METERS			
32:11.81	*Dorcas Wasike'	(Louisville)	inj
32:26.43	Carmela Cardama Baez'	(Oregon)	2
32:39.30	Clare O'Brien'	(Boise State)	15h
32:39.93	*Amanda Vestri	(Syracuse)	14
33:09.57	*Megan Hasz	(Minnesota)	20
33:09.76	**Jackie Gaughan	(Notre Dame)	dnf
33:22.19	Kathryn Munks	(Penn State)	22h
33:22.91	**Julia Paternain'	(Arkansas)	13h
33:23.89	Hannah Miller'	(New Mexico)	34h
33:28.89	Samantha Drop	(Georgia)	inj
110 HURDLES			
12.52	*Chanel Brissett	(Texas)	2
12.57(A)	Tonea Marshall	(LSU)	3
12.69	Anna Cockrell	(USC)	5
12.72	Cortney Jones	(Arizona State)	6
12.74	*Tiara McMinn	(Miami)	7
12.79	*Alexis Duncan	(Tennessee)	4sf
12.81	Madeleine Akobundu	(North Carolina A&T)	5sf
12.94	*Camri Austin	(Oklahoma)	7qf
12.95	**Tara Davis	(Texas)	rs
12.97	Michelle Atherley	(Miami)	3/hept
400 HURDLES			
55.14	Anna Cockrell	(USC)	1
56.11	Brittley Humphrey	(LSU)	3
56.16	Brandee' Johnson	(Florida)	7h/100H
56.29(A)	**Masai Russell	(Kentucky)	5sf
56.31	**Reanda Richards'	(Rutgers)	4



List-leading discus thrower Lagi Tausage of Iowa looks to defend her discus title.

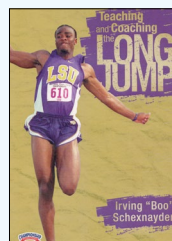
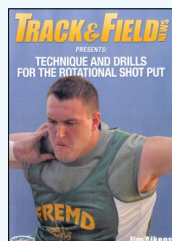
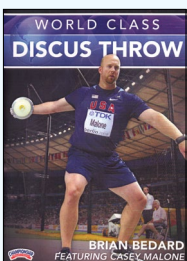
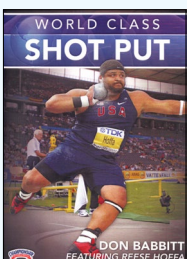
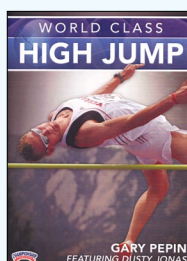
56.36	***Britton Wilson	(Tennessee)	hs
56.42	*Milan Young	(LSU)	5sf
56.53	*Gabrielle McDonald'	(Texas Tech)	inj
56.65	*Nicolee Foster'	(Clemson)	jc
56.69	*Xahria Santiago'	(Maryland)	4sf
HIGH JUMP			
1.91 6-3¼	***Morgan Smalls	(USC)	hs
1.90 6-2¾	Ellen Ekholm'	(Kentucky)	=6
1.89 6-2¼	*Abigail O'Donoghue	(LSU)	dnq
1.88 6-2	Karla Teran'	(Arizona)	5
1.87 6-1½	*Tyra Gittens'	(Texas A&M)	=16
	***Anna Hall	(Georgia)	hs
	Abigail Kwarteng'	(Alabama)	4
1.855 6-1	**Katie Isenbarger	(Western Kentucky)	dnq
1.85 6-¾	**Sanaa Barnes	(Villanova)	=6
	***Janique Burgher'	(Kansas State)	int
	*Petra Luterán'	(Nebraska)	inj
	*Falyn Reaugh	(Oklahoma)	dnq
	***Jenna Rogers	(Nebraska)	hs
	***Shelby Tyler	(Georgia)	hs
POLE VAULT			
4.60 15-1	*Lisa Gunnarsson'	(LSU)	inj
4.53 14-10¼(A)	*Rachel Baxter	(Virginia Tech)	inj
4.50 14-9(A)	Kaylie Bizzell	(Stephen F. Austin)	dnq
	*Tuesdi Tidwell	(Baylor)	dnq
4.48 14-8¼	***Leah Pasqualetti	(Kent State)	hs
4.39 14-4¾	**Nastassja Campbell	(Arkansas)	=16
4.38 14-4½	Helen Falda'	(South Dakota)	7
	Lauren Martinez	(Arkansas)	rs
4.37 14-4	*Sophia Franklin	(Michigan State)	dnq
	Kayla Smith	(Georgia)	=19
	*Andrea Willis	(Kansas)	rs
LONG JUMP			
6.75 22-1¼	*Monae' Nichols	(Texas Tech)	18
6.73 22-1	**Tara Davis	(Texas)	rs
6.71 22-¼	Jasmyn Steels	(Northwestern Louisiana)	2
6.68 21-11	**Lanae-Tava Thomas	(USC)	6/200
6.65 21-10	*Deborah Acquah'	(Texas A&M)	3
	Taishia Pryce'	(Kansas State)	dnq
6.62 21-8¾	*Tyra Gittens'	(Texas A&M)	=16
6.57 21-6¾(A)	Rhesa Foster	(Oregon)	7
	*Ruth Usoro'	(Texas Tech)	jc
6.55 21-6	Destiny Longmire	(TCU)	4
	Wurrie Njadioe	(Kansas State)	rs
TRIPLE JUMP			
14.28 46-10¼	*Ruth Osoro'	(Texas Tech)	jc
13.90 45-7¼	***Jasmine Moore	(Georgia)	hs
13.82 45-4¼	***Rūta Lasmane'	(Florida State)	int
13.81 45-3¾	**Mirieli Santos'	(Missouri)	6
13.77 45-2¼	*Deborah Acquah'	(Texas A&M)	/LJ
13.77 45-2¼	Bria Matthews	(Georgia Tech)	18
13.66 44-9¾	Eszter Bajnok'	(Virginia Tech)	3f
13.63 44-8¾	**Titiana Marsh	(Georgia)	15
13.58 44-6¾	LaJarvia Brown	(Texas A&M)	19
13.56 44-6	**Lexi Ellis	(Oregon)	23
SHOT			
18.17 59-7½	*Samantha Noennig	(Arizona)	1
18.09 59-4¼	*Josie Schaefer	(Wisconsin)	dnq
18.02 59-1½	Lagi Tausaga	(Iowa)	dnq
	*Alyssa Wilson	(UCLA)	7
17.76 58-3¼	*Devia Brown'	(Minnesota)	jc
	Jorinde van Klinken'	(Arizona State)	int
17.74 58-2½	*Taylor Latimer	(Kansas State)	4
17.67 57-11¾	Khayla Dawson	(Indiana)	6
17.61 57-9½	**Akealy Moton	(North Dakota State)	5
17.57 57-7¾	*Maddy Pollard	(Indiana)	8

DISCUS			
3.94 209-9	Lagi Tausaga	(Iowa)	1
62.69 205-8	Shanice Love'	(Florida State)	2
61.62 202-2	*Alexandra Emilianov'	(Kansas)	4
61.33 201-2	Jorinde van Klippen'	(Arizona State)	int
60.76 199-4	*Alyssa Wilson	(UCLA)	7
60.39 198-1	*Serena Brown'	(Iowa)	rs
57.95 190-1	*Obi Amaechi	(Princeton)	3f
57.40 188-4	Elena Bruckner	(Texas)	dnq
57.36 188-2	*Ashley Anumba	(Penn)	21
57.35 188-2	*Seasons Usual	(Texas Tech)	9
HAMMER			
71.50 234-7	*Camryn Rogers'	(Cal)	1
71.43 234-4	*Beatrice Llano'	(Arizona State)	7
70.63 231-8	*Alyssa Wilson	(UCLA)	3
68.36 224-3	*Jill Shippee	(North Carolina)	dnq
66.75 219-0	**Madi Malone	(Auburn)	11
65.68 215-6	Jordan McClendon	(Missouri)	dnq
65.66 215-5	**Mayyi Mahama	(Penn)	24
65.31 214-3	Emma Thor'	(Virginia Tech)	dnq
65.00 213-3	*Makenli Forrest	(Louisville)	15
64.92 213-0	*Kaila Butler'	(Bowling Green)	12

JAVELIN			
58.15 190-9	*Kelechi Nwanaga'	(Florida State)	dnq
57.50 188-8	***Leonie Tröger'	(Cincinnati)	int
57.45 188-6	Kylee Carter	(Auburn)	2
57.44 188-5	Marie-Therese Obst'	(Georgia)	dnq
56.60 185-8	**Madison Wiltrout	(North Carolina)	3
56.21 184-5	*Maura Fiamoncini	(Bucknell)	9
56.13 184-2	***Skylar Ciccolini	(Missouri)	hs
55.73 182-10	Seri Geisler	(Arizona State)	16
	*Sophia Rivera	(Missouri)	6
55.59 182-4	*Laura Paredes'	(Oregon)	7
HEPTATHLON			
6074	*Tyra Gittens'	(Texas A&M)	2
6014	Michelle Atherley	(Miami)	3
5976	Maddie Holmberg	(Penn State)	rs
5869	Kaylee Hinton	(Texas Tech)	rs
5847(A)	***Anna Hall	(Georgia)	hs
5821	Ayesha Champagnie'	(Tennessee)	rs
5806	*Erin Marsh	(Duke)	10
5793	Lauren Taubert	(Kansas State)	8
5779	*Hannah Rusnak	(Washington)	9
5719	Lyndsey Lopes	(Washington)	rs

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2021 High School Boys Top 10 Eligibles

KIRBY LEE/IMAGE OF SPORT



by Jack Shepard

IN OUR 2020 VERSION of this annual compilation, we listed the top 20 prep returners, but this year's version has been cut back to only 10. There just wasn't enough activity last year to fill out lists to that depth which reflected true national-class status.

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Classes: ** = soph; * = junior; all others are seniors.

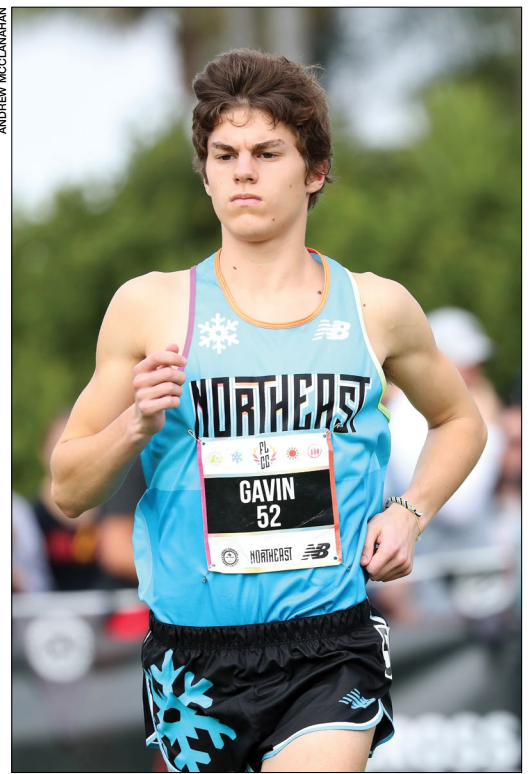
Darius Kipyego comes into his senior year having broken 1:50 in the 800 as both a soph and junior.

100 METERS		
10.49	*Quaron Adams	(Chandler, Arizona)
	David Foster	(Tompkins, Katy, Texas)
10.51	Aaron Bell	(Parker, Jacksonville, Florida)
	*Emory Floyd	(Hillgrove, Powder Springs, Georgia)
10.51/10.22w	*Jaylen Slade	(IMG, Bradenton, Florida)
10.52	*Michael Gupton	(Rolesville, North Carolina)
10.55	*Rayshon Luke	(John Bosco, Bellflower, California)
10.55/10.42w	Connor Washington	(College Park, The Woodlands, Texas)
10.56	Marshall Ellis	(Homewood-Flossmoor, Flossmoor, Illinois)
	*Trevin Moyer	(North Mecklenburg, Huntersville, North Carolina)
200 METERS		
21.03	*Jaylen Slade	(IMG, Bradenton, Florida)
21.08	Laurenz Colbert	(Roosevelt, Greenbelt, Maryland)
21.15	Brandon Miller	(Fenton, Michigan)
	Connor Washington	(College Park, The Woodlands, Texas)
21.18	*Emory Floyd	(Hillgrove, Powder Springs, Georgia)
21.19	Aaron Bell	(Parker, Jacksonville, Florida)
21.22	Jaylen Barringer	(Freedom, Woodbridge, Virginia)
21.28	Gavin Schurr	(Fairview, Boulder, Colorado)
	Garrett Wilkins	(Marshall, Missouri City, Texas)
21.31	David Foster	(Tompkins, Katy, Texas)
400 METERS		
46.76	*Justin Braun	(Worthington, Ohio)
47.16	Korbin Martino	(Canal Winchester, Ohio)
47.40	Joshua Gichaba	(Eastern Hills, Ft. Worth, Texas)
47.43	*Khamari Terrell	(Shoemaker, Killeen, Texas)
	Connor Washington	(College Park, The Woodlands, Texas)
47.45	Camden Wheeler	(Monterey Trail, Elk Grove, California)
47.48	Brett Otterbacher	(Valparaiso, Indiana)
47.59	*Jaylen Slade	(Chapel Hill, Douglasville, Georgia)
47.61	Elijah Mosley	(Southeast, Wichita, Kansas)
	*Jayson Ward	(Bird, Chesterfield, Virginia)
800 METERS		
1:48.26	John Lester	(Amador Valley, Pleasanton, California)
1:48.82	Darius Kipyego	(St. Raphael, Pawtucket, Rhode Island)
1:51.11	Austin Klingler	(West Jordan, Utah)
1:51.49	Miles Brown	(Novi, Michigan)
1:51.73	Robert Whitmarsh	(Brazoswood, Clute, Texas)

1:51.83	Patrick Byrnes	(Plymouth, Michigan)
1:52.12	Antonio Abrego	(Golden Valley, Santa Clarita, California)
1:52.56	Titus Bretzke	(Greenville, Michigan)
1:52.64	Karthik Kochuparambil	(Denmark, Alpharetta, Georgia)
1:52.76	Nicholas Medeiros	(Old Bridge, Matawan, New Jersey)
MILE		
+ = converted from 1500 or 1600		
4:01.34	*Rheinhardt Harrison	(Nease, Ponte Vedra, Florida)
4:06.20	Nathan Green	(Borah, Boise, Idaho)
4:06.97	John Lester	(Amador Valley, Pleasanton, California)
4:10.58	Sully Shelton	(Harrison, Kennesaw, Georgia)
4:11.44+	Colin Peattie	(Bellarmine, San José, California)
4:11.48+	*Larry Josh Edwards	(University, Morgantown, West Virginia)
4:11.85	Ethan Strand	(Vestavia Hills, Birmingham, Alabama)
4:11.86	Ajani Salcido	(Jesuit, Carmichael, California)
4:12.10	*Gavin Sherry	(Conard, West Hartford, Connecticut)
4:12.66+	Javier Vento	(Belen, Miami, Florida)
2 MILES		
+ = converted from 3000 or 3200		
8:53.25	*Gavin Sherry	(Conard, West Hartford, Connecticut)
8:57.12+	Jackson Braddock	(Southern Regional, Mannahawkin, New Jersey)
8:58.10	*Aidan Puffer	(Manchester, Connecticut)
8:59.53+	*Larry Josh Edwards	(University, Morgantown, West Virginia)
9:00.11+	Judson Greer	(Melissa, Texas)
9:00.29+	*Izaiah Steury	(Angola, Indiana)
9:00.92+	Nathan Green	(Borah, Boise, Idaho)
9:02.21+	Caleb Boutelle	(Pine Creek, Colorado Springs, Colorado)
9:03.63	Ethan Strand	(Vestaiva Hills, Birmingham, Alabama)
9:04.98+	Dayton Carlson	(Casteel, Queen Creek, Arizona)
2000 STEEPLECHASE		
6:03.86	Peter Visser	(Star Valley, Afton, Wyoming)
6:06.72	Nathan Green	(Borah, Boise, Idaho)
6:12.33	*Noah Haileab	(Dawson, Pearland, Texas)
6:12.54	Matthew Brown	(Hart, Hartwell, Georgia)
6:12.92	Gavin Saacke	(Tompkins, Katy, Texas)
110 HURDLES		
13.84	Leonard Mustari	(Dunbar, Ft. Myers, Florida)
13.88	Alexander Nunley	(Garner, North Carolina)
13.95/13.84w	Jerry Philippe	(Anderson, Lauderdale Lakes, Florida)

