



Track & Field News

Women Seek Third Consecutive MWC Title

by Taylor Wilson, BYU Athletic Communications



Porshe Giddings will compete in the 60m, 200m and 4x400m at the MWC Championships.
BYU Photo/Mark Philbrick

PROVO, Utah (Feb. 22, 2011) – For the final time in team history, the BYU women’s track and field team will head to the Mountain West Conference Indoor Championships on Friday, looking for their third consecutive MWC indoor title.

“This will be a very competitive conference championship meet,” head coach Patrick Shane said. “A lot of teams in the conference have improved significantly and will provide great competition. The days of BYU scoring 200 points are probably over but you can normally win if you score about 150 points.”

This will mark the 12th time the Cougars have competed at the MWC Indoor Championships. In the previous 11 championships BYU has taken home nine titles and two second place finishes.

The Cougars hold top marks in four events going into the conference championships and have athletes ranked in scoring position for every event with the exception of the long jump, shot put and weight throw.

“We are strong in a lot of areas and that typically means we will be a strong conference contender,” Shane said. “There are not too many events in this meet that we won’t score in.”

BYU also has two reigning MWC indoor champions in the meet and features athletes in four other events that placed second in 2010.

Junior Lacey Bleazard is a reigning MWC champion for BYU and will compete in three events this weekend. Bleazard is currently ranked first in the conference in the 800m and is part of the top-ranked distance medley relay team. Bleazard will also compete in the second-ranked 4x400m relay.

With Bleazard leading the way the 800m is one of the deepest events for the Cougars in 2011. Junior Katie Palmer is ranked second in the MWC, Stacy Slight fifth and Sarah Edwards eighth.

Another strong event for BYU will be the mile. Six Cougars are currently ranked in the top eight in the MWC, with senior Kari Hardt ranked the highest at second. Palmer will go in ranked third, with Slight ranked fifth, Michaelanne Laurent sixth, Candace Eddy seventh and Ashlee Thomas eighth.

“We are very strong in the distance events,” Shane said. “In the 800m and the mile we could have four to six people place in the top eight and score. That will be huge for us.”

Also currently holding a top MWC ranking is junior Ada Robinson. Robinson won the MWC indoor championship in the high jump last season and cleared a MWC record 1.86m (6-1.25) in the event in February of this year.

The pole vault is one of the strongest events of 2011 for BYU and the team enters conference holding the top three spots in the event. Sophomore Rachel Fisher, a second-place finisher in 2010, sits at number one in the MWC and is followed by Christen Botteron in second and Kelli Ehardt in third.

Porshe Giddings, a senior, will lead the Cougars in the sprints. Giddings is currently ranked third in the 60m and second in the 200m. Giddings will face off against several top sprinters in the nation from TCU.

“The conference championships will be one of the most competitive races Porshe has run in this season,” sprints coach Corey Murdock said. “Tough competition often brings out the best in good athletes and I think Porshe will rise to the occasion.”

Senior team captain Mindy Sagers has the potential to earn the first MWC individual

championship of her four-year career. Sagers currently sits at second in the 60m hurdles and the pentathlon. Sagers placed third in the heptathlon at the 2010 MWC Outdoor Championships.

The main competition for the MWC Championship will come from the No. 16 ranked TCU Horned Frogs. TCU is the only other nationally ranked team that will compete in the MWC Championships and the team is ranked No. 1 in four events. The Horned Frogs main strength rests with its sprinters, as they currently hold five of the top eight spots in the 60m dash.

“Overall we are strong in many areas and we need to be because TCU is a great team,” Shane said. “TCU is a team that really does not show everything they have until the conference meet, so we expect some surprise performances from their team.”

The championships will begin on Thursday at 11:00 am MT with the men’s heptathlon. Competition is scheduled to conclude on Saturday with the men’s 4x400m relay at 1:40 pm MT.