



Track & Field News

Day One Successful at Stanford

by Melissa Soderberg and Zack Warren, BYU Athletic Communications



Senior Stephan Shay placed first in the 5000-meter, earning a personal best and regional qualifying mark. BYU Photo/Mark Philbrick

PROVO, Utah (March 27, 2009) -- A handful of regional qualifying marks made the opening day of the Stanford Invitational a success for the BYU men's and women's track teams on Friday in Palo Alto, Calif.

The No. 3 women's team was impressive in its first day of competition at the Stanford Invitational.

"We had a phenomenal opening day," said BYU distance coach Patrick Shane. "Many of our athletes had personal records and NCAA regional qualifying marks."

All-American Mindy Neeley set the tone for the Cougars with a first-place finish in the long jump event. Neeley's NCAA regional qualifying jump of 20-3.50 is the best in the MWC. Neeley also had a solid fourth place finish in the 100-meter dash (11.95).

Earning a personal record in the 5,000-meter event was Cecily Lemmon, who easily qualified for Regionals. Lemmon took third with a MWC best time of 16:23.13.

"We performed well," said BYU women's track and field head coach Craig Poole. "It was many of our athlete's first time competing outside this season and I thought we did well under those circumstances."

Lacey Cramer made her BYU outdoor debut, the 2009 800-meter national champion refuses to accept defeat. Cramer won her heat in the 1500-meter event on Friday with a time of 4:21.65. Her time is a regional qualifying mark, a personal record and a conference best time.

Also earning a regional qualifying mark and a personal record for the Cougar's was All-American Katie Palmer who finished sixth in the fast section of the 1500-meter event with a time of 4:23.21.

The BYU throwing squad performed well. Cassandra Woodall finished first in her division of the shot put with a throw of 44-08.00. Sharissa Thayer took second in the same event with a throw of 41-11.25.

Piret Kuresson had her season's second regional qualifying mark in the javelin event. Kuresson finished in the top 10 with a throw of 144-04.00.

Freshman standout Ada Robinson looked good in her first outdoor meet as a Cougar. Robinson took fifth in the high jump with a jump of 5-07.00.

The men's team entered day one at Stanford with high ambitions of earning more qualifying marks for Regionals.

"Today was a very good day," said BYU men's track and field head coach Mark Robison. "We had eight of our athletes qualify for Regionals with some absolutely great performances. I'm looking forward to tomorrow and earning some more."

Starting off in the running events, senior Stephan Shay recorded a personal record and a No. 1 top finish in the 5000-meter run with a time of 13:59, earning him a regional qualifying mark. Also earning qualifying marks in the 5000-meter were Jon Kotter in 14:08.54, Nate Ogden in 14:09.59 and Miles Batty rounding up with 14:10.85.

Not to be outdone, the 3000-meter steeplechase stepped it up having four qualifiers of its own and two personal best times. Senior Kyle Perry finished fourth with a personal best time and regional qualifying mark of 8:47.92. He was followed by Richard Nelson in 8:50.75, also earning regional and personal best marks, while Ryan Merriman topped it off adding to the regional qualifiers in 9:02.62.

Keeping the distance races dominant, Brandon Babiracki completed the 1500-meter in 3:46.39 earning the final qualifying mark for the distance runners.

Bryan Payne extended the success to other track events, placing third in the 400-meter hurdles adding another regional qualifying time of 51.99 to BYU's previous collection.

Moving things to the field events, Blaine Baker represented the Cougars in the javelin throw with a final distance of 65.47 meters (214 feet 9 inches) and tallying another regional mark for BYU.

Maintaining a strong presence, Danny Lawson earned yet another regional mark for the Cougars in the shot put, with a lifetime best throw of 17.44 meters (57 feet 2.75 inches), while Meelis Kosk had a strong performance in the long jump with a distance of 6.87 meters (22 feet 6.50 inches).

Concluding the field events, high jumpers Wes Collett and Trevor Heiner totaled great performances recording distances of 6 feet 8.75 inches.

The Cougars move into day two of the Stanford Invitational Saturday, with events beginning at 9 a.m. PT.