

Cougars Finish Ninth

by Melissa Soderberg, BYU Athletic Communications



Junior Richard Nelson was named the NCAA West Regional champion in the 3000 meter steeplechase, earning him an automatic qualifying time for the NCAA Nationals. BYU Photo/Jaren Wilkey

EUGENE, Ore. (May 30, 2009) – It was a strong conclusion to the NCAA West Nationals as the BYU men’s track and field team secured a top-10 finish advancing to ninth place at Historic Hayward Field.

BYU jumped from being tied for 14th with three points at the close of day one, to a final top-10 in ninth with 34 points.

USC landed the win with 97 points, while Oregon and Washington State came in second and third with 80.75 points and 66 points, respectively.

“We finished well; I was very pleased,” said BYU men’s track and field head coach Mark Robison. “The steeple was incredible, the pole vaulters did great and our 400 meter relay finished great. We had several athletes really step up and perform well for our team today and now I’m looking forward to nationals.”

Earning an NCAA West Regional champion title, junior Richard Nelson tallied his best time of the season in the 3000 meter steeplechase. Nelson’s first-place time of 8:47.98 automatically qualified him for the NCAA Nationals in Fayetteville, Ark. beginning June 10.

Also advancing to nationals in the 3000 meter steeplechase was senior All-American Kyle Perry. Perry finished fourth overall with a time of 8:58.28. Closing in the top-10 and third for the Cougars was sophomore Reagan Frey with a time of 9:03.63.

In a close finish for the 4x400 meter relay BYU picked up the pace moving into second place with 3:08.49, falling only to Southern California's first-place 3:06.09. Arizona State came in third with a time of 3:09.33.

Freshman McKade Brady got the momentum rolling for the Cougars while the handoff to junior Rob Skidmore moved BYU into third. The third switch to freshman Rhyan Atrice further pushed BYU ahead into second, while junior All-American Kevin Biesinger landed the second-place time for the Cougars in the final stretch earning an additional ticket to nationals.

Moving BYU up in ranks for the pole vault, senior Bob Low carried the Cougars into the final top three. Clearing a height of 5.36m (17 feet 7 inches), Low also advanced to compete at nationals. Sophomore Chris Little finished 11th clearing 5.16m (16 feet 11 inches).

Winning his first flight in the hammer throw and improving his personal record for the season, junior Oliver Whaley threw a distance of 59.22m (194 feet 3 inches). Whaley entered the competition with a personal best of 57.10m.

Starting off the field events for the Cougars was junior Daniel Lawson. Lawson landed a final distance of 46.87m (153 feet 9 inches).

Sophomore Aaron Powell was scratched from the triple jump competition after the first two jumps due to injury.

The Cougars now prepare for the NCAA National Championships. Nationals begin June 10 and carry through June 13 in Fayetteville, Ark.

For full results of the NCAA West Regionals go to http://www.goducks.com/fls/500/track/0809/regional/index.htm?&SPSID=4364&SPID=243&DB_OEM_ID=500.