

Americans look to end Bolder drought

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Frank Shorter and Ellan Hart were the first Americans to win the Bolder Boulder professional races after the finish line was moved into Folsom Field in 1981.

Since that race only five U.S. runners have experienced the thrill of victory in the stadium on Memorial Day.

Herb Lindsay was the last American to win on the men's side in 1984. Over the years Kenya (10 champions), Ethiopia (seven) and Mexico (seven) have dominated the event.

Americans have captured the women's professional race six times since Hart's victory in 1981.

Libbie Hickman ended a 14-year drought for the Stars & Stripes in 1997. Elva Dryer won in 2005 to lead Team U.S. to the International Team Challenge title.

Three-time Bolder Boulder champion Deena Kastor (2001-03) and 2006 champion Sara Slattery will both compete in today's race.

Slattery, who will run for Team Colorado this year, was the last member of Team USA to hear the roars at Folsom Field reserved for a homegrown champion.

Kastor is second in career Bolder Boulder victories behind Rosa Mota (1984-86, 1988, 1990).

"Really this is the greatest stage for elite athletes to compete on, aside from the Olympic Games," said Kastor, a three-time Olympian who hopes to make it to London this summer in the 10K. "So in an Olympic year, this is a special event. Anytime you can have that crowd support everybody gains from it."

From 2001 to 2007 the professional races featured a criterium with a stadium lap. This will be the first time Kastor and Slattery will compete on the same point-to-point course.

Both Americans have talked about how the cheers at Folsom Field inspired them to hold on for victories. Now they will experience the same crowds on the streets of Boulder that cheer on the 50,000-plus participants in the citizens race.

"I just think it creates a wonderful stage," Kastor said. "When you have the criterium course the spectators can pack into a condensed area and see you. On the point-to-point course the fans get to see more elites up close and the elites get to see more fans up close."

Kastor's teammates are Janet Cherobon-Bawcom and Magdalena Lewy-Boulet. The U.S. women finished second in 2011 behind Ethiopia.

"Finally, three years ago, I got invited to be on the U.S. team. I got hooked," said Lewy-Boulet, who finished 14th in 2010 and ninth last year. "Every year since then it's been more and more amazing. The team aspect of this race is really inspiring, coming together for Team USA."

The men's field had a very late addition on Sunday afternoon. Due to a misunderstanding with the Mexican Federation, two Mexican men's teams arrived in Boulder expecting to compete.

Professional race director Don Janicki decided to allow both teams to run. One will be eligible to win the International Team Challenge and the other will run as an exhibition team that will not effect team scores nor be eligible to win prize money.

Ethiopia has won the men's race five consecutive times and the women's race the last three years.

Chris Barnicle, Aaron Braun and Scott Smith will represent Team USA, which is seeking its first title in eight years. Former Colorado Buff Kenyon Neuman will make his Bolder Boulder debut on Team Colorado with teammates Jeremy Freed and Patrick Rizzo.

"You have more of an incentive because the team title is on the line. Ever since I was at CU, that's something I've been missing," Neuman said. "When you're on your own you are only letting yourself down. And there's not as much weight on you as when you have friends that are also depending on you."

Neuman was in the stands when Slattery won six years ago.

"I can only imagine what it sounds like down there," Neuman said. "I've been in the crowd before to watch my friends. It's very moving."

International Team Challenge

MEN

Team USA -- Chris Barnicle, Scott Smith, Aaron Braun

Team Colorado -- Jeremy Freed, Patrick Rizzo, Kenyon Neuman

Kenya -- Allan Kiprono, Lani Rutto, John Korir

Mexico -- Juan Carlos Romero, Diego Alberto Borrego, Alejandro Suarez

Mexico (exhibition) -- Daniel Vargas, Arturo Malaquais, Carlos Cordero

Ethiopia -- Tadese Tola, Brihanu Gedefa, Demessew Tsega

Peru -- Jhon Lenon Casallo Lozano, Paulino Canchanya Canchanya, Leon Lopez Constantino

Canada -- Sam Pawluk, Sami Jabril, Rob Watson

Austria/Oceania -- Liam Adams, Lee Troop, Michael Fox

Guatemala -- Victor Manuel Gonzales, Ottoniel Mucia, Mynor Lopez

WOMEN

Team USA -- Janet Cherobon-Bawcom, Magdalena Lewy-Boulet, Deena Kastor

Team Colorado -- Sara Slattery, Wendy Thomas, Adrianna Nelson

Kenya -- Jelliah Kerubo Tiniga, Genoveva Kigen, Evelyn Lagat

Mexico -- Dulce Rodriguez, Marisol Romero, Karina Perez

Ethiopia -- Ashu Kasim, Mamitu Daska, Alemitu Abera

Japan -- Kayoko Fukushi, Eri Okubo, Yuko Watanabe

Canada -- Marilyn Arsenault, Lanni Marchant, Leslie Sexton

Australia -- Benita Willis, Lara Tamsett, Verity Breen

Peru -- Santa Ines Melchor Huiza, Judith Toribio Lavado, Julia Rivera Lopez

United Kingdom -- Kathy Butler, Rebecca Robinson, Claire Hallisey

PROFESSIONAL WHEELCHAIRS

Men -- Scott Parsons, Aaron Pike, Peter Park, Tyler Byers, Bradley Ray, Dennis Gordon, Jacob Heilveil, Ross Osborne.

