

Three Cougars Claim Championships at MWC Indoors

by Jordan Christiansen, BYU Athletic Communications



Trevor Heiner won his second-straight indoor high jump championship at the MWC meet on Friday. (BYU Photo/Mark Philbrick)

Cougars hold team lead by 10.5 points

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico (Feb. 26, 2010) – Phillip Bettis, Leif Arrhenius and Trevor Heiner each earned back-to-back MWC championships in their respective events, giving the BYU men's track and field team the lead after the first full day of competition at the Mountain West Conference Indoor Championships on Friday.

Bettis took the championship in the pentathlon with 5,489 points, almost 100 points better than when the junior won the same event in last season. Bettis started off the morning with a personal best 8.21 in the 60-meter hurdles to place first in the event, then pushed his lead higher finishing out in the pole vault and 1,000-meter run.

The junior's 5,489 points is a career-high, good for second all-time at BYU, third all-time in MWC history and currently 14th-best in the nation this year.

On the field, Trevor Heiner jumped 2.10 meters, the junior's best mark of the season and a higher mark than the 2.08 meters he used to win the event at last year's championships. With Heiner's win, BYU has won the event 9

of the last 11 years.

“I’m probably more happy with jumping 2.10,” Heiner said, who set a new season high. “I’ve been jumping at that mark all indoor season and been close so many times so to finally get over that barrier feels really good. The competition was fun.”

Junior Leif Arrhenius claimed his second-straight championship in the weight throw with a toss of 20.91 meters, two-and-a-half meters better than the next-best competitor.

Oliver Whaley finished third in the weight throw with an 18.35 meters, adding six points to the team score.

In the 5,000 meters, Nathan Ogden set a lifetime best in the senior’s final indoor championship, garnering All-MWC honors with a third-place finishing. Ogden’s time puts him in 11th place in the nation in the event and has automatically qualified him for the NCAAs.

Jon Kotter, who qualified for NCAAs earlier in the season, finished seventh in the 5,000 meters to earn two team points.

The Cougars sit in first place with 63.50 points after six events scored. Wyoming is second with 53 points, while challengers New Mexico and TCU have 43.50 and 21 points, respectively.

“We’re still okay, but we have to come better tomorrow across the board,” said BYU head coach Mark Robison. “We’ve just got to come with a little bit better attitude of stepping up.”

Brett Birkeland and John Reilly also earned points for BYU in the pentathlon thanks to career-best point totals. Birkeland finished tied for fifth while Reilly rounded out the top eight.

In the long jump finals, junior Aaron Powell, sophomore Myller DeAraujo and sophomore Kyle Mills all picked up points, finishing 5-6-7 in the event, led by Powell’s jump of 7.07 meters.

The Cougars set themselves up for the final day of competition on Saturday in the middle distances, including two athletes who qualified for two separate finals.

Senior Bryan Payne qualified in the 400 meters, finishing with the third-best time of the day. Payne also advanced to the finals of the 60-meter hurdles.

Sophomore Rhyon Atrice also qualified for the 400-meter and 200-meter finals.

Senior Kevin Biesinger will join Payne and Atrice in the 400-meter final, while James Jeiner, Justin Hedin and Brian Weirich will all compete in the 800 meters.

Other finals include the shot put, pole vault, triple jump, mile, 3,000 meters and 4x400 (mile) relay. Action starts with the men’s shot put at 9:45 a.m. MT and will end around 1:40 p.m. MT with the men’s 4x400 (mile) relay.