

CU coach Casey Malone eyeing third trip to Olympics

By John Meyer The Denver Post The Denver Post

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BOULDER — When he isn't coaching throwers on the University of Colorado's track and field team — or commuting 86 miles daily between his home in Fort Collins and his job in Boulder — Casey Malone trains for what he hopes will be his third Olympics this summer as a discus thrower.

He wants it more than ever, and that surprises him.

"The first time I went, it was the ultimate dream to go to the Olympic Games," said Malone, who turns 35 today. "I thought I wanted it a lot then, but now that I've been twice, it makes me want it even more. Now I know what that experience is about. You want it a lot your first time, but it's interesting to see how each time after, it's like I want it even more."

Malone is gaining respect for Al Oerter, who won gold medals in the discus in four consecutive Olympics (1956-68).

"Not that I didn't have a lot of respect for Al Oerter in the first place, but it gives me a whole new level of respect for what he's accomplished," Malone said. "Just going to three Olympic Games would be incredible. Going to four would be incredible. But winning a gold medal at four, it's just staggering to think about."

Malone finished sixth at the 2004 Athens Games and failed to advance from preliminaries at the 2008 Beijing Games. The following season he set his personal record (68.49 meters) and finished fifth at the world championships in Berlin, but he was hampered the next two seasons by a cartilage defect in his left knee. So far this season, his knee is feeling better, so he is optimistic about this summer's Olympics — and beyond. Even in his mid-30s, he expects to compete well beyond London.

"You can make some comparisons with golf, because golf is so highly technical," Malone said. "You can be the best in the game at almost any age — it just depends on your technique and your fitness and as long as you're healthy. I reached new strength levels when I passed the age of 30, so my strength levels are still going up, my size is still going up, technique is still going up."

Kipp second-best in world. CU junior Shalaya Kipp ran the best women's collegiate steeplechase time of the year last Sunday at the Payton Jordan Cardinal Invitational. Kipp's time of 9 minutes, 43.09 seconds was the second-fastest in the world this year.

It gives her the Olympic Trials "A" standard requirement and Olympic Games "B" standard. It is 12 seconds faster than her time at the NCAA championships last year, when she finished third.

"Coming into this race the goal was to break 9:50 and finish in the top five," said Kipp, of Salt Lake City. "This was a surprise, and I'm very happy and excited."

Colorado represented at triathlon trials. A dozen triathletes, including seven who train in Colorado, will compete for spots on the Olympic team this week at the ITU World Triathlon in San Diego.

Laura Bennett of Boulder and Sarah Hoskins of Colorado Springs, both of whom competed in the 2008 Beijing Games, are among six women who will be competing Friday for the one remaining open spot on the Olympic team. Sarah Groff of Hanover, N.H., and Gwen Jorgensen of Milwaukee already have qualified.

Hunter Kemper, Matt Chrabot and Mark Fretta of Colorado Springs are among six men who will vie Saturday for at least two spots on the team. The U.S. could earn a third slot Saturday or at another ITU event later this month. Kemper is a three-time Olympian.

John Meyer: 303-954-1616 or jmeyer@denverpost.com