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Colorado Student-Athlete Spotlight: Allie McLaughlin

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By Nicholas Bernal
Big 12 Campus Correspondent

University of Colorado freshman distance runner Allie McLaughlin has spent her first semester and a half at Boulder turning heads—on and off the fields of competition.

McLaughlin was a cross country All-American during her freshman campaign, and in the process shocked a number of competitors and spectators alike. Not only was she a true freshman, but she does not look like your average college freshman; she stands at 4'10" and weighs in at 80 pounds.



Courtesy: Big12Sports.com

She thinks that her size can definitely be an advantage because competitors underestimate her based on her smaller appearance. She takes some satisfaction in being able to surprise people who underestimate her undeniable talents.

"I like [being smaller]," McLaughlin said. "I think they think I am pretty young and not too experienced and probably not that good. It gives me a little more fire to go out there and prove them wrong and beat them. It's fun to do because some of the spectators are pretty shocked because I look smaller, younger and not as strong as the other runners that I might not do as well, so it's fun to try and prove them wrong."

McLaughlin started her athletic career at CU with an impressive cross country season. She got noticed early and often, opening the season with back-to-back second place finishes and continuing to run strong through the season. She placed second at the Big 12 Championship and fifth at the NCAA Championships.

When asked what her best attributes as an athlete are, McLaughlin does not hesitate.

"[It's] Probably my ambition, I love to win and do very well," McLaughlin said. "I'm really competitive with myself as well, workouts are almost as fun to me as the races are so getting better and training are things I like to do and a big part of why I do so well in competition."

McLaughlin's talents extend well beyond the scope of competitive long distance running, as she was a standout in multiple sports growing up.

"I played lacrosse and ice hockey in high school," McLaughlin said. "I was on varsity all four years in high school and the team captain my junior and senior year; we won the Colorado State Championship my senior year. As for hockey, I played boys through eighth grade and then my freshman and sophomore year I played on the U-16 AAA Colorado Select girl's team in Denver. We made it to nationals both years and it was a lot of fun, but my junior year I decided to start running and I chose that over hockey and that led to where I am today."

McLaughlin said that the Colorado coaching staff was a big reason why she decided to come to CU, and so far she has been very happy with her decision.

"The coaches have been wonderful," McLaughlin said. "They have been my favorite part of the program so far. My teammates are amazing too, they have really encouraged me. My coaches have been really concerned about me doing too much and

they have done a great job of holding me back and I think it will make me a lot better in the long run—which is exciting.”

One of the most important things for an athlete and a coaching staff to have is a common train of thought, and clearly McLaughlin and the Colorado coaching staff are on the same page as head coach Mark Wetmore had a very similar view on her training.

“Our observation of Allie in her recruiting process is she tended to be a little impetuous,” Wetmore said. “So we’re trying to hold her back and assigning her to stay with teammates, but they can tell between their respirations and her respirations in practice that she has a couple of sprints in her.”

With the indoor track and field season starting to hit its stride, McLaughlin is continuing to work hard and prepare herself for competition. She admits it is a little different from training with just distance runners, but likes the change from the norm. Although her sights are set more on the outdoor season, she realizes that the indoor season will be crucial to her success when it comes time to move outside.

“I would love for our teams to do well at the Big 12 indoor meet and that it sets us up for outdoors,” McLaughlin said. “I want us to place well in outdoors. I think the meets will be more fun because there will be more kids and I am used to just traveling with the distance kids. Personally, I would love to run some fast indoor times but my training has been a little different. I’ve been a little up and down in my training so I just want to get through indoors strong and use it as a pad to jump into outdoors.”

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Track and field ready for trip to Iowa

Big 12 Indoor Championship preview

By Gino Figlio on February 25, 2010

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CU track and field athletes will compete this weekend at the Big 12 Indoor Track and Field Championships.

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The meet will mark the fourth year that Iowa State plays host, as the Buffs look to challenge defending champions Texas in the men's division and Texas A&M in the women's.

Colorado's young team placed 12th in both the men's and women's divisions one year ago. But with another year of training under their belts, they said they hope for a stronger finish.

"We have a lot of things to be excited about," CU head coach Mark Wetmore said. "There's a lot of young people who are advancing."

One improving athlete is distance running junior Christian Thompson.

As a sophomore, Thompson ran the 3000-meter race in the Big 12s, finishing 15th with a time of 8:18.60.

He also took on the challenge of running the 5000 this season, and has been a pleasant surprise to his coaches. It is an event in which he said he is hoping to qualify for the national championships.

"I run about 100 miles a week, and mentally I feel a lot more confident," Thompson said. "I'd like to be in the top three in the 5k [and] score in the 3k."

With his comfort level rising, Thompson has shown that he could be one of the athletes to watch this weekend.

CU's best chance of reaching the podium might be sophomore Brianne Beemer.

After an impressive freshman season, Beemer is poised to improve from her 12th place finish in the



(CU Independent graphic/Adam Milner)

pentathlon at last year's Big 12 championships.

"Last year was a learning stage," Beemer said. "This year, I am definitely stronger than I was last year, physically and mentally."

In that competition, Beemer won the 800-meter race, with a time of 2:15.39. However, she finished 11th in the 60-meter hurdles, 13th in the high jump, 14th in the long jump and 12th in the shot put. Despite this she said she remains confident about her chances in those events this time around.

"I'm not too concerned about any of them, I just want to perform and hopefully reach the marks that I'm capable of," Beemer said. "We practice every day, take mental notes and keep track of where we are at and visualize what we want to do."

Regardless of her own performance, Beemer stresses that her team is of the utmost importance, and she will continue to be a supporter.

"I just want to be able to compete the best I can and bring my 'A' game...and also be able to help my teammates," Beemer said. "It's been really neat to be able to grow and become a leader of the team."

Competition begins Friday at 10 a.m. at Lied Recreation Center in Ames, Iowa and concludes with finals on Saturday at 11 a.m..

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