14.08	Anthony Taylor	(Cathedral, Los Angeles, California)
14.12	Michael Bourne	(Cosby, Midlothian, Virginia)
14.13	Desmyn McCall	(Sandalwood, Jacksonville, Florida)
14.17	*Jadyn Marshall	(St. Mary's, Stockton, California)
14.18	*Landon Helms	(Emmett, Idaho)
13.83w	Barry Richards	(Summer Creek, Houston, Texas)
14.13w	Armann Richardson	(Summer Creek, Houston, Texas)
14.17w	*Vincent Flegeance	(Gibbons, Ft Lauderdale, Florida)
300/400 HURDLES		
37.41	*Chris Brinkley	(Marshall, Missouri City, Texas)
37.56	Bryce McCray	(George Ranch, Richmond, Texas)
37.59	*Jadyn Marshall	(St. Mary's, Stockton, California)
37.67	*Isaiah Sategna	(Fayetteville, Arkansas)
37.83	D'Carlo Calderon	(United, Laredo, Texas)
52.23	Mario Paul	(Dunbar, Lexington, Kentucky)
52.36	Bryce McCray	(George Ranch, Richmond, Texas)
52.68	*Tamaal Myers	(Cass, Detroit, Michigan)
MILE WALK		
7:33.0+i	Jake Lawson	(Downingtown East, Exton, Pennsylvania)
HIGH JUMP		
7-1	Tyus Wilson	(Sterling, Kansas)
7-½	Kamyren Garrett	(Lawrence Central, Indianapolis, Indiana)
7-0	Chris Hilton	(Zachary, Louisiana)
	Eli Stowers	(Guyer, Denton, Texas)
6-10	Camrun Norman	(Hattiesburg, Mississippi)
	*Brandon Pottinger	(Florida Christian, Miami, Florida)
	Kason O'Riley	(Marble Falls, Texas)
	C.J. Shoaf	(Mahomet-Seymour, Mahomet, Illinois)
POLE VAULT		
17-4½	Clayton Simms	(Live Oak, Watson, Louisiana)
17-2¾	*Anthony Meacham	(Woodsboro, Texas)
17-0	Carson Lenser	(Vilonia, Arkansas)
16-10¼	Garrett Brown	(La Costa Canyon, Carlsbad, California)
16-10(A)	*Landon Helms	(Emmett, Idaho)
16-8	Conner McClure	(Green, Akron, Ohio)
16-7	Jimmy Rhoads	(Liberty Union, Baltimore, Ohio)
16-6	Clayton Simms	(Live Oak, Watson, Louisiana)
16-5	Spencer Buley	(Boyd, McKinney, Texas)
16-2½	*Beau Domingue	(Hammond, Louisiana)
LONG JUMP		
25-0	Jaden Price-Whitehead	(Upper Dublin, Ft. Washington, Pennsylvania)
24-7½	Julian Collins	(Hewitt-Trussville, Trussville, Alabama)
24-7	Curtis Williams	(Leon, Tallahassee, Florida)
24-6½	Johnny Brackins	(Lees Summit, Missouri)
24-3¼	Kaelen Mitchell	(Piscataway, New Jersey)
24-1½	*Isaiah Sategna	(Fayetteville, Arkansas)
24-¼/ 24-7½w	Ketron Jackson	(Lancaster, Texas)
24-¼	**Ashton Torns	(Westlake, Austin, Texas)
24-0	Solomon Washington	(Stony Point, Round Rock, Texas)
TRIPLE JUMP		
50-¼	Johnny Brackins	(Lees Summit, Missouri)
49-7/50-2½w	Floyd Whitaker	(Highland, Blackwood, New Jersey)
48-8	Michael Herzog	(Thorndale, Texas)
	Korey Steele	(Bloomfield, Connecticut)
48-7¾	Jaden Patterson	(Atascocita, Humble, Texas)
48-6¾/ 50-8½w	Solomon Washington	(Stony Point, Round Rock, Texas)
48-½	LaDamian Rowell	(Opelika, Alabama)
48-¼	Emi Ereckosima	(North Hagerstown, Hagerstown, Maryland)
(A)	A.J. Giron	(Mountain Vista, Highlands Ranch, Colorado)
48-10½w	Reginald King	(Scotlandville, Baton Rouge, Louisiana)
SHOT		
64-9¾	Cooper Mack	(Watertown, South Dakota)
64-4¾	Connor VassGal	(Wilmington, New Wilmington, Pennsylvania)
64-3¾	Bryce Foster	(Taylor, Katy, Texas)
64-1¾	*Tucker Smith	(North, Columbus, Indiana)
63-3	Henry Buckles	(Valley, Hood River, Oregon)
62-8	*Tarik Robinson-O'Hagan	(Woonsocket, Rhode Island)

ANDREW MCCLANAHAN



An 8:53.25 finds junior Gavin Sherry heading the list of 2-mile returners.

62-0	Noah Culbertson	(Sherwood, Oregon)
60-6	Gabe Hickman	(Turpin, Cincinnati, Ohio)
60-4	Dustin Hyde	(Area, Somerset, Pennsylvania)
60-3½	Jacob Tracy	(Lake Travis, Austin, Texas)
	*Spencer Williams	(Davis, Mocksville, North Carolina)
DISCUS		
198-0	Bryce Foster	(Taylor, Katy, Texas)
191-8	Jackson Acker	(Area, Verona, Wisconsin)
187-7	*Zane Forist	(Crystal, Carson City, Michigan)
183-7	Jacob Tracy	(Lake Travis, Austin, Texas)
181-10	Aiden Paul	(West, Albany, Oregon)
180-4	Kaden Pastian	(Hillsboro-Central Valley, Hillsboro, North Dakota)
179-8	Cooper Mack	(Watertown, South Dakota)
176-7	Garret Bernt	(Stevenson, Washington)
175-4	Tyler Konopka	(South, Toms River, New Jersey)
175-1	Henry Buckles	(Valley, Hood River, Oregon)
	Spencer Williams	(Davie, Mocksville, North Carolina)
HAMMER		
230-11	Logan Coles	(Woonsocket, Rhode Island)
208-11	John Fay	(Hendricken, Warwick, Rhode Island)
206-8	*Tarik Robinson-O'Hagan	(Woonsocket, Rhode Island)
198-7	Cooper Stroka	(Don Bosco, Ramsey, New Jersey)
197-2	*Jeremiah Nubbe	(Yelm, Washington)
193-6	Aiden Paul	(West, Albany, Oregon)
192-9	James Wright	(Great Oak, Temecula, California)
190-1	*Liam Capozza	(Barrington, Rhode Island)
JAVELIN		
214-5	Ian Hall'	(Richmond Park, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina)
211-3	Evan Niedrowski	(Wyomissing, Pennsylvania)
203-8	Collin Burkhart	(Area, Nazareth, Pennsylvania)
199-1	*Matt Prebola	(Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania)
198-8	Austin Strawn	(Eagle Point, Oregon)
196-5	Thomas Dickinson	(Scranton Prep, Scranton, Pennsylvania)
194-6	Joe Dionne	(West Warwick, Rhode Island)
186-3	Asher Krauel	(Sherwood, Oregon)
185-6	*Julian Juszczyk	(Trinity, St. Louis, Missouri)
184-9	Jack Olsen	(Olympia, Washington)
DECATHLON		
6611	Jordan Fick	(North Oconee, Bogart, Georgia)
6559	Devin Barnett	(Whitewater, Fayetteville, Georgia)

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Classes: **** = 8th grade; *** = frosh; ** = soph; * = junior; all others are seniors.

Precocious junior Kayla Davis leads the 400's returnees at 51.17 and is also No. 2 in the 200 (23.31).

100 METERS		
11.36	Kenondra Davis	(Trimble, Ft. Worth, Texas)
11.44	*Jayla Jamison	(Airport, West Columbia, South Carolina)
11.55	Trinity Rossum	(Buford, Georgia)
	Lashanti Williams	(Clarke Central, Athens, Georgia)
11.56	Makhaila Mills	(Creekside, St. Johns, Florida)
11.58	Alicia Burnett	(Parkway North, Creve Coeur, Missouri)
(A)	Adriana Tatum	(Sandia, Albuquerque, New Mexico)
11.59	*Moforehan Abinusawa	(Germantown, Ft. Washington, Pennsylvania)
11.62	*Kennedi Sanders	(Central, Madison, Mississippi)
11.53w	*Jassani Carter	(Flanagan, Pembroke Pines, Florida)
	Kaylee Lewis	(Melissa, Texas)
200 METERS		
23.28(A)	Dynasty McClennon	(Summer Creek, Houston, Texas)
23.31/23.08w	*Kayla Davis	(Hough, Charlotte, North Carolina)
23.38	Kenondra Davis	(Trimble, Ft. Worth, Texas)
23.45/23.27w	*Ramiah Elliott	(North Central, Indianapolis, Indiana)
23.56	*Moforehan Abinusawa	(Germantown, Ft. Washington, Pennsylvania)
23.61/23.31w	*Jassani Carter	(Flanagan, Pembroke Pines, Florida)
23.65	*Aaliyah Butler	(Piper, Sunrise, Florida)
23.66/23.11w	Aaliyah Pyatt	(Massaponax, Fredericksburg, Virginia)
23.19w	*Jayla Jamison	(Airport, West Columbia, South Carolina)
23.51w	Deja Shaw Huckaby	(Chisolm Trail, Ft. Worth, Texas)
400 METERS		
51.17	*Kayla Davis	(Hough, Charlotte, North Carolina)
52.25	*Aaliyah Butler	(Piper, Sunrise, Florida)
52.79	Caitlyn Bobb	(Hartford, Bel Air, Maryland)
52.89	*Ramiah Elliott	(North Central, Indianapolis, Indiana)
53.14	**Kaylyn Brown	(Holbrook, Lowell, North Carolina)
53.25	Dynasty McClennon	(Summer Creek, Houston, Texas)
53.60	Aaliyah Pyatt	(Massaponax, Fredericksburg, Virginia)
53.61	*Maisha Atkinson	(Florida Atlantic, Jacksonville, Florida)
53.65	Mekenze Kelley	(Campbell, Smyrna, Georgia)
53.69	**Shawnti Jackson	(Wake Forest, North Carolina)
800 METERS		
2:02.07	*Juliette Whittaker	(Mt. de Sales, Catonsville, Maryland)
2:02.90	**Sophia Gorriaran	(Brown, Providence, Rhode Island)
2:03.05	*Roisin Willis	(Stevens Point, Wisconsin)
2:04.38	Michaela Rose	(Home, Suffolk, Virginia)
2:04.70	Bailey Goggans	(Marble Falls, Texas)
2:05.83	Taylor James	(Niwot, Colorado)

2:06.27	Makayla Paige	(Memorial, Tewksbury, Massachusetts)
2:08.40	Jessica Edwards	(Canterbury, Ft. Myers, Florida)
2:08.45	*Lea Hatcher	(Morgantown, West Virginia)
2:08.47	Jinah Mickens-Malik	(Mater, Hialeah, Florida)
MILE		
4:42.86	Carlee Hansen	(Woods Cross, Utah)
4:42.91	Allie Janke	(North Central, Spokane, Washington)
4:43.33	*Jenna Hutchins	(Science Hill, Johnson City, Tennessee)
4:43.89	*Juliette Whittaker	(Mt. de Sales, Catonsville, Maryland)
4:44.24+	Jacqueline Duarte	(Chino Hills, California)
4:45.96+	*Riley Chamberlain	(Del Oro, Loomis, California)
4:46.67+	Audrey Suarez	(Mayfield, Pasadena, California)
4:47.21	**Sophia Gorriaran	(Brown, Providence, Rhode Island)
4:47.28+	Mia Barnett	(Village, Sun Valley, California)
4:48.05	Brooke Rauber	(Tully, New York)
2 MILES		
9:47.95	Sydney Thorvaldson	(Rawlins, Wyoming)
9:51.00	Brynn Brown	(Guyer, Denton, Texas)
9:53.26+	*Jenna Hutchins	(Science Hill, Johnson City, Tennessee)
10:05.86+	*Charlotte Bednar	(Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, New Jersey)
10:06.36+	Sydney Masciarelli	(Marianapolis, Thompson, Connecticut)
10:06.66+	*Abigail VanderKooi	(Western Michigan, Muskegon, Michigan)
10:13.57	Audrey DaDamio	(Seaholm, Birmingham, Michigan)
10:14.38+	Allie Janke	(North Central, Spokane, Washington)
10:17.40+	*Lea Hatcher	(St. Francis, Morgantown, West Virginia)
10:17.76	*Ava Parekh	(Latin, Chicago, Illinois)
2000 STEEPLECHASE		
6:41.95	Brooke Rauber	(Tully, New York)
6:43.19	**Karrie Baloga	(Cornwall, New Windsor, New York)
6:47.71	Kaitlyn Chandrika	(Mt. Sinai, New York)
6:58.94	Hannah Iellfield	(South Louis, Turin, New York)
6:58.95	Lauryn Heskin	(Marymount, New York, New York)
110 HURDLES		
13.39	Tyra Wilson	(Rock Bridge, Columbia, Missouri)
13.42	Jalaysi'ya Smith	(DeSoto, Texas)
13.60/13.48w	Lucheyona Weaver	(Dunbar, Ft. Myers, Florida)
13.63	Bella Witt	(Birmingham, Lake Balboa, California)
13.78	Na'Taja Ballard	(Western Branch, Chesapeake, Virginia)
13.88	Zariyah Black	(Eastern Guilford, Greensboro, North Carolina)
	*Taylor McKinnon	(Gibbons, Raleigh, North Carolina)
13.92	Alexis Glasco	(Aquinas, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida)



Juliette Whittaker's 2:02.07 has her atop the 800 list; she's also a 4:43.89 miler.

