

Cougars Light Up Final Meet Before Conference

by Melissa Soderberg, BYU Athletic Communications



At the Twilight Invitational, the Cougars qualified more athletes for regionals while several others earned personal and season-best marks in the last meet before the MWC Championships. BYU Photo/Mark Philbrick

Salt Lake City, Utah (May 5, 2009) – In the last chance to qualify for regionals, the BYU men’s track and field team competed at the Twilight Invitational qualifying more athletes and setting new personal best marks on Tuesday.

“We had some really good performances today,” said BYU men’s track and field head coach Mark Robison. “It was a great meet. Several athletes had lifetime best marks and we had a few more qualify for regionals.”

Adding another regional qualifying mark to the BYU board, the 4x400-meter relay team got the job done with a first-place finish of 3:09.17, beating out second-place Weber State, 3:12.09.

Also making his spot on the regional qualifying list with a fourth-place finish, Tanner Emrich earned his regional mark for his performance in the pole vault with a final height of 5.05 meters (16 feet 6.75 inches).

Representing BYU in the field events, junior Oliver landed the top performance in the hammer throw. With a first-place finish of 54.25 meters (177 feet 11.75 inches), Whaley beat out his second-place

competition by three inches. Also earning a first-place finish for the Cougars, junior Daniel Lawson stole the discus competition with a top mark of 53.89 meters (176 feet 9.75 inches).

Sweeping in the 1500 meters, the Cougars got off to a strong start landing the first through sixth place finishes. Leading the way with a first-place finish for BYU was Robert Harrison with a final time of 3:52.60. Following behind in second and third place were Tommy Gruenewald in 3:53.16 for second and Nate Ogden in 3:53.50 for third.

Following the pattern in the 400-meter finals, junior All-American Kevin Biesinger paved the way for the first through fourth steal by the Cougars with a first-place final time of 47.86. Kevin Ahlstrom landed second place in 48.37 while McKade Brady and Justin Hedin made their mark in third and fourth with 48.47 and 48.90, respectively.

Finishing with lifetime best times in the 400-meter hurdles, Lance Walker and Bryan Payne improved with first and second-place finishes. Walker placed first with 14.72 while Payne came in second with 14.80.

In the sprints, freshman Rhyan Atrice made his mark once again with a first-place finish in the 100-meter dash with a final time of 11.10.

Solidifying the dynamic-duo combination, Payne and Walker led the way for the Cougars once again finishing first and second in the 400-meter hurdles, improving their already regional qualified marks. In first, Payne finished with 51.31 while Walker took second in 51.74, both season-best marks. Nate Page and Rob Skidmore followed in third and fourth, with 52.55 and 53.23, respectively, landing another sweep for BYU.

In the long jump, Anse Myller DeArujo placed second with a final mark of 6.75 meters (22 feet 1.75 inches) while Brett Birkeland came in third with 6.62 meters (21 feet 8.75 inches).

A solid performance by two athletes generated two lifetime best marks in the triple jump. In first place, Aaron Powell landed a final distance of 15.21 meters (49 feet 10.75 inches) while Kyle Mills cleared a distance of 14.59 meters (47 feet 10.50 inches).

Topping off the successful meet for the Cougars, the javelin landed the final sweep with the top-three spots going to BYU. In first place, Blaine Baker finished with a distance of 65.45 meters (214 feet 8.75 inches) while Sean Richardson and Spencer Fausett came in second and third with marks of 61.53 meters (201 feet 10.50 inches) and 57.76 meters (189 feet 6 inches).

The Cougars now return home to prepare for the Mountain West Conference Championships beginning next week. The team will travel to Laramie, Wyo. in hopes of defending its championship title.