

Barringer explores her abilities in various events

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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Jenny Barringer has traded her beloved University of Colorado uniform for New Balance gear and moved from Boulder to Colorado Springs to train.

The Camera caught up with Barringer -- the legendary collegiate star and 2008 Olympian, who is one of the bright, young faces of American professional running -- this week ahead of her performance in the 5,000-meter run at the USA Outdoor Track and Field Championships today at Drake Stadium in Des Moines, Iowa, (6 p.m., ESPN).

Here is the exchange ...

Camera: What has the transition from college to being a professional athlete been like? You were one of the great student-athletes in CU history, but is it refreshing to be able to focus on your running full-time?

Barringer: It's a luxury to be able to focus on running full-time. I'm living my dream scenario with all of my immediate energies focused on my training and my family. And for that, I'm very grateful. The best part of being such a recognized athlete at CU is the continued connection with the university. I'm so glad I'm still recognized as a Buff and have enjoyed returning to the school a few times since I graduated.

Camera: How has training in Colorado Springs treated you? Great facilities, other world-class athletes around, still running at altitude ... is it much different than Boulder?

(Editor's note: Air Force cross country coach/assistant track coach Juli Benson has been coaching Barringer, who has also been taking advantage of the Olympic Training Center)

Barringer: Every time I've moved in my life, I've also grown up a lot. Taking my career to Colorado Springs hasn't been easy, but I have no doubt in my mind that it was the right decision. I'm, once again, surrounded by people that are committed to helping me reach my goals and keeping me healthy. It is incredibly motivating to be around world-class athletes and medical staff at the Olympic Training Center, and a privilege to have been accepted at the Air Force Academy with open arms. Everyone has been so generous with their resources and it's always rewarding to see other people excited about my future.

Camera: What did you think of Emma Coburn's (runner-up) performance at the NCAA championships? Is it gratifying to know that the event you made famous at CU is now one of the program's signature events with some talented young athletes following in your footsteps?

Barringer: I am so so proud of Emma and Shalaya (Kipp) both. These two steeple ladies have grown so much, even in the short time I've been gone, and it has been so fun to watch. I keep in close touch with Emma and she has continued to be one of my best friends. It's so fun to see her grow and take a more aggressive attitude towards her running career. She and Shalaya are very talented and from my very short distance away I'm cheering for them very loudly.

Camera: It sounds like you are going to stay true to your word and continue to be a versatile runner and not just focused on steeplechase. What are your expectations for the 5,000 this week? Why did you decide not to run the steeplechase?

Barringer: I'm so excited about the 5K here and am going to continue throughout the year to race as many different disciplines as I can. The steeple is unfortunately going to have to take a backseat this weekend. There are a lot of factors that go into my decision to run the 5K this weekend. I'm fortunate to have a range of events to consider and this time my coach and I thought the 5K was in my best interest.

Camera: Is running the steeplechase at the 2012 Olympics still a major goal? What is the plan to build momentum for yourself in the event over the next two years?

Barringer: The major goal is to make the 2012 Olympics period -- not really in a specific event. This year really is about

me exploring my abilities across a range of events and truly challenging myself in each of them. I look forward to discovering my edge in each and then deciding what my best event is for the Olympic trials in 2012.

Camera: How does your new coach's style differ from Mark Wetmore's style?

Barringer: Juli is a very special coach and an even more special woman. I admire her ability to connect with people and her desire to learn from others in order to be a better coach and person for everyone she works with. She and Mark differ enormously in personality, and of course in coaching style. I feel so fortunate to have such different people to learn from.

Camera: Why did you choose New Balance and how will your new team help you achieve your personal goals?

Barringer: New Balance has already been so instrumental in my development from a college kid to a professional runner. They have been so invested in getting to know who I am and how best to help me reach my goals. We work closely together with everything from what shoes I need to what sorts of audiences I want to reach out to, such as the high school athletes at the New Balance Nationals. I appreciate how family-focused the people are and how generous the company is as a whole with their numerous charitable affiliations and commitment to keeping production running in their USA factories.

Barringer earns 3rd

Academic All-America honor

Barringer earned her third selection on the ESPN The Magazine Academic All-America Women's Track & Field/Cross Country First Team on Thursday.

The team is selected by the members of the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). Barringer also earned the honor in 2008 and '09.

The Oviedo, Fla., native graduated in December with degrees in political science and economics with a GPA of 3.71.

Over the span of Barringer's career, she collected four individual Big 12 titles, four NCAA titles and was also a 13-time All-Big 12 performer and a seven-time All-American (track and cross country combined). She was also a two-time USATF Champion and IAAF World Championship participant and competed in the 2008 Olympics while still a member of the CU cross country and track and field programs.

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track and field

Former CU track star Barringer branching out at nationals

By John Meyer
The Denver Post

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Former CU star Jenny Barringer, left, has been training for the upcoming outdoor nationals with new coach Juli Benson, an Air Force Academy assistant. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

In her first professional season as a runner, Jenny Barringer has a new coach, a new residence and a wedding coming in October. She also has the opportunity to experiment, and she's taking full advantage.

Having represented the U.S. in the steeplechase at the world championships and Olympics before graduating from the University of Colorado, Barringer is racing other distances this season to help her determine which one makes the most sense to target heading into the 2012 Olympics.

She has already raced 800 and 1,500 meters this year, and at the USA Outdoor Track & Field Championships tonight in Des Moines, Iowa, she will run the 5,000.

Because there are no world championships this year, it's a good time to branch out.

"I'm really excited about not focusing or narrowing down into one or two events, but instead leaving the door wide open," Barringer said. "I look back at my collegiate career, and it really wasn't until my senior year that I showed a lot of promise in the middle distances. I don't know exactly where I'm best suited, because even though I've shown a lot of promise in the last year in those (middle-distance) events, I think I'm really strong and I have a great base for the 5K. And clearly I've competed best, on the world stage, in the steeple."

Since leaving CU, Barringer moved to Colorado Springs, where she lives at the Olympic Training

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Center, and is coached by Juli Benson, an assistant at the Air Force Academy who was a 1996 Olympian in the 1,500 meters. Benson's husband, Robert, is defensive coordinator for the football team at Colorado School of Mines.

"It's gone really well," Barringer said of the transition to Benson from CU coach Mark Wetmore. "We really click, and it's been fun having a female coach."

Benson feels "very blessed" to coach a runner as gifted as Barringer.

"We could have a lot of success in four different events, and that type of athlete doesn't come along very often," Benson said. "It makes it a lot of fun and really exciting, and it certainly makes it challenging for me as a coach, trying to cover all of those areas."

It's rare for an elite runner to take advantage of the residence program at the Olympic Training Center, but it made sense for Barringer in the interim between her graduation and wedding, and she loves it.

"People are like, 'Oh, you live in a dorm room, you're totally isolated,' they think about the hours, from like 6 in the evening until 9 at night, those three hours when you're here by yourself," Barringer said. "The truth is, you wake up in the morning, you have sports medicine a two-minute walk away, you have all your meals right here, prepared and ready for you. And just the convenience factor: You're more likely to take

advantage of resources when they're so readily available."

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