13.93	Asjah Atkinson	(St. Anthony, Long Beach, California)
13.96	Eddiyah Frye	(Aquinas, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida)
	*Falon Spearman	(Providence Day, Charlotte, North Carolina)
300 HURDLES		
40.79(A)/58.33	Tyra Wilson	(Rock Bridge, Columbia, Missouri)
41.43	Alexis Glasco	(Aquinas, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida)
41.92	Amanda Kinloch	(Pembroke Pines, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida)
41.94	Chakiya Plummer	(McEachern, Powder Springs, Georgia)
42.14	Jalaysi'ya Smith	(DeSoto, Texas)
42.24	Jania Hodges	(Sandy Creek, Tyrone, Georgia)
42.26	*Terica Boyd	(North Miami, Florida)
42.78	Morgan Taylor	(Summer Creek, Houston, Texas)
42.80	Jordyn Grady	(Upland, California)
58.16	Michaela Rose	(Home, Suffolk, Virginia)
3000 WALK		
14:38.63	Ciara Duncan	(Pearl River, New York)
15:07.19	Grace Endy	(Westfield, New Jersey)
15:12.69	Analiiese Fabrizi	(Sachem North, Lake Ronkonkoma, New York)
HIGH JUMP		
6-¾	*Alyssa Jones	(Southridge, Miami, Florida)
5-11¼	**Cheyla Scott	(Matthews, North Carolina)
5-10	Sydney Billington	(Bentonville, Arkansas)
	Maya Harrison	(Mayde Creek, Katy, Texas)
5-9¼	*Emma Gates	(Cascade, Turner, Oregon)
5-9	Grace Cunningham	(Silverado, Las Vegas, Nevada)
	Tacoria Humphrey	(Warren Central, Indianapolis, Indiana)
	Faith Hunter	(Lincoln, Gahanna, Ohio)
	*Nyalaam Jok	(Annandale, Osseo, Minnesota)
	Annika Kinley	(Lakota West, West Chester, Ohio)
	Holland Pilukas	(Woodinville, Washington)
	*Cheyenne Roberts	(Westview, San Diego, California)
	Jazzmin Taylor	(Alexander, Douglasville, Georgia)
POLE VAULT		
14-6	Paige Sommers	(Westlake, Westlake Village, California)
14-3¾	**Amanda Moll	(Capital, Olympia, Washington)
14-1	Lianne Kistler	(Ballard, Seattle, Washington)
13-7	Payton Phillips	(Carrollton, Georgia)
13-6½	*Heather Abadie	(St. Michael, Baton Rouge, Louisiana)
13-6	Ashley Callahan	(Rancho Bernardo, San Diego, California)
	Olivia Leuking	(Clear Creek, League City, Texas)
	**Hana Moll	(Capital, Olympia, Washington)
13-5¼	Windsor Roberts	(Tri-Valley, Downs, Illinois)
13-5	*Kenna Stimmel	(Margaretta, Castalia, Ohio)
13-4½	Chloe Timberg	(Central Bucks West, Doylestown, Pennsylvania)

LONG JUMP		
20-9¼	*Alyssa Jones	(Southridge, Miami, Florida)
20-8½	*Caelyn Harris	(Upland, California)
20-8	***Avery Lewis	(Friends Central, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania)
20-3	Lashanti Williams	(Clarke Central, Athens, Georgia)
20-½	****Elizabeth Deen	(MS, Greensboro, North Carolina)
19-11¼	*Jayla Jamison	(Airport, West Columbia, South Carolina)
19-9¼	Paige Floriea	(Mentor, Ohio)
19-9½	*Gianna Locci	(Central, Stillwater, New York)
19-8¼	Tess Stapleton	(Ludlowe, Fairfield, Connecticut)
19-7(A)	Teagan Zwanstra	(ThunderRidge, Highlands Ranch, Colorado)
TRIPLE JUMP		
41-3¾	Riley Ammenhauser	(Neuqua Valley, Naperville, Illinois)
41-½	Jayla Brown	(McEachern, Powder Springs, Georgia)
40-9½	*Agur Dwol	(Mullen, Denver, Colorado)
40-7¾	Kendall Jordan	(Cummings, Burlington, North Carolina)
40-7	Jordan Hardy	(Hampton, Virginia)
40-5½	Elise Miller	(San Pasqual, Escondido, California)
40-5	Summer Stevenson	(Great Oak, Temecula, California)
40-4	Jada Joseph	(American Heritage, Plantation, Florida)
40-2¼/42-5¾w	Sophie Galloway	(Graves, Mayfield, Kentucky)
40-2¼	Rieko Wilford	(Curtis, University Place, Washington)
SHOT		
51-4¼	Sarah Marvin	(Byron, Michigan)
48-3½	Makayla Long	(Perry, Gilbert, Arizona)
48-¼	*Emma Callahan	(Shenango, New Castle, Pennsylvania)
48-1 ¾	Janae Profit	(Dunwoody, Georgia)
47-8 ½	Siniru Iheoma	(Council Rock South, Holland, Pennsylvania)
47-8	Jayden Ulrich	(East Alton-Wood Ranch, Wood River, Illinois)
47-7¼	Faith Bender	(Liberty, Bakersfield, California)
47-5	Chrystal Herpin	(Dawson, Pearland, Texas)
47-½	Amelia Flynt	(Cinco Ranch, Katy, Texas)
46-3	**Carlie Weiser	(Giddings, Texas)
DISCUS		
168-6	Faith Bender	(Liberty, Bakersfield, California)
160-5	Chrystal Herpin	(Dawson, Pearland, Texas)
157-9	Janae Profit	(Dunwoody, Georgia)
157-1	**Emma Sralla	(Marcus, Flower Mound, Texas)
156-6	Cara Salsberry	(Somerset, Boynton Beach, Florida)
152-7	Siniru Iheoma	(Council Rock South, Holland, Pennsylvania)
152-3	Amelia Flynt	(Cinco Ranch, Katy, Texas)
151-6	Meredith Adams	(Calvary, Clearwater, Florida)
150-11	Sarah Marvin	(Byron, Michigan)
150-2	Klaire Kovatch	(Seeley-Swan, Missoula, Montana)
HAMMER		
166-11	Cara Salsberry	(Somerset, Boynton Beach, Florida)
166-4	Sarah Ortes	(Classical, Providence, Rhode Island)
165-11	Sydney Lake	(Yulee, Florida)
163-11	Jillian Stafford	(Dana Hills, Dana Point, California)
163-0	Sophia Gallucci	(Coventry, Rhode Island)
JAVELIN		
164-8	Sydney Juszczuk	(Trinity, St. Louis, Missouri)
156-11	Katelyn Fairchild	(Andale, Kansas)
150-5	Alianna Eucker	(Bergen, Hackensack, New Jersey)
147-5	Maryann Ackerman	(Area, Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania)
146-1	Taylor Ciccolini	(Mifflin, Lewiston, Pennsylvania)
143-10	Kendra Odegard	(Lisbon, North Dakota)
142-9	Makayla Hunter	(Chandler, Arizona)
142-8	Samantha Marx	(Andale, Kansas)
141-11	Makayla Long	(Perry, Gilbert, Arizona)
HEPTATHLON		
5094	*Bryanna Craig	(Millville, New Jersey)
5010	Patasha Bryan	(South Walton, Santa Rosa Beach, Florida)
4888	Sophie Galloway	(Graves, Mayfield, Kentucky)
4839	Jania Hodges	(Sandy Creek, Tyrone, Georgia)
4787	Lauren Heck	(Blue Valley Southwest, Overland Park, Kansas)

How Will The Revamped 2021 DL Work?

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED... Whether the international federation is going by the name of IAAF or WA, Monaco continues to tinker with the format of its signature elite-pro series, the Wanda Diamond League.

Big changes were scheduled for last year ("The Diamond League Gets A Facelift," November 2019), some events being removed from

the program altogether and the broadcast window tightened.

These changes were not looked upon kindly by many athletes, with triple jumper Christian Taylor leading the charge.

WA eventually compromised, but the whole thing ended up not playing out properly as the pandemic wrought its havoc.

Which brings us to '21. There are 14 meets, with the previous complement of 16 events in play for the end-of-season finale.

From '10 through '19 the season wrapped up in 2-part fashion, with half the events in Brussels, half in Zürich. For '20 the plan was to have Zürich-only, which didn't work out.

But '21 will have just the one big finale, in the Swiss city. That will be a 2-day affair, with the first day featuring 7 street events.

Of the 13 meetings leading up to the Final, 11 will stage 14 events; Shanghai will have 15, Oslo 13.

The staging of events will vary in number: 4 events will be held 8 times, 6 events 7 times, 3 events 6 times and 3 events (all throws) 5 times.

The hammer, walks and multis will continue to have their own Challenge series.

Overall, there will be \$7M on offer in prize money. At every series meet a total of \$25,000 will be available for each discipline. In the Final, the winner will receive \$30,000, with another \$30,000 spread among the other placers.

Additionally, a \$500,000 bonus pot has been set aside for the "Best Performing Athletes" (those who deliver consistent, high-level performances throughout the season). There will be 10 award winners in total: 1 male and 1 female in the sprints, hurdles, distance events, jumps and throws.

A field event "innovation" that was tried last year and was met with less than universal acclaim is back in play.

Which Events Are In Which DL Meets In 2021?

MEN'S EVENTS

100 (8)..... Rome, Stockholm, Monaco, London |OG| Shanghai, Eugene, Brussels, Zürich
200 (7)..... Rabat, Doha, Oslo |OG| Eugene, Lausanne, Paris, Zürich
400 (7)..... Doha, Rome, Stockholm |OG| Shanghai, China2, Brussels, Zürich
800 (8)..... Doha, Stockholm, Monaco, London |OG| Eugene, Lausanne, Paris, Zürich
1500 (8).... Rabat, Doha, Oslo, Stockholm, Monaco |OG| Eugene, Brussels, Zürich
3000 (7).... Rabat, Rome, Oslo, London |OG| Eugene, Lausanne, Zürich
St (6)..... Rabat, Rome, Monaco |OG| China2, Paris, Zürich
110H (7) ... Rome, London |OG| Shanghai, China2, Lausanne, Paris, Zürich
400H (8) Doha, Oslo, Stockholm, Monaco |OG| Shanghai, China2, Brussels, Zürich
HJ (7) Doha, Rome, Monaco, London |OG| Shanghai, China2, Zürich
PV (7) Rabat, Oslo, Stockholm |OG| Lausanne, Paris, Brussels, Zürich
LJ (6)..... Rabat, Monaco |OG| Shanghai, China2, Brussels, Zürich
TJ (6)..... Oslo, London |OG| Shanghai, Eugene, Paris, Zürich
SP (5) Doha, Rome |OG| Eugene, Lausanne, Zürich
DT (5) Oslo, Stockholm |OG| China2, Brussels, Zürich
JT (5)..... Rabat, London |OG| Lausanne, Paris, Zürich

WOMEN'S EVENTS

100 (8)..... Rabat, Doha, Oslo |OG| Shanghai, Eugene, Lausanne, Paris, Zürich
200 (7)..... Rome, Stockholm, Monaco, London |OG| Eugene, Brussels, Zürich
400 (7)..... Rabat, London |OG| Shanghai, China2, Lausanne, Paris, Zürich
800 (8)..... Doha, Oslo, Stockholm, Monaco |OG| Shanghai, China2, Brussels, Zürich
1500 (8).... Rabat, Rome, Monaco, London |OG| Eugene, Lausanne, Brussels, Zürich
3000 (7).... Doha, Oslo |OG| Shanghai, China2, Paris, Brussels, Zürich
St (6) Doha, Stockholm, Monaco |OG| Shanghai, Eugene, Zürich
100H (7) ... Rabat, Rome, London |OG| China2, Paris, Brussels, Zürich
400H (8) ... Rome, Oslo, Stockholm, London |OG| Eugene, Lausanne, Paris, Zürich
HJ (7) Rabat, Stockholm |OG| Eugene, Lausanne, Paris, Brussels, Zürich
PV (7) Doha, Monaco, Rome, London |OG| Shanghai, Eugene, Zürich
LJ (6)..... Rome, Oslo, Stockholm, London |OG| Lausanne, Zürich
TJ (6)..... Rabat, Doha, Monaco |OG| China2, Lausanne, Zürich
SP (5) Rabat, Stockholm |OG| Shanghai, China2, Zürich
DT (5) Doha, Rome |OG| Paris, Brussels, Zürich
JT (5)..... Oslo, Monaco |OG| Shanghai, China2, Zürich

|OG| = Olympic Games break; some 1500s will be Miles and 3000s will be 5000s

Which DL Meets Have Which Events In 2021?

The event distribution for '21, noting that some meets may have "street events" on days before the official calendar date:

Rabat (May 23)

m200, 1500, 3000, St, PV, LJ, JT
w100, 400, 1500, 100H, HJ, TJ, SP

Doha (May 28)

m200, 400, 800, 1500, 400H, HJ, SP
w100, 800, 3000, St, PV, TJ, DT

Rome (June 04)

m100, 400, 3000, St, 110H, HJ, SP
w200, 1500, 100H, 400H, PV, LJ, DT

Oslo (June 10)

m200, 1500, 3000, 400H, PV, TJ, DT
w100, 800, 3000, 400H, LJ, JT

Stockholm (July 04)

m100, 400, 800, 1500, 400H, PV, DT
w200, 800, St, 400H, HJ, LJ, SP

Monaco (July 09)

m100, 800, 1500, St, 400H, HJ, LJ
w200, 800, 1500, St, PV, TJ, JT

London (July 13)

m100, 800, 3000, 110H, HJ, TJ, JT
w200, 400, 1500, 100H, 400H, PV, LJ

Shanghai (August 14)

m100, 400, 110H, 400H, HJ, LJ, TJ
w100, 400, 800, 3000, St, PV, SP, JT

Eugene (August 21)

m100, 200, 800, 1500, 3000, TJ, SP
w100, 200, 1500, St, 400H, HJ, PV

China2, site tbd (August 22)

m400, St, 110H, 400H, HJ, LJ, DT
w400, 800, 3000, 100H, TJ, SP, JT

Lausanne (August 26)

m200, 800, 3000, 110H, PV, SP, JT
w100, 400, 1500, 400H, HJ, LJ, TJ

Paris (August 28)

m200, 800, St, 110H, PV, TJ, JT
w100, 400, 3000, 100H, 400H, HJ, DT

Brussels (September 03)

m100, 400, 1500, 400H, PV, LJ, DT
w200, 800, 1500, 3000, 100H, HJ, DT

Zürich Final (September 08-09)

m100, 200, 400, 800, 1500, 3000, St, 110H, 400H, HJ, PV, LJ, TJ, SP, DT, JT
w100, 200, 400, 800, 1500, 3000, St, 100H, 400H, HJ, PV, LJ, TJ, SP, DT, JT

How Do You Make It To The Olympics?

TRACK'S CRUCIAL DATES for '21 are June 18–27 in Eugene, Oregon & July 30–August 08 in Tokyo, Japan.

As always, for American athletes the road to the Olympic Games on the latter dates begins with the Olympic Trials on the former.

Both meets will have two major ways to get in, the first of them being making tough qualifying standards (see boxes). Neither meet will achieve the desired quotas solely from that protocol, so some events will have field-filling procedures. For the OT, USATF's pure performance lists will be used; for the OG, WA's world rankings will come into play for the first time.

American athletes can also be considered to be qualified for the Nationals: if in the previous 4 years they have earned an Olympic, World Outdoor or World Indoor medal; if they are the reigning national champion, indoors or out; if they finished in the top 3 at the previous year's Nationals, indoors or out.

Unlike the World Championships, the Olympics has no provision for "Wild Card" entries for defending champs or anybody else, so no matter what, no nation's representation in any event will be larger than 3.

Most of the OT events will find the U.S. selecting the full complement of 3 per event, although it will not necessarily be the first 3

finishers, since it's not uncommon for a high finisher to be lacking a qualifying-standard mark. In those cases, lower-finishing athletes who do have standard will be selected. Note that the Rio team included one 11th-placer from the OT.

Per a USOPC requirement, Americans may not chase qualifiers after the conclusion of their events at the Trials.

The Olympic Trials for the marathons and men's 50K walk were both held back in February of '20.

The Olympic Relay Fields

The fields of 16 national relay quartets in the 4x1s, 4x4s and mixed-sex 4x4 can qualify for Tokyo in one of three ways: by having placed in the top 8 at the '19 WC in Doha; by having placed in the top 8 at the '21 World Relays; or by the WA performance lists for the qualifying period as needed to reach the quota.

WA says the field-filler performance lists for the relays will be "based on the aggregate of the two fastest times achieved by national teams in the qualification period" and those times must be achieved in races including at least two national teams.

As always, composition/order of the U.S.'s relay foursomes will probably remain largely a mystery until the last minute.

Miscellany...

Olympic Games age restrictions: Junior (U20) athletes are allowed in all events save the marathon and 50W; Youth (U18) athletes are barred from the 10K, road races, decathlon and throws; those who are not yet 16 this year are excluded from all events...

Both the OT and OG accept legal-track indoor marks (no banking beyond 200m) as qualifying standards, but wind-aided marks are not considered and there are no altitude-adjustments...

OT qualifying marks will not necessarily be used as seeding marks in the meet proper, a more current window usually being applied...

The OT figures to stage a single round in the 10K and walks, 2 rounds in the steeple & 5000 and 3 rounds in all others. All field events will be 2 rounds...

WA will publish qualification lists and world rankings on July 01 and submit entries to Tokyo on July 02–05. □

Olympic Trials Q-Standards

USATF has yet to confirm the window for making an Olympic Trials qualifying mark. The original plan for last year was May 01, 2019 through June 07, 2020, but with so few people having competitive opportunities in '20, we would suspect that the new window will start earlier, relatively speaking, than the original, likely somewhere in '19. We'll publish the firm dates as soon as they are announced.

