

Tied for Fourth and Looking to Climb

by Zack Warren, BYU Athletic Communications



Kari McAllister-Clark took third in the pole vault event at the NCAA West Regional qualifying her for nationals. (BYU Photo/Jaren Wilkey)

EUGENE, Ore. (May 29, 2009) – Earning three national qualifying marks on Thursday, the BYU women’s track and field team sits in fourth at the NCAA West Regional in Eugene, Ore., going into day two.

The No. 21 nationally ranked Cougars enter Saturday’s finals tied in fourth place with 19 points. BYU trails only No. 1 Oregon (31.5 points), No. 6 Arizona State (27) and No. 13 Washington (26). The Cougars are tied with No. 12 Stanford and lead No. 15 UCLA (16.50) and No. 5 USC (10), who round out the top seven.

“I think we performed pretty well today,” said BYU women’s track and field head coach Craig Poole. “We were able to qualify three and advance several to the finals, which is encouraging. We have great competitors on this team and we are looking forward to tomorrow.”

Pole vault star, Kari McAllister-Clark, earned the Cougars their first NCAA National qualifying mark at Historic Hayward Field on the University of Oregon campus. McAllister-Clark, the BYU record holder in the pole vault, equaled her previous school record with a jump of 13-9.75.

“Kari had a great day,” said BYU women’s pole vault coach Erik Rasmussen. “She’s been very consistent the last few weeks and was able to really put it together when it counted.”

McAllister-Clark finished third in the event and will compete in Fayetteville, Ark., at the NCAA National Championships on June 10-11.

Also making it to the National Championships was Cecily Lemmon, who took third in the 5,000-meter event with a time of 16.24.93

“Cecily ran a great race,” said BYU women’s distance coach Patrick Shane. “Our goal for her was to break into the top four and she finished third against great competition. This will give her a lot of confidence when she competes at nationals in the 10,000-meter event.”

While Lemmon qualified for nationals in the 5,000-meter event, she will only compete at nationals in the 10,000-meter event. Lemmon ranks seventh in the nation in the 10,000-meter race making it her primary focus.

The final national qualifying mark of the day for the Cougars came from All-American long jumper Mindy Neeley-McClurkin. Neeley-McClurkin finished third in the long jump event with her season best jump of 21-02.50.

BYU also had success in the preliminary events. All-American Katie Palmer took third and advanced to Saturday’s final in the 1,500-meter race with a time of 4:22.52.

Lacey Cramer, one of the nation’s best freshmen, qualified for the 800-meter finals. Cramer, the Indoor 800-meter National Champion, won her heat with a time of 2:07.18.

Fellow freshman, Natalie Stewart also made her regional debut a success. Stewart qualified for the 400-meter finals with a time of 54.27.

Saturday’s finals will begin at 12:30 p.m. PT with the high jump and conclude at 4:35 p.m. PT with the 4x400-meter relay.

For live results of the meet go to
http://www.goducks.com/ViewArticle.dbml?DB_OEM_ID=500&ATCLID=3735603.