Women -- Christian Schwab, Dawna Callahan, Katja Stokley, Susannah Scaroni, Anjali Forber-Pratt.

Sara Slattery putting her best work on display at Bolder Boulder

By John Meyer The Denver Post The Denver Post

Posted:

DenverPost.com

BOULDER — Sara Slattery will run today's Bolder Boulder elite race hoping to make a little prize money and get in a good tuneup for the Olympic Trials.

But the former Colorado Buff will be keenly interested in what happens in the citizens race too. About 90 people she coaches in a corporate wellness program will be taking part.

"They're going to be all out there, so it will be fun to see how they do, and I know they'll be out there cheering me on," Slattery said. "I'm just really excited for the whole weekend."

Slattery works with Ric Rojas, a prominent local coach and former elite runner who won the first Bolder Boulder in 1979, at the wellness program for WhiteWave, a Broomfield company that makes soy milk and organic foods. She works 15 to 20 hours a week, setting up training programs.

"I really enjoy being able to use my business degree, but also staying involved with running and getting people involved in the sport, improving their fitness and seeing their confidence levels go up," Slattery said. "It's a really cool position, so I feel grateful. It's a great environment to work in."

Slattery, who won the Bolder Boulder in 2006, will run for Team Colorado in today's International Team Challenge. She wanted to run it the past two years but was sidelined by injuries. This will be her first race this spring, so it's important for her preparation for the Olympic Trials.

"It's a race I can't pass up because it's such a community event," Slattery said. "It's so awesome having such a huge race like this in your backyard. I have so many friends and neighbors who will be out there cheering."

Slattery will run the 5,000 meters at the Olympic Trials, June 22-July 1 in Eugene, Ore. Her husband, Steve, will run the steeplechase.

With her run of injuries in recent years, and a hamstring issue in recent weeks, Slattery concedes it will be "difficult" for her to make the U.S. Olympic team.

"I feel like I've come back from a lot of things," Slattery said. "My best years on the track have been overcoming a lot of things, so you never know. I had a great buildup, and it's just been the past month with little injuries and stuff. I don't count myself out."

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Never satisfied

Hale Irwin wasn't impressed that, a week shy of his 67th birthday, his third-place finish cemented his distinction as the oldest player to finish in the top five in a major. Already, he said, he's got some ideas on how to get better.



Hale Irwin was pleased with the way he hit the ball all week, but wasn't so happy with his putting. (Getty Images)

By John Kim, PGA.com Coordinating Producer

BENTON HARBOR, Mich. -- Hale Irwin wasn't impressed that at age 66 (and a week shy of 67), his third place finish on Sunday at the Senior PGA Championship presented by KitchenAid -- after shooting a final round 68 -- meant he was now the oldest player to finish in the top five in a major championship.

"Statistics ... I don't pay attention to statistics," he stated. Of course, the player he surpassed was none other than himself, when he finished fourth at the 2011 Senior PGA Championship.

But Irwin's nonchalance is probably more a testament to his lofty expectations at the majors more than a lack of interest in his place in history. Irwin's game is tailored for the toughest tests and the exacting nature that the courses demand, something he anticipated and was ready for. Well, mostly ready for.

"I think I played reasonably well," Irwin said in a matter-of-fact manner after his Sunday round. "You got the tale of the tee to green and you got the tale of the greens. Well, today and this week really it was the tale of how I got to the greens -- very good -- and how I putted the greens -- was very poor."

With the most favorable scoring conditions and hole locations all week on Sunday, Irwin lamented some missed putts that prevented him from pulling off what might have been the largest final-round comeback in

Senior PGA Championship history.

"I just puttied so poorly for the week," he claimed, "I'm not going to lay that off on putting alone, but these are difficult greens to putt. I just didn't strike the putts very well."

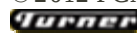
After an opening round even-par 71, he shot three scores in the 60s (66-69-68). And though those scores were good enough to beat all but two of the best senior players in the world, Irwin sees an opportunity for improvement.

"I've got some adjustments to make," he stated. "I've got some ideas in mind."

So can Irwin continue his success in the majors, including potentially next year when he'll be a week shy of 68, as the Senior PGA Championship moves to Bellerive Country Club?

The last time he was there was for the 2004 U.S. Senior Open, an event he lost in a playoff to Peter Jacobson. A familiar major championship course with a game that never seems to age just might be a formula to take the leap from a top-five fixture to a return to the winner's circle.

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