



Track & Field News

Jeff Hansen--No. 1 in the Nation in the Pole Vault

Written by Leonard Myles-Mills on Sunday, March 10, 2002

Fayetteville, AR—Pole Vaulter Jeff Hansen had one objective in mind when he entered Randal Tyson Center, the home of the 2002 NCAA Indoor track and field championships.

Anything less than first would have been unsatisfactory. At last year's outdoor championships, Hansen received All-American honors with a second place finish. This time around, Hansen's goal was for first, and by the meet's end, he was standing on the highest pavilion with a gold medal plaque raised in the air.

Hansen's eighteen-foot jump was an inch shy of his season's best, but was enough for him to claim his first NCAA Track and Field title.

Leading up to his final attempt at 18-4.0, Hansen had never failed to clear the bar.

According to head coach Mark Robison, Hansen's victory in the pole vault could be the first time any BYU vaulter had ever won the event at the NCAA Championships.

"We couldn't be happier," Robison said. "I know that he wanted to go higher, and if he would have made the last height that would have been a lifetime best. He wanted to win it and that's what we wanted. How can we be more proud? That's what we came for."

According to Robison, Hansen is not completely content with his winning mark, and "he will still be hungry when he goes outside."

The outdoor season will commence next weekend as the team travels to San Luis Obispo to compete.

Men's pole-vault coach, Larry Berryhill, has worked with Hansen all season. The height he and Hansen set to clear as a goal was 18-8.0.

"I felt that he wasn't satisfied he won and that he did not go as high as he felt that he should go," Berryhill said, "but we'll take the win.

According to Berryhill, Hansen has met his target height in practice and he feels that during the outdoor season, he will clear it during competition.

Hansen's parents flew from Idaho to watch him vault.

"That little stink, good for him," Ron Hansen said. "I'm just tickled to death and pleased. He's worked hard all summer. He prepared himself well, and I think that all he had to do was come today and do his job, and he did it."

According to Hansen, Jeff's interest in vaulting began when he was in the seventh grade.

"He learned to vault with a broken pole and a cinder block against a trampoline in the backyard. That's about all he had at home to practice with, so that's what he used."