= approximate field size desired (USATF stresses "not the minimum"); fields will be filled as needed from performance lists. The standards:

Event	mStandard	#	wStandard	Event
100	10.05	(32)	11.15	100
200	20.24	(30)	22.80	200
400	45.20	(28)	51.35	400
800	1:46.00	(32)	2:02.50	800
1500	3:37.50	(30)	4:06.00	1500
Steeple	8:32.00	(24)	9:50.00	Steeple
5000	13:25.00	(24)	15:20.00	5000
10,000	28:00.00	(24)	32:25.00	10,000
110 Hurdles	13.48	(32)	12.84	100 Hurdles
400 Hurdles	49.50	(28)	56.25	400 Hurdles
20K Walk	1:36:00	(15)	1:48:00	20K Walk
High Jump	2.26 7-5	(24)	1.87 6-1½	High Jump
Pole Vault	5.75 18-10¼	(24)	4.60 15-1	Pole Vault
Long Jump	8.00 26-3	(24)	6.70 21-11¾	Long Jump
Triple Jump	16.66 54-8	(24)	13.50 44-3½	Triple Jump
Shot	20.65 67-9	(24)	17.70 58-1	Shot
Discus	62.00 203-5	(24)	58.00 190-3	Discus
Hammer	72.00 236-3	(24)	68.00 223-1	Hammer
Javelin	75.00 246-1	(24)	54.00 177-2	Javelin
Decathlon	7900	(18)	6000	Heptathlon

Olympic Games Q-Standards

WA's window for achieving Tokyo qualifying marks ended up being anything but simple as it went through an open/close/open cycle in '19 & '20: January 01—open for 10K, marathon, walks, relays & multis; May 01—open all other events; April 06 through November 30—close all events; December 01—re-open all events. Qualifying window closures coming in '21: May 31—road events; June 29—all other events.

The Tokyo '21 standards in individual events (# = desired field size, to be achieved by adding to those at Q-standard from WA's world rankings as of June 29):

Event	mStandard	#	wStandard	Event
100	10.05	(56)	11.15	100
200	20.24	(56)	22.80	200
400	44.90	(48)	51.35	400
800	1:45.20	(48)	1:59.50	800
1500	3:35.00	(45)	4:04.20	1500
Steeple	8:22.00	(45)	9:30.00	Steeple
5000	13:13.50	(42)	15:10.00	5000
10,000	27:28.00	(27)	31:25.00	10,000
110 Hurdles	13.32	(40)	12.84	100 Hurdles
400 Hurdles	48.90	(40)	55.40	400 Hurdles
Marathon	2:11:30	(80)	2:29:30	Marathon
20K Walk	1:21:00	(60)	1:31:00	20K Walk
50K Walk	3:50:00	(60)	not held	50K Walk
High Jump	2.33 7-7¾	(32)	1.96 6-5	High Jump
Pole Vault	5.80 19-¼	(32)	4.70 15-5	Pole Vault
Long Jump	8.22 26-11¾	(32)	6.82 22-4½	Long Jump
Triple Jump	17.14 56-2¾	(32)	14.32 46-11¾	Triple Jump
Shot	21.10 69-2¾	(32)	18.50 60-8½	Shot
Discus	66.00 216-6	(32)	63.50 208-4	Discus
Hammer	77.50 254-3	(32)	72.50 237-10	Hammer
Javelin	85.00 278-10	(32)	64.00 210-0	Javelin
Decathlon	8350	(24)	6420	Heptathlon

T&FN Interview — Sara Hall



A U.S.-leading 2:20:32 in The Marathon Project race gave Sara Hall 4 PRs in her 5 races in 2020.

by Jeff Hollobaugh

AMERICA'S SECOND-FASTEST MARATHONER ever, Sara Hall freely admits that one of her talented daughters recently dropped her on a distance run. But first, some backstory. As Sara Bei, the energetic sprite out of Santa Rosa, California, captured the Foot Locker XC title her senior year after becoming the first girl to win four straight Golden State crowns. She followed that up with successful career at Stanford — thrice an NCAA runner-up on the track — and wed fellow Cardinal running royalty, Ryan Hall.

She continued her track career as a pro — remarkably, she's been sponsored by Asics for the 15-plus years since then ("There are definitely times I was underperforming and I just feel so grateful for their loyalty"). It seemed she tried everything on the track, from the 1500

at the '08 Trials to the steeple 4 years later, but only in the last couple of years has she truly discovered her medium.

Along the way, she helped Ryan as he battled with the marathon. The winner of the Trials in '07, he placed 10th in the Beijing Olympics after hitting a PR 2:06:17 in London that year. He retired from racing in '15, about the time the couple adopted 4 sisters from Ethiopia. That changed everything for the Halls, and one would think, might have marked the end of her running career as well. "I had a lot of unfinished business," she says.

After a crushing DNF in the OT Marathon last February, Hall has put together some of the best running in her life. A 68:18 half-marathon in August, a 2:22:01 runner-up finish at the London Marathon in October that made her the No. 6 American ever, and an improvement to No. 2 with her 2:20:32 win in the Marathon Project just 11 weeks later.

At age 37, she says there's no end point in sight for her career: "I just want to keep improving." She found time in a hectic training/parenting schedule early in the new year to talk with us about her long and winding path. And to confirm the stories about being dropped by her own kid. Running with her second oldest, Mia, Hall — on her second run of the day — watched as the teenager left her behind: "That had definitely not happened before. It was fun to see."

T&FN: You've been on quite a streak ever since the Trials. Are you enjoying the ride?

Hall: Oh yeah. I'm having a blast and it feels so good to have had some opportunities. Typically I race more than most pros and so this was a hard year. Obviously the disappointment of the Trials, and not being able to really move forward from it without any other races. So to finally have some opportunities at the end of the year and have them be the best races of my career is just really exciting.

T&FN: The year has been a challenge for everybody. How was it for you?

Hall: It was the most challenging year — maybe of my life. Mainly because the Trials was really the biggest disappointment of my running career. I just had such high hopes for that moment and making my first Olympic Team and had really committed for that race, trying to prepare for that course and doing all kinds of really crazy things in training... and to have it go so much different than I thought it would and not make the team. That was really heartbreaking.

And then I told myself, "Well, I have all this fitness I can use towards future races." And to have just everything I had planned canceled and not really getting to turn the page on that race. To have to self-motivate for a really long time, not knowing if I was going to get a chance to run a marathon this year. And then, you have your kids at home all the time; it's all those things like you can't travel. All your normal rhythms are out of whack.

It was challenging, but it definitely it made me realize how much fire I still have for this sport. You know, I'm 37, I have four kids and if there's ever a time to cruise or wind down, it would be this year. But instead I was the opposite. I was like, I know have so much more I haven't seen yet. And I'm just so motivated more than ever to keep seeing my potential come out. It made me just realize just how much fire I still have to improve in the sport. In the end, it was obviously rewarding and it made those victories that much sweeter, but the year was very challenging.

T&FN: Was it tough doing, let's call it an emotional rebuild of yourself after the Trials?

Hall: For sure. I think what made it really tough is I just didn't understand why we ran the Trials on the hilliest course in history, when the Olympics was going to be completely flat. And I think that just was really hard for me to wrap

Sara Hall In A Nutshell

Personal

Sara Marie Bei was born April 15, 1983, in San Mateo, California; married to 2-time Olympic marathoner Ryan Hall; 5-4/112 (1.63/51); Instagram/Twitter: @SaraHall3

Schools

Montgomery HS (Santa Rosa, California)'01; Stanford '05; now represents Asics

Coaches

Larry Meredith, Shannon Sweeney (HS); Dena Evans (Stanford); Steve Magness (2012-2016); Ryan Hall (2016-present); Agent: Josh Cox

PRs

800 — 2:05.86 ('08); **1500** — 4:08.55 ('08); **Mile** — 4:31.50i ('10); **3000** — 8:52.35 ('10); **5000** — 15:20.88 ('06); **10,000** — 32:35.87 ('15); **Half-Marathon** — 68:18 (6, 8 A) ('20); **Marathon** — 2:20:32 (2, 2 A) ('20) (plus 2:22:01 '20 — x, 9 A, 2:22:16 '19 — x, 10 A)

Major Meets

1500/Mile: '07 — 10)USATF Indoor, 5)USATF; '08 — 3)USATF Indoor, 9)Olympic Trials; '09 — 10)USATF Indoor; 3)USATF Indoor; '10 — 9)USATF; '11 — 4)USATF Indoor; '12 — 6)USATF Indoor
3000: '02 — 1)USATF Junior, 15)World Junior; '04 — 2)NCAA Indoor; '05 — 10)NCAA Indoor; '06 — 2)USATF Indoor, 12)World Indoor; '09 — 2)USATF Indoor; '10 — 2)USATF Indoor, 7h)World Indoor; '11 — 2)USATF Indoor; '12 — 3)USATF Indoor, 8)World Indoor

Steeple: '11 — 5)USATF, 1)Pan-Am; '12 — 8)Olympic Trials; '13 — 11h)USATF

5000: '02 — 12)NCAA; '03 — 13)NCAA; '04 — 11)Olympic Trials; '05 — 2)NCAA, 6)USATF; '06 — 7)USATF; '09 — 18)USATF; '16 — 14)Olympic Trials

10,000: '15 — 12)USATF

Marathons: '15 — 22)Santa Monica, 10)Chicago; '16 — 12)London, 9)NYC; '17 — 6)Tokyo, 5)Frankfurt; '18 — 3)Ottawa, dnf)Frankfurt; '19 — 15)Boston, 5)Berlin; '20 — dnf)Olympic Trials, 2)London, 1)Chandler

XC: '00 — 1)Foot Locker; '01 — 89)NCAA, 3)USATF Junior; '02 — 43)World Junior, 57)NCAA; '03 — 3)NCAA; '06 — 26)World 4K; '10 — 6)USATF; '12 — 1)USATF; '13 — 6)USATF; '15 — 4)USATF, 20)World

U.S. Rankings

1500: '08 — 8

Steeple: '11 — 5; '12 — 8

5000: '05 — 8; '06 — 8; '07 — 10

Marathon: '15 — 9; '16 — 8; '17 — 5; '18 — 8; '19 — 3

my head around. It was up to me to figure out how to be successful there on that day. And I really tried, but at the end of the day, I just felt like that wasn't the right call. I get that some things are outside your control, right? Sometimes that's what's hard.

If you felt like you gave it your all and it just wasn't good enough, that's one thing you can live with, but sometimes when things are outside your control, it's a little bit harder to deal with. In general, I've always just moved on in my career when I've had disappointments and been like, "Alright, I'm going to do the best with whatever opportunities I have." And so I just tried to refocus that way and fortunately I had the opportunity of London.

T&FN: Those last two marathons, did they make up at all for the Trials? Or is it just an apples-and-oranges impossible comparison?

Hall: It's apples and oranges. I would have traded them for the Trials for sure. I think that's a dream obviously to make the Olympic team. And I think it's a dream that we maybe inflate a little too much here in the U.S. In other countries it's World Marathon Majors and everything are almost bigger because it's not as hard to make the Olympic team. But that was something I

had really felt capable of. I'm still hopeful I can have the experience at the Olympics either on the track — I'm going to go for that in June — but if not, I don't see any reason why I can't be in contention into 2024 at this point. My body's still responding to training.

T&FN: Running 2 marathons 11 weeks apart, it's not that common. What was the timeline of deciding to race again so soon after London?

Hall: When they announced they were doing the Marathon Project, it was before London. And so I didn't commit to the race yet, but I had it in the back of my mind as an option. Every time I've run a marathon, pretty much since my very first, I've always kind of regrouped towards races. My very first marathon in LA went really poorly because of a similar course to Atlanta, but I had already qualified for the World XC Championships, and it was 13 days later.

I wasn't really thinking I was probably going to do it, but after the marathon, similar to the Trials, I was like, "I have all this fitness I built, I want to use it for something." Even though USATF was kind of advising against me doing Worlds, I was like, "I'm just going to throw myself into recovery and do everything I can."

And sure enough, by the time the race came, I was 20th and the top U.S. performer. That kind of opened my mind to the marathon not needing to be like a hard-stop. Ever since, when it made sense, I've started racing [shortly] after marathons. [The decision] was the day of London because we were hoping to run fast in London. And I'm really thankful that the race went how it went. I think that was the highest I could have placed on that day. The No. 1 goal was just to compete and that's what I did, but we both were like, "OK, that wasn't like a good indicator of how fast you can run, just because of the conditions." And I ran that whole race alone.

We originally thought of doing an early spring marathon [in '21], which would give me more time to prepare. I thought I would look into a Dubai or something like that, but we just weren't confident that they were going to happen with COVID and sure enough, everything's gotten canceled. So we were like, "The Marathon Project is one we know is going to happen. Let's do that."

T&FN: The marathon project itself: the small, super-fast loop, the small elite field, custom-made for records. Do you think that's a type of race we might still see after the pandemic? Is that a model for something that might work?

Hall: I think so. I mean, we see it already at major championships, right? Spectator-friendly loop courses. I think personally, there's good things and bad things. There was the upside with it was a flat course. I was able to have great pacemakers. But I would say it's still difficult in this kind of COVID scenario [when] there's no crowd; it's pretty quiet out there and it feels kind of like training.

I really hope we can get back to those mass starts, with crowds out there, because it's really hard to replicate that kind of atmosphere. But certainly I think that criterium-style racing, especially if you have a great crowd, that can be amazing. It's kind of like Breaking2, right? It can be a great opportunity.

T&FN: It's been 4 years since you've raced on the track. Do you miss it?

Hall: I wouldn't say I miss it. I'm not someone that loves the track as much as the roads. But I'm actually really excited to get on it just to see what I'm capable of. 'Cause I haven't raced on it in a long time, but I've built all this strength in the process. I'm a totally different runner than I was 4½ years ago.

And, in my track work and training, even in the middle of high-mileage marathon training, I'm doing the best track workouts I've ever done, including this last summer. So that gives me hope I can be competitive in the 5000 or 10,000 even though my PRs are not anywhere in the ballpark of what you'd need to be in contention. I'm really hopeful when I do plan to get on the track as soon as there's track races, and just start working towards that. I'm excited to see what I can do.

T&FN: You do a lot of training with Rachel Schneider; what's the key to a good training partner for you?

Hall: The number one thing I'd look for in a training partner is someone that I want to just hang out with a lot. Rachel, she's lovely, one



Hall was at the front of the pack in the Olympic Trials Marathon, but was doomed to disappointment.

of the most positive people I've ever met. So upbeat, she has probably 10 times the serotonin of a normal person. I love spending time with her, but then also we really balance each other in our strengths. She's obviously from the 1500 and even 800 in college.

The way that Mike [Smith] trains her, she puts in a lot of really hard, long stuff that I would want to do too. And so she definitely pushes me in the speed area, but then I think I can push her some in the longer stuff. We complement each other well and obviously she just had a really great 10,000 [31:09.79] and a really fast 5000 [15:06.71] last year. She'll be a great training partner to get ready for the track.

T&FN: *When you were a new runner back in Santa Rosa 20-plus years ago, did you ever imagine the sport would take you all these places?*

Hall: Not at all. This wasn't really my dream to be a professional runner. I always thought I would go into doing development work in Africa. That's still my plan when I'm done. Right now, we're still investing in people living in extreme poverty through our foundation, the Hall STEPS Foundation. That's been neat to get to keep investing in that passion because here I am 15½ years later running professionally. I would've never guessed I would be doing this professionally that long.

I definitely would have walked away from the sport back in 2009, had Ryan not kept me in, both because he was doing it himself and he was really supportive of me and believed in me. It's really interesting how life works because here I am. I'm enjoying it the most I ever have, racing the best I ever have, and I want to keep going, but that was never really the plan.

T&FN: *You had a successful collegiate career at*

Stanford — 7 times All-America — but never got that NCAA win. Did that perhaps spur you to keep going longer?

Hall: You know, not really. I would say that was just disappointing. Getting 2nd a bunch of times. And then also the one time in the 3000

Obviously you don't get to being one of the fastest marathoners in history without being pretty strongwilled.

But I think the upside is he's a natural coach. There's just this mutual trust where he allows me to do some stuff that's outside the

when I was moving into the lead and I got clipped from behind and, you know, you just have a lot of those near misses. For me, I think it was even kind of a relief because I'd had some rocky races early on in college. So even just to be in the picture in 2nd place was a good thing.

Definitely getting outkicked my senior year when I really wanted to win that 5K was what probably stung the most. But I've always just been someone that as long as I have another goal ahead of me, I'm excited just to keep moving forward and try to keep improving.

