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August 03, 2012

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Emma Coburn gears up for her 2012 Olympic debut

**Emma Coburn gears up for her 2012 Olympic debut**

Written by Than Acuff

Wednesday, 01 August 2012

**"It was the most incredible thing I've ever done"**

Crested Butte's own Emma Coburn will be making her Olympic debut on Saturday, August 4, running in the women's 3,000-meter steeplechase prelims at 4:35 a.m. Crested Butte time Maxwell's will show the replay of the race at 11 a.m. that same day. If Coburn qualifies for the finals, they will then show the finals at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, August 6.

She's had a busy schedule leading up to the race with an event in Dublin, Ireland the week prior, the opening ceremonies and everything else. Coburn took time for a Q&A with the Sports Barrel via email. And for Emma's account of the Opening Ceremony, see the story below.

Any races leading up to Olympics? How did they go?

I raced a mile in Dublin, Ireland on July 25. I ran 4:33 and finished fifth in my race. Every runner in the race was a professional runner, other than Shalaya and I, and most specialize in the event. I wanted to run a few seconds faster and maybe finish a few places higher, but it was a good rust-buster because I hadn't raced since the trials.

When did you arrive at the Olympic venue?

We landed in London on the 20th and spent the night in the Olympic Village that night to get our credentials. Then off to USA track and field training camp in Birmingham, England. I didn't go into the stadium until the Opening Ceremony though, and obviously I couldn't really see the track or barriers, so I still haven't seen the details of my racing venue.

What did you think?

We were so sleepy that I couldn't really absorb everything that first night. We went back again for a night for the Opening Ceremony and then I could appreciate the Village. Dozens of towers, all about 10 stories tall, with flags hanging off the balconies to show what country is staying where. The USA tower is very close to the dining hall, which we all really appreciate! The dining hall is huge! Bigger than any grocery store I have ever been in—like the picture the size of 10 Clark's Markets! There are stations of all different types of food (American/Mediterranean, "Best of Britain," Jamaican/Caribbean, Indian/Asian) and there's McDonald's that is completely free! I have gone there for oatmeal, smoothies, and coffee, but after my race will hit up some of the less healthy options ;)

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It is pretty incredible to walk around and see hundreds of athletes dressed head to toe in their country's team apparel. There is such a strong sense of patriotism from every athlete and the "Olympic Spirit" is in the air.

Have you been on a whirlwind media tour or do you get time to focus/relax?

No media obligations. The USA officials try and keep that to a minimum so that we can focus and relax. We have been traveling so much though that we haven't had much down time. London, Birmingham, day trip to Wales, Dublin, Birmingham, London, Birmingham—all in days! We have stayed in each place for one to three nights so just lots of traveling. I'm looking forward to the next few days to just relax!

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Home Sports Opening ceremonies through Emma's eyes

## Opening ceremonies through Emma's eyes

Written by Emma Coburn

Wednesday, 01 August 2012

**"Pure sport and pure celebration. Pure happiness!"**

Emma Coburn was nice enough to share her opening ceremonies experience in her own words...

They rang the bell and we all started walking. It was about a mile walk to the stadium and we would walk 50m then be stopped for a few minutes then start walking again. So the walk took over an hour! When the bell first rang, and we started walking, I was so excited! Everyone in the group started chanting USA!—USA!—USA! It was so cool. Then after the first five minutes, after starting and stopping and starting and stopping, most of the energy died. Even though we had to wait so long, it was okay because we would stop and chat with other athletes. I happened to be surrounded with mostly track people so on the walk I talked with Jesse Williams, Lolo Jones, Allyson Felix, Amy Hastings and Desi Devilla. I enjoyed this part way more than the photo/hang out session we had earlier for an hour. I think that time was set aside to take pictures and socialize but it felt really awkward and so the walk was good because we were able to just casually talk. Once we walked through the Olympic Village, we crossed through gates into the Olympic Park (where the public has access). Once we got into the Olympic Park, the energy started to pick up again.

People were lined up waiting to get high fives, autographs, pictures, and to cheer for us. Most of the people were little kids. We would walk by some and they would just say USA, USA, USA. We still would walk 50m then stop for a few minutes and so when we were stopped, kids would ask for autographs, ask our event, take pictures, and tell us they loved our accent. Ha! The crowds really amped up the energy and made the anticipation to enter the stadium just grow and grow. Finally, when we got in sight of the stadium, my heart skipped a beat! It was so beautiful, lit up in the dark sky, it took my breath away. Knowing that I was about to walk in there for the Opening Ceremony was unreal.

As we approached, there were lines painted on the ground of how wide we can stand (we had about 50 people across and we could only have 15 people across to be able to fit on the walkway in the stadium). I knew I wanted to be on the outside so that you could see me and [fellow steeplechase athlete] Shalaya better on TV.

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## Weather



Tomorrow: Partly Sunny

Hi **77°F**

Lo **41°F**

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