

Split Weekend Finishes Strong

by Melissa Soderberg, BYU Athletic Communications



Senior Bob Low placed first in the pole vault at the Sun Angel Track Classic in Tempe, Ariz. Saturday. BYU Photo/Mark Philbrick

PROVO, Utah (April 11, 2009) – After three separate meets on the road, the BYU men’s track and field team wraps up the weekend with a collection of regional qualifying marks and personal records from the Mesa and Sun Angel Classics in Arizona along with the Javier Wildcat Invitational in Ogden, Utah.

“It’s been a rainy and windy weekend,” said BYU men’s track and field head coach Mark Robison. “We didn’t have as much success as we had hoped for but the athletes did well in the conditions we were given. That’s the great thing and the hard thing about outdoor track – you can’t control the weather. But I’m proud of our guys, and in spite of it all we had some good performances.”

Sun Angel Track Classic

Despite the weather, the Cougars pushed through the rain and wind to bring home several top performances for BYU at the Sun Angel Track Classic.

Consisting of freshman Justin Hedin, sophomore Brian Weirich and juniors Drew Foster and Lance Walker, the BYU 4x400-meter relay team stepped up to land a first-place finish for the Cougars with a top time of 3:20.82.

Landing another first-place finish and another regional qualifying mark in the pole vault was senior Bob Low. Clearing 5.20 meters (17 feet 0.75 inches), Low beat out second-place finisher Jared O'Connor who followed behind with 5.05 meters (16 feet 6.75 inches).

Junior Daniel Lawson remained consistent in his performances in the shot put and discus earning second and third place titles. In the shot, placing second, he threw a distance of 16.69 meters (54 feet 9.25 inches) while earning third in the discus with a final distance of 50.44 meters (165 feet 6 inches).

Securing another top finish for the Cougars and fifth overall, sophomore Sean Richardson pulled through in the javelin with another regional qualifying distance of 62.44 meters (204 feet 10 inches).

Finalizing the field events, sophomore Trevor Heiner brought another top performance for BYU in the high jump, clearing a height of 2.05 meters (6 feet 8.75 inches) for third place.

While the Cougars were tearing up the field events, the track athletes were giving their competitors a run for their money.

Also earning regional qualifications were junior Ryan Merriman and sophomore Miles Batty. In the 3000-meter steeplechase, Merriman crossed the finish line in fourth with a final time of 8:59.97 while Batty finished third in his heat, bringing his time to 3:6.35 in the 1500-meter.

In the 1500-meter premiere race, senior All-American Kyle Perry ran the final 1500-meter race his career, earning a fifth-place finish and regional qualifying time of 3:44.28.

Closing things up for the distance races, All-American Keith Jensen earned another mark for the Cougars in the 800-meter run with a fourth-place finish of 1:50.93, while Weirich set a new personal record with 1:50.98.

“Our athletes ran well today,” said distance coach Ed Eyestone. “It was overall a good performance and I was really impressed.”

While the distance runners were tallying up their scores, Bryan Payne earned another regional qualifying mark in the 400-meter hurdles with a second-place finishing time of 52.17. Kevin Ahlstrom followed close behind in fourth in 52.70.

In the 400-meter hurdles run freshman Rhyan Atrice took on his competitors finalizing the top three with a third-place finishing time of 47.79.

Javier Wildcat Invitational

Competing in a variety of events, the men's team pulled through at Weber tallying some high rankings for BYU in the Javier Wildcat Invitational.

In the hammer throw, sophomore Oliver Whaley placed second overall with the top finish of the day for the Cougars and a final distance of 58.83 meters (176 feet 7 inches).

Pulling in several strong third-place finishes for the Cougars were seniors Matthew Johnston in the javelin with a final distance of 54.28 meters (178 feet 1 inch) while Robert Harrison topped off third in both the 1500 and 800-meter runs in 3:55.83 and 1:58.29, respectively.

Adding to the Cougar collection of third-place finishes, freshman Brett Birkeland wrapped up the top

three in the 400-meter run with a time of 50.02.

Mesa Classic

Setting a new personal record by more than three feet, junior Daniel Lawson earned a best mark in the discus with a final distance of 179 feet 6 inches.

“Danny threw better in the discus tonight than he ever has,” said Robison. “It was a great night for him, an incredible performance.”

The Cougars return home to prepare to hit the road once again next week. Traveling to Walnut, Calif. and Logan, Utah, the Cougars split to compete in the Utah State Invitational and Mt. Sac Relays.