T&FN: *Along the way, you've had some very high-profile coaches. What have you learned from them?*

Hall: A lot of different personalities! I think I'm responding the best to having Ryan as my coach. It's definitely hard having your husband as your coach at times. We butt heads — we're both pretty stubborn people.

On Dealing With Your Childrens' Running Careers

Sara and Ryan Hall went from a couple to a large family in 2015, with the adoption of Ethiopian sisters Hana, Mia, Jasmine and Lily. The two oldest have made headlines as runners, with Hana winning two state titles in Arizona and Mia getting her first last fall. Have Sara's running experiences shaped the way she has dealt with Hana and Mia's budding running careers?

"Hana loved it from the get-go. She was always really fired up about it. We just fanned those flames. But Mia, she had immediate success in it in middle school, but she ended up taking a break. She wasn't sure she really liked it. We were totally supportive of that. She tried other sports and then she started running again. She had this whole fire that was just her own when she came back. That was cool to see because I've always felt like running is something that you have to be internally motivated for. It's a very individual sport. It's difficult. It's distance running. It's a lot of pain. It's a lot of hours out there in discomfort and so yeah, it's cool to see them both pretty fired up about it.

"Ryan and I, we have a little bit of different perspectives. I'm more, "Let's give them freedom to just find their own limits." And Ryan's more like, "No, we have to be giving them workouts because we know what to do." We try to find the balance in there somewhere where they have some say in what they're doing and have freedom, but also Ryan is definitely involved in, especially in the off season, orchestrating their workouts and stuff."

Is it tough to balance parenting for girls with training and racing?

"It's had its own unique challenges, but I think what's helped is I can't compare myself to my old lifestyle of just being really dialed in and really selfish. I have to realize my life looks different now but also realize I've been able to improve every year since being a mom. I try to just not compare myself to my old self or my competitors, what they're doing, but just be like, this is working for me even though it's not ideal in a lot of ways.

"So many things that I want to instill in them through my running and the character traits that it's building, like they're seeing me fail. They're seeing me pick myself back up and motivate myself all through COVID and then have London and they're a part of all that."

Thoughts On A Marathon Career Arc

Sara Hall's track-based career — from high school star to the NCAA to the pros — contrasts with the pathway that we see marathoners from Africa and other cultures follow. From her perspective, what's the best way for a culture to create world-class marathoners?

"I think it depends if the goal is to maximize your marathon potential or to have a long career. I think starting the marathon early, as Ryan did, you may not be able to have as long of a career as I'm having now. But in hindsight, I would have rather started the marathon earlier. Building that speed and I think staying close to the speed is important.

"Once you start the marathon, not just only running halves, but continuing to run shorter events and having periods where you're focusing on shorter events is really important because I think that's one mistake Ryan made and you see other people make is, it just starts to make you slow. And all of a sudden half-marathon pace feels really fast and then marathon pace starts feeling really fast. Definitely develop the speed young, while not being afraid to try some marathons in your 20s, and also keeping the speed close if you can."

box and take risks because he's also kind of a risk taker himself. I think I've really responded well to that. I definitely could not have done this career without his support for so many years. I've learned the marathon through him, watching him competing himself. I was one of his main support people throughout his career and I learned how to do the grind of the training and just racing fearlessly. He really taught me that.

I've always kind of gone out—even in the Marathon Project — believing for a lot bigger, higher from where you're at quite yet, you know, but in that process you really can accomplish some great things. And I think Ryan was similar. He wasn't afraid to be aggressive. He wasn't going into his first marathon trying not to blow up. He was taking the lead at the London Marathon against World Record holders and Olympic champions. That's taught me a lot about not playing it safe in this sport, but swinging big.

And Terrance Mahon, his training with Ryan has definitely influenced what I do. A lot of the main components come from that style of training. The value for strength training really came from him too. At the time I was not really enjoying it because my body was pretty beat up when I was in Mammoth and I wasn't responding that well to the lifting, but now that that's a big part of what I do. I learned from him how important it is.

T&FN: How does Ryan do with your race days now that he's not competing himself? Do his nerves get going like they used to when he was racing?

Hall: I think so. He got really sick after the Trials. I know what that's like, it's almost harder on the support person watching the marathon than the person going through it. You just sink so much into those days. It's really stressful. I remember that from when I was vice versa. But I think also the last two, he just felt — just the way my buildup had gone — just felt really confident in me. And so that helps. I remember being that way with him where it was like, you're more nervous in the buildups that don't go well, or you're coming into it having gone through an injury or something, you don't know what to expect, but I think we both really trust each other that if the training's gone well, than the race is going to go well.

T&FN: Are you able to generalize how your training has evolved over the years?

Hall: Obviously track training was different than this, but I think one of the mistakes I made, when I was running track professionally, was getting a little too far away from the strength work. I almost feel like I would have run better on the track if I was marathon training. I was really focused on the race-specific work and I think you can really do some damage if you overrun that stuff too often. So when I transitioned to the road, I found I actually had a lot of room to grow my aerobic capacity that I didn't realize from neglecting it. What gave me the success in high school and college that I had was a lot of aerobic work.

Getting back to that each marathon I've been able to chip off about a minute per marathon. First I ran the LA Marathon and it was a disaster. I ran like 2:48 or something, but then

I ran 2:31, then 2:30, then 2:28, 2:27, 2:26. So it was very linear and progressive. Then I had a big jump down to 2:22 in Berlin, but that was really because I had had a long stretch of injuries and I'd been making those gains, but I hadn't realized them in a race because of injuries.

Each buildup my tempos get a little bit faster. Each buildup my long runs get a little bit faster and what's exciting in the marathon is those couple second increments add up to like a minute in the race. What I've been focused on is just trying to make those incremental gains.

T&FN: You've been up in Flagstaff for a while, and before that Mammoth; do you think you've accrued some nice altitude adaptation by now?

Hall: For sure. It took me a while to become that altitude responder. I really struggled with living full-time in Mammoth and Mammoth is pretty high, it's around 8000ft [c2500m]. I struggled with sleep and recovery and I was ready for sea level once we ended up leaving.

We did train in Palo Alto and Redding as well as making trips to Flagstaff, but it was actually when I started spending a lot more time in Ethiopia during the adoption process of my kids and started training up higher at 9,000 feet that I feel like I really started to become an altitude responder. Now I feel I really get a big boost from it, but it took me a while, like a lot longer than Ryan who was raised most of his life at altitude.

T&FN: Speaking of Ryan, when he retired, he was 32. At that point, was there a temptation for you to consider retiring too?

Hall: Yeah, it's funny because you know, I would have if it had been like 5 years earlier. I would have been really excited that he was finally done and we could move to Africa, but at that point when he retired, I actually had started the marathon [training] and was really enjoying my career the most I'd had in a while. And I felt like I had a lot of unfinished business on the road and wanted to keep going and keep seeing my potential come out. I would have never guessed I would outlast [Ryan's career] quite a bit. We kind of switched there.

You know, it's interesting that it's difficult to both be successful in this career. I definitely was more the support person for him and my career took a hit in some ways. I'm not super-surprised that we were never quite running really well at the same time, you know?

T&FN: You've talked about how in your tough times you always get that glimmer of hope from training that there are better days ahead. That can be hard to do in our sport. Are you generally hardwired to be more optimistic than other people?

Hall: I would say I'm optimistic, but I'm more of a realist than Ryan. Ryan was definitely a dreamer when he was in college, dreaming about like winning the Olympic gold medal and I've always been a little bit more like, looking at my training and making goals. In track I was always striving for these higher goals, but never quite reaching them, but in the marathon it's like in each buildup, I do stuff in training that really just surprises me. It makes me just believe bigger.

I would have never guessed I could go after the American Record, but it's just from training and making those gains slowly that actually this is just the next logical step to go for. That's been a fun part about the marathon for me. It's just continued to expand what I think I'm capable of and what my goals should be.

T&FN: You could walk away your career now and call it a success, but do you have faith that there's a lot more coming?

Hall: Yeah, I do. Mainly just because of how I'm responding to training. I think the last couple of buildups was the most work I've ever done, mileage-wise, intensity-wise, and the fastest workouts, but also the best my body actually absorbed the work. I credit that a lot to my team, obviously Ryan's coaching and oversight and as well as my therapist, John Ball and Maximum Mobility, does a really good job keeping me injury-free. But that's what's interesting, right? You think as you get older, you need more recovery and you need to be more careful, but that's kind of in the opposite for me thus far. So it gives me hope I can keep improving even at this age.

T&FN: Obviously there have been developments in footwear that have dramatically changed times and distances over the last few years. Do you worry that controversy might obscure the fact that you've genuinely improved?

Hall: It took me a while to get in a high stack-height, carbon-plated shoe. My first race in that was London Marathon. So I'm kind of thankful that when I had my big breakthrough in Berlin, where I had that big jump, that I was in normal shoes there. I feel like everyone else would have just attributed that to my shoes, you know, but I



The steeplechase is just one of four events in which Hall has been a U.S. Ranker in her long career.

was able to just know for myself, “No, this was me working my butt off the last two years.” And, obviously now running London and Marathon Project in those it’s a little bit hard, ‘cause you’re still out there working just as hard.

You know that anything you do, people are just going to attribute it to super-shoes, but that’s just the game now. It was hard to be on an uneven playing field for almost 5 years, competing against that technology and not being in it myself. I’m not willing to do that anymore. So for me, it’s a new game now. The game has changed and we all need to be on an even playing field. We all need to be in that technology.

T&FN: *It’s changed the meaning of fast times in a historical sense, one might say. For instance, do you think we’re on the brink of seeing more sub-2:20s by*

American women?

Hall: I don’t know, because super-shoes or not, running 2:19 is not easy. We don’t even have that many people running that fast for a half-marathon right now. I think that we have to respect those times. There’s a little bit of a mentality of like, “Oh, well, 2:09 isn’t what 2:09 used to be anymore” with the Marathon Project, but I dunno, I would say, yeah, they are affecting times, but. As someone that’s in the shoes trying to run that fast, it’s still really hard and I don’t think it’s going to be as commonplace as maybe we hope.

T&FN: *Looking back over your long career, even going back to day 1, race 1, are there any races that you’ve that have made a mark on you and truly transformed who you are as a competitor?*

Hall: Hmm, that’s a good question. I think Foot Locker in high school really was a pivotal experience. I loved that at the time we only had one national championship. My freshman year I made it kind of on a fluke. I didn’t even know what Foot Locker was. I was going to do the freshman race [at Regionals] and someone told me, “No, you should be in the seeded race.” I ended up nabbing in a photo finish the last spot to Foot Locker nationals.

Being there really opened my eyes. It felt like the Olympics as a high schooler. I was like, “I want to win this race by the end of my high school career” and got 3rd the next year as a sophomore. I didn’t qualify as a junior, which was really heartbreaking. It really was something that I had on my wall, that goal of winning Foot Locker.

My senior year, it was my last chance to win the race, but I started that year off in the worst shape of my life, losing some of my league races. I refused to take that goal down off my wall though. And sure enough, I just kept chipping away at my fitness. And in the end, those [Cal State & Foot Locker] are really only the two races I did win that year.

Every day I would run strides outside my house on a grass strip and I would picture winning Foot Locker. Once I got to the race it was like my body just knew what to do. I wanted a sprint finish like I had pictured over and over again. And it really just taught me the power of, No. 1, no matter how unlikely your goals, not giving up on them, to keep chipping away. And No. 2, the power of visualization. That’s something that I’ve carried on throughout my career.

I still have my goals written on my mirror. I had “American Record holder” written on my mirror this year. I think just keeping those in the forefront, even when it’s challenging, even when you’re going through the biggest injury cycle of your career, like I was a couple of years ago. I wrote “2:22 in Berlin” on my mirror in the middle of a massive injury. And sure enough, by the end of the year, I ran 2:22 in Berlin. So yeah, I would say that was a pivotal moment for me. □

When Legends Run Free *by Ken Norton*

When Legends Run Free features a team of high-achieving cross country runners who strive for success under the guidance of Coach John Mosley, whose fundamental idea is “Good is the greatest enemy of excellence.”

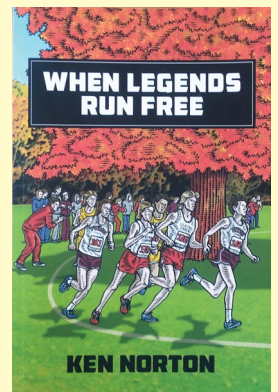
The squad includes a guy who loves to quote Shakespeare and a couple of dependable never-let-you-down types. There is an ROTC guy with a feisty gymnastics girlfriend and a teammate who doesn’t use his real name. Things get serious when the school’s administration moves from NCAA Division II to Division I. At this point, the story plays out against the backdrop of an administration that intends to drop the cross country and track as well as the women’s gymnastics teams in order to use the money for those programs to upgrade a mediocre football program.

Goosebumps! If you been on a cross country team, you’re gonna get ‘em. Tears! The competition scenes are gonna bring ‘em. In Norton’s first novel, his portrayal of a team on the brink—laced with a bit of college days romance and humor—is a potent mix. Read this book!

Doug Clark—Former assistant coach at University of Arkansas; head cross country coach at University of Tulsa, University of Kansas, University of Memphis

“When Legends Run Free...it’s so real...a great read! It’s accurate about training and racing details. Norton understands runners, what they think, what they want, how they feel. And the battle to save a college program? A challenge today! Thanks, Ken!”

Tom Heinonen—Head Women’s Track and Cross Country Coach at the University of Oregon, 1975-2003



Available in print and digital on Amazon.com (https://www.amazon.com/dp/B086KJF1WV/ref=rdr_kindle_ext_tmb)

Teen Sprint Sensation Erriyon Knighton Goes Pro



16 might be a young age at which to enter the run-for-pay ranks, but when you've already run the 200 in 20.33...

by Jeff Hollobaugh

IF YOU SAW THE VIDEO last summer, it made an impression on you. [Erriyon Knighton, a prep soph, crushing the AAU Junior Olympic 200 field](https://youtu.be/G8QKrIES0Zw) (<https://youtu.be/G8QKrIES0Zw>), his monstrously long stride propelling him to a 20.33, making him the world No. 2 ever among sprinters under 18.

A revelation, to say the least.

Now the young Knighton, still only 16 (he will turn 17 on January 29), has opted to go the pro route, signing with adidas. He won't be competing for Hillsborough High in Tampa any more.

"I know I can maximize to the next level," he says. "I've got to see what I can do. I want to win against the top athletes, but I know they're not going to take it easy on me, so I'm going to have to train real hard."

For now, the, 6-3/170 (1.91/77) wonder will continue working with his coach at My Brother's Keeper TC, Jonathan Terry. His agents are former pro sprinters Ramon Clay and John Regis at Stellar Athletics.

Says Regis, himself the '93 World Championship silver medalist in the 200, "He has a lot of potential. He's hungry. He has what it takes."

For his part, Knighton says of his agents, "They set me up for long-term success in the sport. They believe in my ability and I'm looking forward to making them proud."

Knighton's long stride has generated inevitable local newspaper comparisons to the Youth Recordholder, Usain Bolt, who ran 20.13 at age 16. Perhaps not so crazy, when one considers

Knighton ran his 20.33 in a pandemic-shortened season, still only his second summer in the sport.

He started sprinting on the advice of his school's football coaches, who saw his speed as an asset on the field. In his first season he clocked 10.66 and 21.39, placing 5th in the 200 final at the State Meet.

Last summer, having grown a couple inches taller, he showed up at the JOs in Satellite Beach — straight across the state from Tampa on the Atlantic Coast — after not having raced in 6 months. First came a 21.28 PR in the heats, followed by a 10.45 PR heat in the 100 the next day.

Though those times marked him as the favorite, no one expected what would follow. On Friday came his 20.33 runaway victory in the final, breaking the American Youth Record. Saturday, he closed out the weekend with an impressive 10.29 win in the straightaway dash.

Stat geeks noted that all of his times were into a headwind save for the 200 record, which had a faint 0.3 trailing breeze. And here's the math in case you haven't already done it: he took an astonishing 1.06 off his 200 best in one weekend.

What happened to make Knighton so fast?

The growth spurt might have been part of it. Six months of uninterrupted training without competition might also have played a role. He explains it by saying, "I just tried really hard and I wanted it more than anyone else."

