



Men's Track Ties for 13th at Nationals

by Melissa Soderberg, BYU Athletic Communications



The BYU men's track and field team tied for 13th at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field National Championships with 16 points. BYU Photo/Doug Padilla

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. (June 13, 2009) – With a total of 16 points, the BYU men's track and field team tied for 13th place at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field National Championships Saturday.

"I am thrilled with how we did this week," said BYU men's track and field head coach Mark Robison. "We had three All-Americans, a national champion and finished 13th in the nation! Everyone performed better than they were ranked, except Meelis [Kosk], and that was just because of injury. What a great way to finish the season."

The Cougar's ranking is a huge improvement from last season's 42nd placement with six points. Each athlete finished higher than they were ranked, minus Kosk who pulled out of the decathlon with 2,638 points due to injury

Finishing up day one of the competition, sophomore Blaine Baker ended 18th overall in the javelin throw with a final distance of 63.69 meters (208 feet 11 inches).

Going into day two, despite not advancing to the final round of the 4x400 meter relay, four Cougars

earned their spot in the BYU record books, landing one of the fastest times in school history.

Juniors Kevin Ahlstrom, All-American Kevin Biesinger, Rob Skidmore and freshman Rhyan Atrice finished 14th overall with a time of 3:06.60.

Coming into the competition as No. 25, senior Stephan Shay stepped up his performance in the 10,000 meter run finishing higher-ranked than he entered. Shay completed the run in 29:43.25, 17th overall.

Senior All-American Kyle Perry and junior regional champion and All-American Richard Nelson each won their individual heats in the preliminary round of the 3000-meter steeplechase, advancing to the finals.

It was the final round of the steeplechase that gave both Cougars their All-America honor with Perry landing first-place with a lifetime best, BYU record and Mountain West Conference All-time best time of 8:29.24. Nelson summed up the top-10 with a 10th-place time of 8:50.08.

Topping-off the championships for the Cougars, senior All-American Bob Low tied for a career-high and lifetime best mark in the pole vault competition. Clearing a height of 5.45 meters (17 feet 10.5 inches), Low secured third place overall with an All-America title in his pocket to end his collegiate career.

The Cougars complete their 2009 track and field season with both indoor and outdoor MWC championship titles, four All-Americans at indoor nationals, a ninth-place finish at regional's and now tied for 13th with three All-Americans at outdoor nationals.