



## Track & Field News

### **First Outdoor Meet is a Success**

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All-American Whitney Neves placed first in the pole vault with an NCAA regional qualifying mark on Saturday at the Baldy Castillo Invitational. (BYU Photo/Mark Philbrick)

TEMPE, Ariz. (March 21, 2009) – Kicking off the outdoor season, the BYU men and women’s track and field teams return home with many NCAA regional qualifying marks after a strong season-opener at the Baldy Castillo Invitational in Tempe, Ariz.

“This was a really good start for our outdoor season,” said BYU men’s track and field head coach Mark Robison. “We had a really good meet and I was very proud of the marks we made today.”

The men came out strong in the distance races taking first and second in the 3000-meter steeplechase due to top performances from juniors Ryan Merriman and Richard Nelson. Merriman set the pace finishing with a time of 9:09.81 followed closely behind by Nelson with 9:09.93.

Keeping the energy going, the 1500-meter proved to be another power race for the Cougars with senior Miles Batty placing first and earning an NCAA regional qualifying bid with a final time of 3:46.28

Representing the Cougars in the 4x100-meter relay, BYU's 'A' team, combining talent from freshman Rhyan Attrice, junior Bryan Payne and sophomores Tanner Emrich and Aaron Powell, placed second with a time of 42:08. Also placing second with a time of 3:12.59, was BYU's 'A' team in the 4x400-meter, made up of Attrice, Payne, Drew Foster and Nathan Page.

Placing second in the 800-meter, freshman Justin Hedin closed in with a final time of 1:52.05, trailing only to first-place Alex Hudak, a freshman from Manhattan who finished in 1:51.57.

To balance things in the field events, senior All-American Whitney Neves took charge in the pole vault with a first-place finish and NCAA regional qualifying mark clearing a height of 17 feet 2.75 inches (5.25 meters). Also earning an NCAA regional qualifying mark was Chris Little, clearing a height of 16 feet 6.75 inches (5.05 meters).

Sophomore Blaine Baker pulled through in the javelin tallying a second-place finish and NCAA regional qualifying mark with a final distance of 216 feet 4 inches (65.94 meters).

Also bringing home NCAA regional qualifying bids were juniors Bryan Payne in the 400-meter hurdles with a time of 52.19 and Daniel Lawson in the discus with a distance of 176 feet 7 inches (53.82 meters).

Building off a successful indoor season the No. 3 nationally ranked BYU women's team continued to roll in their first outdoor meet.

"We performed well," said BYU women's coach Dick Legas. "This was a low-key meet that gave our athletes an opportunity to get their feet wet and ready for the outdoor season."

The Cougars began the meet in dominant fashion in the 800-meter race. Sandra Mazan took first in the event with a time of 2:09.83. Following close behind was Emily Dunn who finished in third with a time of 2:10.78. Rounding out the top five was Jenna Lowder who ran in a time of 2:12.79.

Freshman standout Sarah Edwards had a strong outdoor debut with a third place finish in the 1500-meter event (4:32.89).

Another freshman that was equally impressive was Diana Blauer. Blauer the 2009 Mountain West Conference high jump champion placed second on Saturday with a jump of 5-07.00.

Like Blauer, Madara Dzalbe also jumped well. Dzalbe took second in the triple jump event (39-08.00).

The Cougar throwing squad looked fresh. Deezbaa Whaley nearly had an NCAA provisional qualifying mark on Friday. Whaley threw 170-09, earning her third in the hammer throw.

Collecting BYU's first outdoor provisional qualifying mark of the season was Piret Kuresson, who finished second in the javelin throw (150-11).

Next up for the Cougars will be the Stanford Invitational in Palo Alto, Calif., with competition beginning on Friday, March 27.