Coach Terry says, "Everything is so exciting and a blessing."

Knighton played well enough on the football field that the scholarship offers started rolling in. He says the decision to leave the gridiron behind was hard: "Knowing that I grew up around football my whole life, and receiving a lot of D1 offers, it was a tough decision, but it was also a no-brainer. In track, the success of my career is fully in my hands, and I know that I can do it."

The timing has something to do with the Olympics being less than 200 days away. "When I decided, I had to jump right into training, because I was already behind."

Yet Knighton is not taking anything for granted. "I feel like it will take more training because it's the next level. It's not high school anymore."

"It's only my third season running track. I've been extremely successful in both training and competition. I believe if I work hard, I will eventually develop to be a world-class athlete. I'm soaking it all up, all the knowledge."

He knows there are tradeoffs in bypassing the NCAA scene to become a pro so young. He knows that until he shows improvement, some critics will think he made a mistake. He responds, "It's my decision. I feel like I'm not making a mistake. I feel like it'd be good for me."

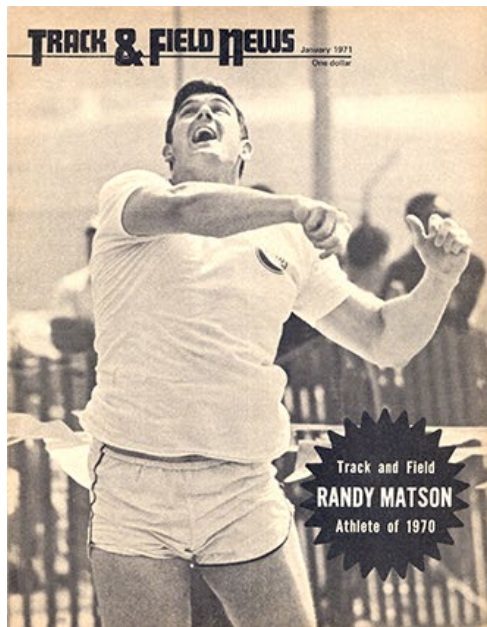
"What motivates me every day is people who are better than me. I just want to be the best. Out of everybody out there working, I want to work two times harder."

Does he think the '21 Olympics are a possibility? "I believe if I train hard enough, I can make it." □



Knighton says his agents have set him up for long-term success in the sport.

It Was 50 Years Ago Today — The 1971 U.S. Indoor Season Remembered



T&F's first three covers in '71 went to Randy Matson, Al Feuerbach and Kerry Pearce.

by Mike Fanelli

THERE WAS ONCE A TIME when big-city invitational indoor track & field meets were part of nearly every U.S. sports fan's consciousness. It was a traveling road show of high-skill athletes seamlessly conducted among NFL playoffs and the long-haul seasons of the NBA and NHL.

In just 9 short weeks, the undercover carnival — almost exclusively the province of men — trekked to nearly 2 dozen North American cities. There were contests in Portland and Pocatello, Saskatchewan and Albuquerque, Philly, Seattle and Los Angeles too. Boston, Oakland, Houston, Louisville, San Diego, Vancouver, Cleveland, San Francisco and more.

Legendary *Sports Illustrated* scribe Tex Maule said, "There are few spectacles in the world of sport to compare with an indoor track meet for color and movement and excitement."

He was right of course. The up-close pageantry unfolding upon a tight wooden oval, nestled practically in one's lap, and an infield just out of arm's reach, called for a much fuller immersion inside, than the same sport conducted outside. The grunt-then-thud of a shot putter's heave melded with the rolling thunder from the incessant pounding of boards. Tobacco smoke wafted down from the rafters with the din of close-quarter crowds oohing over missed vaults, and aahing for close clearances. Bedlam often ensued from the fight for position on turns that are banked.

In the winter of 1971, one half-century ago, the indoor sport was still near its zenith, setting

the stage for some of the best depth of performances that the sport had ever seen.

The legacy of indoor track harkens back to the sport's inaugural event held on Manhattan's Upper East Side in November of 1868. Hosted by a fledgling NYAC, the first indoor amateur athletic games were staged under the tarpaulin-patched roof of the soon-to-be finished Empire City Skating Rink.

In the winter of 1971, one half-century ago, the indoor sport was still near its zenith, setting

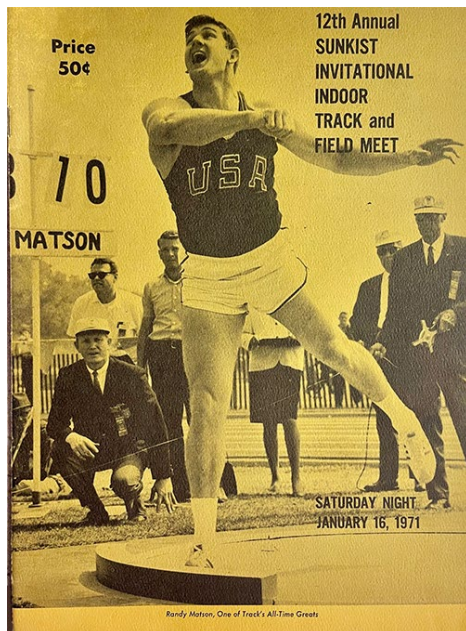
the stage for some of the best depth of performances that the sport had ever seen.

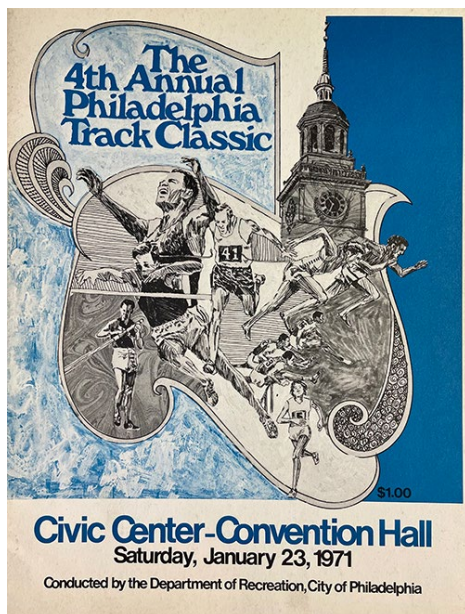
It was a season of some tongue-twisting pronunciations for American ears, with athletes named Gianni Del Buono, Kjell Isaksson, Henryk Szordykowski and of course Jean-Louis Ravelomanantsoa. A season with a pair of Australian Kerrys, who spiced up the 2M, and of gunslinging big men whose shots were heard around the world. It was a season for flashy newcomers along with a prior king's return from exile.

While the show got off to an inauspicious start on the tight 136.8y (125m) circuit in Saskatoon, it wasn't until two weeks later in College Park, Maryland, that the season began in earnest.

Highlighted by the big-time sprinting debut of a 27-year-old leukemia researcher, the Cole Fieldhouse crowd was all abuzz over the 60y dash. Dr. Delano Meriwether, who played sax, not tracks, in both high school and college, crouched at the start alongside stars like Mel Pender (who had tied the World Record of 5.9 in the heats), Ivory Crockett and Don Quarrie. Adorned in gold swimming trunks, white hospital shirt, and a pair of striped suspenders the neophyte was off to an atrocious start, when suddenly, midway through, he pulled even, and then outleaned Captain Pender — 6.0s by both — for a most unexpected win.

Unexpected, that is by all but Dr. Delano, who came in having previously announced, "Hey, I can beat those guys" while watching them on TV that past summer. Later, when asked about his uniform choice, the first Black man ever admitted into Duke Medical School





explained, "My swimming trunks give me a sense of speed," and that he wears suspenders, "because women who go to track meets might be entertained by a fashion show."

And although later that evening Olympic gold medalist Lee Evans raced to a 500y WR of 54.4 while earning the meet's Outstanding Athlete award, and Tom Von Ruden lowered the 880 WR to 1:48.5, all that the lucky attendees could talk about was the sport's most colorful man. Over the course of the '71 season Meriwether would race in 7 top-tier meets. He won at CYO and at Boston, finished 2nd 3 times, and 3rd and 5th once. Undoubtedly, his attire was garish, but the good doctor proved that his astonishing velocity was for real.

As the circuit of '71 headed west to the Cow Palace, just outside of San Francisco, in excess of 13,000 fans were elated by the return of one of the sport's biggest names as Jim Ryun reemerged from his self-imposed 19-month hiatus from competition to dip his toes back into the mile wars. Ryun had not stepped on a starting line

since the '69 AAU Outdoor Championships in Miami, where he stepped off the track midrace.

Without stiff competition, the Kansan grabbed the lead with 4 rotations to go. The recipient of a 2-lap standing ovation, Ryun blazed the final 440 in a swift 56.4 for a back-in-the-saddle 4:04.4 victory.

Four weeks later, on the fast red boards at the San Diego Invitational, the 23-year-old Ryun's comeback continued. Although 50y back while splitting a 2:01.0 first half, Ryun rolled 59 for the third quarter. Still in just 4th with 2 to go, he skillfully slipped past Dick Quax and early leader Chuck LaBenz and eventually John Mason. Ryun closed yet again in 56.4, good enough to tie Tom O'Hara's 7-year-old WR of 3:56.4, a performance that surprised even Ryun.

Grinning ear to ear at the postrace press swarm, Ryun politely excused himself to have a gander at the ballyhooed 2-miler. All season long Kerry Pearce and Kerry O'Brien had battled one another for "most awesome Aussie" honors in both the 2- and 3-mile runs. Pearce took the deuce in Saskatchewan, San Francisco, Millrose, Boston and Seattle. In the last, Pearce tied his own indoor WR of 8:27.2. Coming in he had held off the steeplechase WR holder O'Brien 8:30.0-8:30.8 in Inglewood.

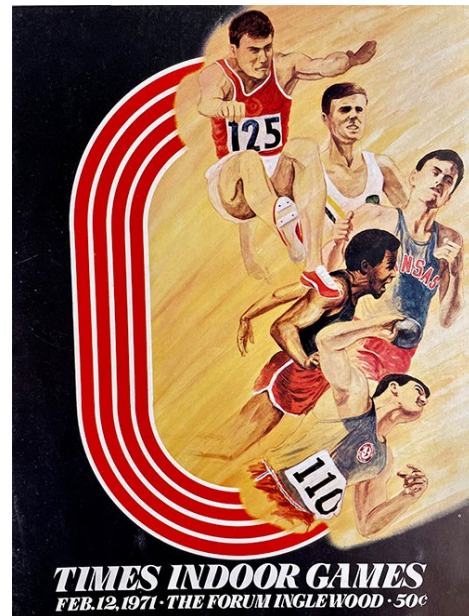


After a rabbit first three quarters, the Australians got down to the business of trading leads while towing ex-Yalie Frank Shorter in their wake. The PA announcer recited 4:11.9 at the mile and advised that they were on record pace. At 7:22 with just 440y remaining, it was clear that a new mark was imminent, but by whom, and by how much, was anyone's guess.

With three laps left, O'Brien took over from his countryman, and this time for good. Sprinting wildly over the final circuit, O'Brien ripped off a 56.0, while recording a brilliant 8:19.2, the fastest time ever, indoors or out. Pearce too kicked home nicely (57.7) for the runner-up spot in 8:20.6, as Shorter managed 8:26.2, good for an American Record. When asked afterwards to what he owed such a breakthrough, O'Brien cited the arena's cutting-edge no-smoking policy

and the Pro West track's highly banked turns.

No synopsis of the '71 season would be remotely complete without reportage of the fireworks from the infield. In a battle of shot-putting heavyweights, 1970 T&FN Athlete Of The Year Randy Matson and upstart rival Al Feuerbach traded blows in 8 explosive mano a mano contests.

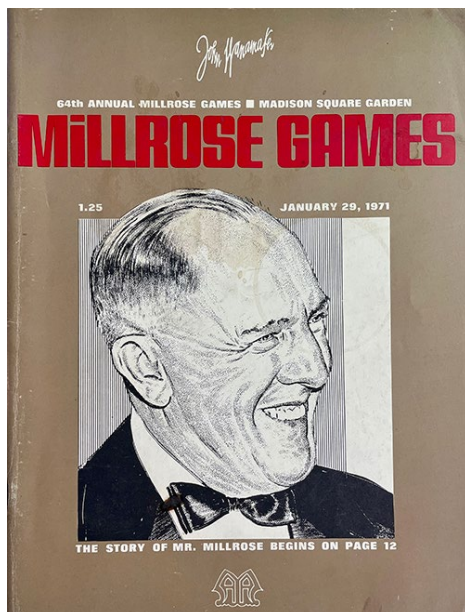


When the year started, the indoor WR stood at 67-10 (20.67). When the smoke cleared from the season's epic duels, Matson's best-throw-per-meet averaged a hefty 68-2½ (20.79), while the challenger, Feuerbach weighed in with a 67-4 (20.52) average. In every single contest, Matson matched or surpassed Neal Steinhauer's old WR.

But while Matson won most of the battles, Feuerbach won the war. At San Francisco's All-American Invitational the Emporia State alum upped his PR with an eye-popping 68-11 (21.00) WR heave, relegating Matson's 68-8 (20.93) mark to status as the longest-ever non-winning put. It was not the sort of consolation prize that Randy had in mind.

And the hits kept coming, as Isaksson twice set new WRs in the vault. The busy Swede's first was a 17-7¼ (5.38) at the LA Times meet on February 12. In March he was in Bulgaria for the European Champs, where Wolfgang Nordwig beat him with a WR 17-8½ (5.40). But less than a week later Isaksson was back in Cleveland, reclaiming the mark at 17-9 (5.41) in the year's undercover finale.

Alas, the major metropolitan indoor meeting road show is merely a distant memory. There is but one of the old-timey contests remaining, the Millrose Games. As the last man standing, said indoor contest moved in '12 from NYC's Madison Square Garden to the 168th Street Armory, when attendance dwindled from sellout crowds of 18,000 spectators to less than a third of that tally. We really miss you, indoor track, and may you rest in peace. □



VICTOR SALES/PHOTO RUN



Veteran miler Nick Willis, a 4-time (and counting) Kiwi Olympian, has set a WR of sorts with his 19th straight year as a sub-4:00 performer.

WITH HIS 3:58.63 at a January meet in Florida, 37-year-old **Nick Willis** has now run a sub-4:00 mile for 19-straight years, breaking the record set by fellow New Zealander John Walker 1973–90...

The NCAA has announced that for '21 only, it will cut the field size of the **track Regionals** from 48 to 32 individuals. Relays would remain at 24 teams. Accordingly, this would reduce the overall championship field by more than 1100 athletes...

In a major signing, Puma picked up vault star **Sandi Morris** after her Nike contract expired. Similarly, the German shoemaker signed road star **Molly Seidel**, who was formerly with Saucony. Puma also picked up Arkansas alum **Taylor Werner**, Stanford's '19 NCAA steeple champ **Steven Fahy** and Stanford's **Fiona O'Keefe**, who had originally been looking at a graduate transfer...

French sprinter **Jimmy Vicaut** is now training in Florida with noted U.S. coach Rana Reider...

Sifan Hassan is back in the Netherlands because of visa/C-19 travel challenges, but hopes to return to the U.S. this spring. For this year, she says, "Right now, I'm thinking of the 5000

and 10,000m. The 1500m remains my favorite, but I don't see myself running that distance at the moment..."

Former Wisconsin runner **Sarah DiSanza** is making a comeback after not having raced in 2 years, and has joined Hanson Brooks ODP...

Alexa Efraimson has hooked up with Pete Julian's Nike training group...

Olympic 800 finalist **Kate Grace** has departed Nike Bowerman and signed on with Team Boss in Colorado, coached by Joe Bosshard...

Ryan Hill has also left Nike Bowerman. The 7-time U.S. Ranker at 5000, now 30, will be training and competing with Hoka NAZ Elite...

In January an auction house sold Ivan Pedroso's '00 **Olympic long jump gold medal** for \$71,335...

Hurdler **Aaron Mallett** says he competed in '20 for the money: "I didn't have a choice. I needed the money. The loan was starting to run out, and I wanted to put my name out there and show I could compete..."

Doha 800 bronze medalist **Ferguson Cheruiyot** of Kenya says that after Tokyo he will concentrate on the 1500, where he has a 3:33.21 PR...

South African Olympian **Marius van**

Heerden, a 1:44.57 performer in '96, has died of C19 at age 46...

The mystery of the '11 death of Beijing Olympic marathon **Samuel Wanjiru** is still not resolved, as a Kenyan court recently heard testimony from two government pathologists who said that his demise was not caused by the reported one-story balcony fall, but rather because he was struck on the back of the head with a blunt object...

When Michigan native **Nathan Martin** ran his 2:11:05 at December's Marathon Project, that marked the fastest time ever by a U.S.-born Black runner. The old best was held by Herm Atkins with a 2:11:52 from '79...

One of the key drivers of the **GameStop Reddit mania** that is the talk of the financial world is a YouTuber named Keith Gill. Track fans in the Northeast might remember him as a 4:03.43 miler for Div. III Stonehill...

Christian Noble of Lee University ran 13:37.49 for 5000 at the first Magic City Elite meet, but even though the time betters the all-time Div. II record, it may not count for NCAA qualifying because of the use of pacer lights. Technical assistance with pacesetting is banned by NCAA rules. According to meet director Dave

Milner, an NCAA official said the case would go before a committee...

NAZ Elite has renewed its partnership with eyewear manufacturer Rudy Project, additional support for the Hoka One One-sponsored club...

Usain Bolt, singer? The Jamaican legend has released a ditty called *Living The Dream*...

Distance great **Sonia O'Sullivan** has written that Tokyo can and must go ahead by following a system similar to the strict testing/quarantine regimen the Australians are using for tennis's Australian Open. In short, athletes who test positive would not be let in, she said: "It won't be fair, and a lot of people will not be happy, but I can't see how else the Games can go ahead."...

With 66 WC/OG medalists banned since the AIU was set up in '17, plus another 130 of lesser accomplishments, track & field was recently heralded as **taking the idea of clean competition more seriously than other major sports**. Whether the steady drumbeat of drug announcements helps the sport's image is open for debate...

Not a huge surprise, but a new 10-year study of four of the World Marathon Majors suggests that **carbon-plate "supershoes"** provide a 1-2% improvement in times, with women benefiting more than men. Math on that upper estimate: 2% in a 2:20 marathon is a not-insignificant 2:48...

The IOC's Dick Pound warns that with President Trump's signing of the **Olympic Reform Bill**, the U.S. is no longer in compliance with the Olympic Charter, and possibly has violated WADA rules. "If the U.S. becomes a rogue state, I think we will start looking at whether the Games in Los Angeles should proceed," he told Reuters...

Also faced with the threat of **IOC sanctions**, the Italian government agreed to guarantee the autonomy of the Italian Olympic committee...

A **new biography** has hit the shelves (or Amazon, rather) on a former NCAA 800 champion for Oregon. Titled *Stable Boy: David Mack: A Story of Struggle, Success, Shadows, and Redemption*, it covers more than just the track career of the 1:43.35 talent; he also served more than a decade in prison after an armed robbery...

Dave McGillivray, the longtime director of the **Boston Marathon**, has applied his organizational skills to fighting the pandemic. His DMSE Sports organization is now working with Massachusetts to set up a mass vaccination site...

Many sports organizations have suffered financially in the pandemic, but the **NCAA's losses** are a doozy: an estimated \$600 million drop in revenue...

The **British Indoor Championships** have been canceled...

The **Asian Championships**, set for May 20-23 in Hangzhou, China, have also been taken off the schedule...

At this point the **Euro Indoor** is still scheduled for Toruń, Poland, March 05-07. The current plan is that all athletes, coaches and officials need to have a negative C19 test. No spectators will be allowed...

The **Osaka International Women's Marathon** will go off as scheduled on January 31, but the course has been changed to a small loop with the field restricted to 99 runners...

Glasgow is considering trying to land the '24 **World Indoor**...

Many Competitions Postponed

The new date for the next Boston Marathon is October 11...

The USATF men's 50K walk champs, as well as the women's 35K, have been pushed back a month, to February 28...

The Los Angeles Marathon has been dislodged once again and is to be held in the fall...

Kuwait's staging of the Asian Youth (U18) Championships has been postponed until October...

The Seville Marathon has been moved from February to November 14...

The Roma-Ostia Half-Marathon has been moved from February 21 to October 17...

The Camel City indoor in Winston-Salem, originally slated for February 05-06 has changed dates to February 19-20 and combined with the DMR Invite. Other meets at the JDL facility have been canceled.

Budapest is reportedly studying the viability of a '32 **Olympic hosting**...

Meanwhile, Kenya keeps preparing its '25 **World Championships bid**. "We are doing everything necessary to bid to host this world event," says Athletics Kenya president Jackson Tuwei...

Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce says that being 34 is not going to be a problem for her in Tokyo: "If I can come back from having my son and be able to stand on the podium, my age is not going to stop me..."

The west side of **Louisville** is now host to the Norton Sports Health Athletics & Learning complex, a \$35 million production that includes an outdoor track and a 200m banked hydraulic track with a Mondo surface...

An **Ypsilanti, Michigan**, high school may be the first in the nation with its own 300m indoor track. The Lincoln Athletic Building facility is set to host its first meets in the coming weeks...

How hard can it be? The CFO of the state of **Florida** wrote a letter to the IOC offering to host the '21 Olympics should Tokyo not be able to do so. "Unlike other states, when the COVID-19 vaccine comes to Florida it doesn't just sit on the shelf wrapped in government red tape; it moves fast to protect our communities," said Jimmy Patronis. Skeptics noted that Florida has one-fifth the population of Japan yet 5 times the COVID fatalities, and is probably lacking in the

secure infrastructure that would be needed to host an event the magnitude of the Games...

In a daunting logistical challenge, organizers of the **Olympic Torch Relay** are reportedly making contingency plans to conduct the 10,000-runner event without using public roads. Instead, they would confine the event to parks and sports arenas to avoid crowds of onlookers...

The **Big 10** is allowing Michigan to run in a non-conference cross country meet to try to qualify for Nationals. The conference had limited its teams to the Big 10 race in late January plus Nationals, but Michigan had to miss the Big 10 event because of a 2-week mandated shutdown by state health authorities...

Olympic relay gold medalist **Bianca Knight** has developed an app called BK Trackstars to help train athletes using predictive algorithms to generate workouts...

The NJCAA has announced that individual qualifying marks from the '20 season will carry over to the '21 **JUCO Indoor Championships**. In addition, all entrants must be COVID-tested...

Correction-department note for print-only subscribers: If you were thrown by the 18-9/4 (5.72) vault attributed to Katie Nageotte in our Podium Rankings in January, please disregard it. That was just a reading challenge, and so far only 57-year subscriber Bob Langenbach passed the test. □

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Died: Steve DeAutremont, 74

On January 02, in Centennial, Colorado. Winner of the NCAA hammer in '69 and '70 for Oregon State. A 7-time U.S. Ranker 1969–75, he was No. 1 in '74, the year he won the AAU title.

Died: Clem Eischen, 93

On December 07, in Gresham, Oregon. Twice an NCAA scorer for in the mile for Washington State (5th as a frosh in '46), Eischen shocked by finishing runner-up in the '48 Olympic Trials, but didn't advance out of the heats in London. In '51 he finished 2nd in the NCAA 880.

Died: Paul Foreman, 81

On December 15, in Louisville. A 3-time Big 10 long jump champ for Illinois, the Jamaican won the '58 Commonwealth title. He tied for 4th in the '59 NCAA and was 8th the following year before going on to take 12th in the Olympics.

Died: Margitta Gummel, 79

On January 26, in Wietmarschen, Germany. The '68 Olympic shot champion representing East Germany World Ranked 11 times 1962–72. Her sole No.1 Ranking came the year she won the gold medal, but she also rated No. 2 on 4 occasions. She broke the WR 4 times.

Died: Marion Jochman, 85

On December 27, in Bydgoszcz, Poland. The '60 Olympian ranked No. 10 in the world in the 5000 in '58.

Died: Vladimir Kiselyov, 65

On January 07, in Kremenchuk, Ukraine. The '80 Olympic shot gold medalist for the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian was No. 4 twice in the World Rankings, '79 & '80.

Died: Bob Maplestone, 74

On January 02, in Seattle. A 4-time NAIA champion for Eastern Washington, the British sub-4:00 miler placed 3rd in the AAU in '71.

Died: Álvaro Mejía, 80

On January 12, in San Francisco; of pancreatic cancer. A 3-time Colombian Olympian, he was the 10K 10th-placer in the 10,000 at the '68 Games. He won the Boston Marathon in '71 and took 48th in Munich the next year.

Died: Bill Nankeville, 95

On January 08, in Laleham, England. The 6th-place finisher in the 1500 at the '48 Olympics, he won bronze in the '50 Euros. Later, he ran on three WR-setting British relay teams: 4 x 880 ('51), 4 x 1500 ('53) and 4 x mile ('53). He World Ranked No. 5 in the 1500 in both '50 & '51.

Died: Mark Pharoah, 88

On April 27, 2020, in Malvern, England. A shot & discus Olympian in both '52 & '56, his best finish was 4th in the discus in Melbourne; that year he was No. 9 in his only World Ranking.

Died: Anneliese Seonbuchner, 91

On November 20, in Nuremberg, Germany. The West German placed 4th in the 80 hurdles at the '52 Olympics. World Ranked No. 8 in the long jump in '57.

Died: Rich Torrellas, 70

On December 26; of a heart attack. A member of many USATF coaching staffs and committees over the years, the former hammer thrower was head women's manager at the '08 Olympics.

Died: Bob Walters, 93

On December 21, in Fort Worth, Texas. The Longhorn high jumper topped the world lists in '49 (6-8¼/2.04 to win the Kansas Relays) & '50 (6-8½/2.045) but didn't score in the NCAA or AAU either year. World Ranked No. 9 in '50.

Died: Liane Winter, 78

On January 17, in Germany. The West German marathoner won Boston in '75 in a World Record 2:42:24.

Died: Mikhail Zhelev, 77

On January 05, in Sliven, Bulgaria. He topped the World Rankings in the steeplechase in '69, the year he won the European title. He ranked No. 3 the following year. A 2-time steeple and 5K Olympian his highest Games finish was 6th in '68 steeple. □

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Starting with TC #210 (Winter 2015), *Track Coach* became a digital-only publication available only by e-mail.

THE LATEST in the aches, pains & eligibility departments (elsewhere in the issue find compilations of the top 10 NCAA and high school performers for this year):

JIRO MOCHIZUKI/IMAGE OF SPORT



World decathlon champ Niklas Kaul is finally back to javelin training after elbow surgery last year.

Quartermiler **Jasmine Blocker** earned a public warning for failing to obtain a TUE (Therapeutic Use Exemption) for a medication she was on.

Just freshly turned pro, **Quincy Hall** went down in the 400 in ATL #1, the apparent culprit a hamstring.

Ninon Guillon-Romarin, the French vault recordholder, says she hopes to compete in Tokyo even though she has a baby coming in February.

In part, Germany's **Niklas Kaul** was lifted to the '19 WC decathlon gold by a javelin PR, but he hasn't thrown the spear in competition since. In fact, he's just finally back to javelin training after elbow surgery last May.

Kenyan **Alfred Kipketer** has earned a 2-year ban for whereabouts failures.

Luvo Manyonga, the '17 world champion in the long jump, has been provisionally suspended for whereabouts violations.

In late January **Eliza McCartney**, the Rio vault bronze medalist, almost made it to the competition runway for her first meet since '19. However, with recent hamstring/Achilles issues in mind, the Kiwi star decided not to jump. Says her manager, "She just wasn't feeling quite right, just didn't free up enough, the wind was a little bit tricky, and for a comeback it probably wasn't worth the risks around it."

U.S. hurdler **Briana McNeal** has been provisionally suspended by the AIU and is facing an 8-year ban "for tampering with the results

management process."

Reigning world 800 champ **Halimah Naikaayi** only raced once outdoors in '20 after injuring her shin. She reports that her training has been interrupted since the national stadium she trains at in Uganda was transformed into a C19 hospital.

Justin Robinson, who topped the world 400 list in '20 while in his senior year of high school, has deferred his admission to Arizona State until next fall to focus on training for the Olympics.

Bralon Taplin of Grenada, already serving a 4-year doping ban, has had 3 more years added to it because of whereabouts problems.

Washington's **Carley Thomas**, who ran 2:01.01 in '19, will not be competing this indoor season. Last summer she broke her femur in two places while tubing. She's still recovering from the resulting surgery.

OT Marathon winner **Aliphine Tuliamuk** had her baby girl on January 13. Now she turns back to her training, saying, "We anticipate & hope for a quick recovery."

Retired

The Arkansas twins, **Lexi Jacobus & Tori Hoggard**, have left the vault world at 24 to pursue careers in pharmacy (see Last Lap).

Andrew Bumbalough has hung up his spikes at 33. The Georgetown grad hit bests of

3:37.15, 13:12.01, 26:56.78 and 2:10:56 during his long career, which included a 4th in the '12 OT.

Miler Kyle Merber has ended his competitive career at 30. He announced the news on Instagram: "I'm not done running, I'm just done getting paid for it... the fire was missing... I don't like to say I am retiring — real runners don't retire. I'm merely rearranging priorities."

In The COVID Ward

Two top U.S. women's vaulters ran afoul of C19: **Sandi Morris** said her symptoms were minor with the loss of her sense of taste the worst of it; **Katie Nageotte** said she underwent a cardiac test before being cleared for competition and it took a month to get back up to speed.

Let's hope we don't see the name of **Mariya Lasitskene** in this space as a C19 sufferer. She says she doesn't want to get the jab, explaining, "As an athlete I really worry how the vaccine can affect my body and my physical shape."

Italy's sub-10 sprinter, **Filippo Tortu**, recently weathered a bout with the virus.

Doping Suspensions

4 years — Viktoriya Khapilina (Ukraine, distance), Maksim Krasnov (Russia, walks), Hanna Krasutska (Ukraine, TJ);

3 years, 6 months — Patrick Siele (Kenya, distance);

2 years — Alfred Kipketer (Kenya, 800). □

HERE'S THIS MONTH'S collection of short takes on generally off-track activities that have gone/will go a long way towards shaping the way the sport is headed.

KIRBY LEE/IMAGE OF SPORT



Tori Hoggard (l) and Lexi Jacobus celebrated the end of their collegiate careers at the '19 NCAA.

A Little Late To The Dance?

On the eve of the second edition of the new American Track League (see this issue's lead story about meet promoters stepping up to fill the competitive void being faced by the nation's pro athletes) USATF announced that it will "provide resources" to the series for the 3 remaining competitions.

Said the press release from Indianapolis, "With limited competitive indoor opportunities during this unprecedented and challenging time, USATF applauds this endeavor. Competitive opportunities prepare our athletes for their journey to gold. USATF is pleased and proud to support the American Track League's efforts to provide safe meets."

While we are hesitant to be critical of any levels of support, we have to ask where the federation has been the last year as this nasty crisis has played out.

A New Look For The Florida Relays

Olympic hurdler Percy Beard founded the Florida Relays in '39 and the meet has been a major fixture on the early-spring circuit in the Southeast ever since.

This year's meet (Gainesville, April 02-03) will host a limited number of participants to mitigate the risks associated with the pandemic. It was announced earlier in the year that there would be no high school section, and a late-January announcement tightened things even further.

With no unattached/professional athletes allowed, the meet will take on an NCAA-only guise for the year. But it won't be a collegiate free-for-all, as entry will be restricted to just 13 schools from the Power 5 across the nation.

The expected entrants: Alabama, Auburn, Clemson, Florida, Florida State, Georgia Tech, Iowa State, Kentucky, Miami, Mississippi State, South Carolina, USC & Virginia Tech.

The Vaulting Twins Hang Up Their Poles

Known as the Weeks Twins when each was a national HS Recordsetter, former Arkansas vaulters Lexi Jacobus and Tori Hoggard announced via social media that they are retiring from the sport and starting 4-year pharmacy programs.

Jacobus was a '16 Olympian and a 4-time NCAA champion with 8 All-America honors. Hoggard won the '19 NCAA Outdoor and was a 6-time All-America. To say the two were big points producers for the Razorback program is an understatement. Together they accounted for 92 points at the NCAA and 134 at the SEC Championships.

Said Jacobus, "I think I am ready to close this chapter and wholeheartedly open the next one. The decision was not an easy one, but it is the best decision for me in this point in my life."

Hoggard explained that she had trained with the '20 Games in mind, and after the postponement kept trying to train while in school, "This last year has proven that it is impossible to commit 100% to both school and training. I found myself physically, mentally, and emotionally drained... While it was an extremely difficult decision to make, I am confident I am making the right one."

A Move To Elevate Thorpe's Status

Jim Thorpe was robbed, most agree, when the year after he won 1912 Olympic golds in the pentathlon and decathlon he was stripped of those medals by the IOC, charged with violating the rules on amateurism. Thorpe's violation? He played two seasons of summer baseball with a minor league team, making as little as \$2 a game.

His medals were restored — posthumously — in '82, with the proviso that he be listed as "co-champion" with the original 2nd-placers.

IOC vice-president Anita DeFrantz has joined the fight for the Olympic governing body to make things right for the native American legend. Calling it "an example of how the elitist cult of amateurism a century ago resulted in one of the most egregious miscarriages of justice in sports history," DeFrantz urged the IOC to give Thorpe sole status as the winner of those events.

"In this time of reckoning over social justice, I urge my IOC colleagues to do our part by righting this wrong," wrote DeFrantz in an op-ed in the Washington Post.

Martinez Medication Almost Trips Her Up

Brenda Martinez, a Rio Olympian in the 1500, tested positive for a prohibited substance in September but has accepted a finding of "no fault or negligence" and will not be penalized.

The substance, HCTZ, is a common diuretic that is on the banned list because it can be used as a masking agent. During the USADA investigation, it was found that HCTZ is an

ingredient in an oral medication that Martinez had been taking at the time of the test under the direction of her physician. The label of the medication did not list HCTZ as an ingredient, but USADA's laboratory tests on some of the pills revealed HCTZ contamination "on a level consistent with Martinez's positive test sample."

"Even with my best preventative efforts," Martinez said, "some things are out of my grasp. No athlete is bulletproof. I'm thankful to my lawyer and USADA for testing my prescribed medication because my biggest worry was that we could not trace the source of contamination."

Vaccinations For Olympians?

A debate is brewing over whether it is ethical to have all the Olympic athletes vaccinated prior to the Games, even if that means them jumping the queue ahead of more vulnerable populations in their respective countries.

The IOC issued a statement addressing this: "The IOC continues to strongly support the priority of vaccinating vulnerable groups, nurses, medical doctors and everyone who is keeping our societies safe.

"The IOC will work with the NOCs [National Olympic Committees] to encourage and assist their athletes, officials and stakeholders to get vaccinated in their home countries, in line with national immunization guidelines, before they go to Japan."

Australia, for one, says it hopes to be able to vaccinate all of its Tokyo-bound athletes.

McNeal Under Investigation

The AIU announced in January that Olympic 100H champion Brianna McNeal has been provisionally suspended.

Details are lacking, the policing unit's release saying only that it had charged the Rio winner with "tampering within the results management process." It noted that the WADA Code bans "conduct which subverts the doping control process."

Her agency responded, "Brianna has not tested positive for any substance banned in the sport of track & field. Brianna will request a hearing, where she fully expects to be exonerated and continue her championship career."

Previously suspended for a year in '17 because of a whereabouts failure, the former AR holder could be facing 8 years for a second offense.

McNeal, 29, is a 6-time World Ranker. In addition to her '16 gold, she was the '13 world champion and 3-time USATF winner. Her best of 12.26 makes her No. 4 all-time.

Where's Luvo Manyonga?

Long jumper Luvo Manyonga has been provisionally suspended for missing 3 doping tests in a year.

South Africa's WC/OG silver medalist would be expected to serve a 2-year suspension if found guilty. He had previously served an 18-month ban after testing positive for methamphetamines in '11. He participated in a rehabilitation program and returned to the sport successfully.

In December, his sister told reporters that he was "wasting his life" and that he needed to return to rehab. He responded that he was clean, but he also indicated that he was no longer training.

A Positive Test For Shubenkov?

Russian media reported in late January that Sergey Shubenkov, the '15 world 110H champion, had tested positive for the masking agent Furosemide (commonly known as Lasix), and faces a possible 4-year ban.

Reportedly, the Russian sports minister traveled to the high-profile athlete's training base in Siberia to deal with the matter personally.

For his part, Shubenkov denied the allegations vehemently, saying on Instagram, "All the information about the fact that I used Furosemide and that it was found in the sample is a blatant slander invented by an unnamed 'source'! This has never happened! And the news feeds cheerfully rushed to repost the story, without checking where it came from."

He did confirm, "However, I did receive an e-mail from AIU. It is never about Furosemide at all. For legal reasons, I cannot disclose the details of this confidential letter. Just pay attention to the fact that I am not subject to any restrictions and train as usual."

Why Not Same XC Distance For Women?

The British federation is looking at bringing gender equity to its races and has sent a survey on the subject to its member clubs.

The response as to whether women should be running the same distance as men in XC championships has been heated. CEO Joanna Coates said, "Some people have concluded that we're saying men and women should run the same distances but that's not really what we're saying. We can't say what changes might or might not be made because we don't know what the answers to the consultation are going to be."

Some of Britain's top female names, including Paula Radcliffe and Laura Muir, issuing a blistering statement opposing any changes.

"We are saddened by the suggestion that our past performances are viewed as somehow lacking, simply because we raced shorter distances than men," it read in part.

Responded Coates, "To see the way that those high-achieving athletes have interpreted this... saddens me because I've spent 11 years fighting for the right for women in sport. We really wanted to have this debate because it was very important to a lot of women. I think some people assume that this is the start and end and it's not."

The Armory Shut Down As Track Venue

New York City's Armory has been closed to track for the indoor season and is instead being used as a major C19 vaccination center for a nearby hospital.

In addition to the loss of dozens of high school and youth meets, the closure forced the cancellation of two major meets, the Millrose Games and the New Balance Indoor HS Nationals. (See Calendar for a listing of more major meets that have fallen by the wayside.)

On a related note, Boston's Reggie Lewis Center has also become a mass vaccination center, but fortunately the New Balance GP was able to move to the Ocean Breeze facility in Staten Island, New York. The move came with a date change, from January 23 to February 13.

USATF Indoor Champs Canceled

For the first time since 1912, the USA will not stage a national indoor championships. The meet had been scheduled for Albuquerque on February 20–21, but in the first week of January Indianapolis pulled the plug.

The official statement explained, “USATF’s COVID-19 Working Group of medical and scientific experts worked diligently to develop a rigorous set of COVID-19 protocols for conducting the Championships. However, it has become apparent that statewide restrictions in New Mexico and other logistical challenges for the event are too severe to overcome.”

Russian Agency Will Accept CAS Ban

RUSADA, Russia’s anti-doping body, has confirmed that it will not appeal the CAS decision to slap it with a 2-year sanction (“Last Lap,” January).

Perhaps that’s because door No. 2 was the 4-year sanction that WADA had originally imposed on the organization for its part in manipulating the data from the Moscow laboratory.

The sanctions will restrict Russian entries in international championships through 2022 to neutral athletes and forbid Russia from hosting international events in that time. However, some of the other aspect of the WADA penalties were watered down.

In its statement RUSADA talked tough, saying it “strongly disagrees with the findings in the CAS Award regarding the alleged data manipulations... based on a flawed and one-sided assessment of the facts and were not sufficiently proven.”

WADA Wants Explanation From CAS

CAS’s halving of Russia’s sanction period raised an international uproar. Among those less

than thrilled was WADA, which has demanded that the CAS panel give a full explanation of why it accepted WADA’s findings in its investigation of the Moscow laboratory but not the 4-year penalty.

In their decision, the three CAS panelists had heavily criticized RUSADA’s conduct and acknowledged that it had tried to “cover up the coverup.”

The WADA response said in part, that the panel was “(for reasons that are not comprehensively explained in the award) not willing to endorse the full suite of consequences recommended by the Compliance Review Committee, which WADA believes were proportionate and reasonable.

“In other words, based on its own assessment of proportionality, the Panel considered that the legitimate objectives of WADA could be adequately achieved with lesser consequences.”

Tokyo Notebook...

The decision point is rapidly approaching: either the Tokyo Olympics are going to happen, or they aren’t, and organizers and sponsors with

billions invested can’t wait until July to make up their minds.

The London Times cited unidentified Japanese government sources saying that the government has already concluded the Olympics would be canceled and the focus was on trying to secure the ‘32 Games for the Japanese capital.

That set off a firestorm of denials: the Japanese government saying there was no truth to the story, with the IOC and other stakeholders chiming in.

Said WA head Seb Coe, “I think the most important thing... is that it was immediately knocked down by the Japanese prime minister. It’s probably better for athletes that they’re not swept along from rumor to rumor”

That being said, Tokyo has generated plenty of headlines lately, and not all of it’s good:

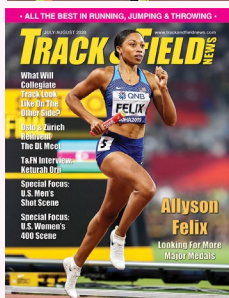
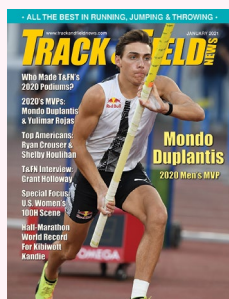
A January survey found 80% of the populace want the Games canceled or postponed.

If the Games are canceled, various insurers are facing a \$2–3 billion (yes, with a B) loss. Already the event cancellation insurance business has been hit for \$5–6 billion in losses worldwide because of C19. Adding the Games on top of that would make the hit to the industry “mind-blowingly” large, according to one director.

Will the Games be held without spectators? After a Japanese professor issued a report saying that would cause the overall economy of the country to take a \$23 billion hit, the LOC issued a statement saying, “We are not willing to see the Games without spectators.”

Meanwhile, in the logistics department, the Japanese have suspended special entry conditions for athletes from other countries, and the test meet for the Tokyo stadium, May 09 on the WA Continental Tour Gold calendar, will be open only to Japanese athletes. □

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FOR THE RECORD

Records reported since the January issue. W = World; A = American; J = Junior (U20); C = Collegiate; + = event not recognized by official governing body.

MEN INDOOR TRACK

60H	7.35	=A	Grant Holloway (adidas)	Fayetteville, Arkansas	January 24
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MEN INDOOR FIELD

PV	5.94 19-5¼	C	KC Lightfoot (Baylor)	Lubbock, Texas	January 16
TJ	18.07 59-3½	W	Hugues Fabrice Zango (Burkina-Faso)	Aubière, France	January 16
SP	22.82 74-10½	W, A	Ryan Crouser (Nike)	Fayetteville, Arkansas	January 24

WOMEN INDOOR TRACK

600	1:25.80	C	Athing Mu (Texas A&M)	College Station, Texas	January 23
800	2:01.07	AJ	Athing Mu (Texas A&M)	College Station, Texas	January 16
4 x 800	8:37.20	WJ+, AJ+	800 United All Stars	Virginia Beach, Virginia	January 17

(Roisin Willis 2:05.97, Bailey Goggans 2:20.49, Juliette Whittaker 2:05.25, Sophia Gorriaran 2:05.49)
(all high schoolers, but under T&FN protocols, all-star teams not eligible for HS Records)

PLAN AHEAD

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BUDAPEST 2023



Budapest, Hungary, is the host city of the 2023 World Championships. A city on the Danube of endless fascination and Old (and New) World charm, Budapest welcomes us to the 19th World Championships. The dates have recently changed to August 19-27, 2023. We'll be there with a sizable tour group of fans, and we invite you to join us. The current deposit required is just \$250/person. Possible attractive optional extension trips to Vienna, Prague, Krakow, Zagreb, Dubrovnik, etc. Projected tour price, ca. \$4000 double occupancy. Air not included.

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CALENDAR

DUE TO C19, all meets should be considered tentative. Current public-safety orders, if extended, would cancel meets in a number of states. TBC (to be confirmed) indicates that the host's schedule has not been announced for the season. Pandemic or not, always check with meet hosts before attending any meet.

U.S. Indoor Invitationals		
February		
06	South Carolina Invitational	Clemson, South Carolina
	Thomas Invitational	College Station, Texas
07	American Track League III	Fayetteville, Arkansas
12	Fastrack Invitational	Staten Island, New York
	Samford Invitational	Birmingham, Alabama
12-13	UW Invitational	Seattle, Washington
	Iowa State Classic	Ames, Iowa
	Texas Tech Shootout	Lubbock, Texas
	Music City Challenge	Nashville, Tennessee
	Tiger Paw Invitational	Clemson, South Carolina
	Tyson Invitational	Fayetteville, Arkansas
13	New Balance Indoor GP	Staten Island, New York
13-14	Kirby Elite Invitational	Albuquerque, New Mexico
14	American Track League IV	Fayetteville Arkansas
19	LSU Twilight	Baton Rouge, Louisiana
19-20	JML DMR Invitational/Camel City	Winston-Salem, North Carolina
25-26	Husky Classic	Seattle, Washington
<i>Major cancellations: Hemery Invitational, Husker Invitational, Meyo Invitational, Millrose Games, Sykes-Sabock Cup, Wilson Invitational</i>		

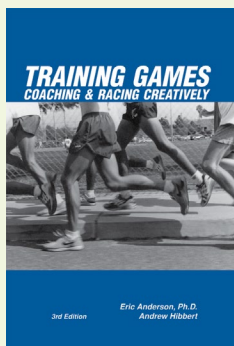
Collegiate Indoor Conferences		
February		
20-21	Conference USA	Birmingham, Alabama
22-23	Sun Belt	Birmingham, Alabama
25-26	ACC	Clemson, South Carolina
25-27	SEC	Fayetteville, Arkansas
26-27	Mountain West	Albuquerque, New Mexico
	American	Birmingham, Alabama
	Big 10	Geneva, Ohio
	Big 12	Lubbock, Texas
	Mid-American	Mt. Pleasant, Michigan
26-28	Horizon	Ft. Wayne, Indiana
27-28	Missouri Valley	Cedar Falls, Iowa
	Southern	Lexington, Virginia

28-01	Southland	Birmingham, Alabama
	Mountain Pacific	Seattle, Washington
26-28	Horizon	Fort Wayne, Indiana
27-28	Big South	Winston-Salem, North Carolina
	Missouri Valley	Cedar Falls, Iowa
	Patriot League	Allston, Massachusetts
	Southern	Lexington, Virginia
28-01	Southland	Birmingham, Alabama
<i>Div. I conferences that have been canceled so far: America East, Atlantic 10, Big East, Big Sky, Big South, IC4A/ECAC, Ivy League, Metro Atlantic, Mets, Mountain Pacific, Northeast, Ohio Valley, Patriot League, WAC</i>		

National Indoor Championships		
March		
04-06	NAIA	Brookings, South Dakota
05-06	JUCO	Pittsburg, Kansas
12-13	NCAA	Fayetteville, Arkansas
	NCAA II	Birmingham, Alabama
	NCAA III	Geneva, Ohio
11-14	NSAF Indoor Nationals HS	Staten Island, New York
12-14	New Balance Indoor Nationals HS	New York, New York
<i>Nationals canceled so far: New Balance HS, USATF</i>		

World Indoor Tour Gold-Level Meets		
February		
09	Hauts-de-France Pas-de-Calais	Liévin, France
13	New Balance Indoor GP	Staten Island, New York
17	ORLEN Copernicus Cup	Toruń, Poland
24	Villa de Madrid	Madrid, Spain
<i>Canceled: Millrose Games</i>		
<i>Note: The World Indoor Championships, scheduled for Nanjing in March of 2020, was postponed to March of 2021. That meet has now been moved to March of 2023, with Belgrade hosting the '22 version.</i>		

Cross Country		
March		
15	NCAA XC Championships (for '20)	Stillwater, Oklahoma



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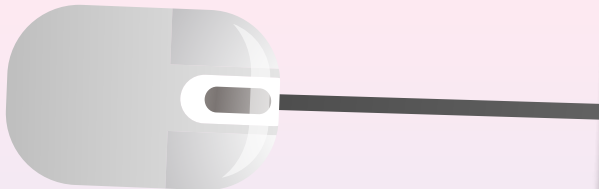
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