



Emma Coburn, with USA teammate Bridget Franek, finished ninth in the 3,000 Steeplechase at the London Olympics
Photo Courtesy: Associated Press



Coburn Places 9th In The Olympic Finals

Release: 08/06/2012 Courtesy: Linda Poncin Sprouse, Assistant SID

LONDON- University of Colorado senior Emma Coburn raced to a top-nine finish in the finals of the 3,000-meter steeplechase on Monday night at the Olympic Summer Games.

Coburn recorded a personal best in the race, clocking a time of nine minutes, 23.54 seconds, two seconds faster than her previous best. She was the top U.S. finisher, crossing the line in front of U.S. teammate Bridget Franek, who took 14th in 9:45.51. Russia's Yuliya Zaripova won the gold medal in 9:06.72 and was closely followed by Tunisia's Habiba Ghribi (9:08.37), who took silver, and Ethiopia's Sofia Assefa, who won the bronze in 9:09.84.

"Overall I am happy," Coburn said. "A personal record and finishing ninth in the Olympics is something I'm proud of, and I hope to use this and my experiences in the future to prepare myself to race these women and hopefully do better against them in the future, finish a little higher up."

The Crested Butte, Colo. native ran a smart race after leading the majority of her preliminary race on Saturday. She tucked in and stayed with the lead pack until the top group pulled away from the field. Coburn was in eighth

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near the end of the race and at the finish she was just nipped by Germany's Gesa Felicitas Krause (9:23.52).

"This was another very sound and mature race for Emma," CU coach Mark Wetmore said. "I'm not sure if this is correct, but I heard she was the youngest member of the U.S. track team. So, to run her fastest time ever, and one of the fastest U.S. times ever, in the middle of the pressure, excitement, and distractions of this meet, is a testimony to her character.

"She exceeded all of our goals for the year. We are enormously proud of her."

The ninth-place finish is the best finish of the games for a Buff this Olympiad and ties the best finish by a Buff in the last two Olympic Games. Jenny (Barringer) Simpson placed ninth in the steeplechase in 2008 and raced to a similar time of 9:22.26. Two other Buffs, Kara Goucher (5,000-meters) and Dathan Ritzenhein (marathon) also placed ninth in their events in 2008.

Coburn's Olympic finish is three spots better than what she finished at the 2011 IAAF World Championships almost one year ago when she took 12th.

Simpson, who has switched gears from the steeplechase to the 1,500, ran in the prelims of the 1,500 during the morning session and just barely advanced to the semifinals on Wednesday, taking the sixth and final automatic qualifying spot in the second section (4:13.81).

She found herself in the back of the pack and fought her way up from a 10th-place position heading into the bell lap. Simpson started to surge as the lead pack went around the final turn but it wasn't until the final 100 meters when she started to pick off some runners in front of her. In the final meters, she was able to just nip Russia's Yekaterina Martynova for the final qualifying spot. Martynova finished 25th overall (seventh in the heat) and missed advancing to the next round with a time of 4:13.86, .05 seconds behind Simpson.

"If people want to see my miracle kick that was definitely a miracle today," Simpson said. "I ran the slowest race to make it in. At this point, what's done is done, I have to move on. It was really physical up front. With about 200 meters to go I realized I needed to do something so I put my head down and didn't look up until 5 meters to the line. I think it's the first time in my life I've leaned at the line."

The semis for the 1,500 are on Wednesday at 12:45 p.m. MT (7:45 p.m. in London).

Social Media: The official twitter hash tag for CU at the Olympics is #LondonBuffs. Please follow CU track and field's handle on twitter: @CUBuffsTrack for updates throughout the games.

30th Olympic Games

(Olympic Stadium, London, England)

Women's 3,000-Meter Steeplechase - Finals

1. Yuliya Zaripova, Russia, 9:06.72

9. Emma Coburn, 9:23.54

Women's 1,500-Meters - Round 1

1. Abeba Aregawi (Ethiopia), 4:04.55

24. Jenny Simpson, 4:13.81

Buffs In London Track & Field Schedule (All Times Are Mountain)

Women's 1,500 Meters

(Jenny Simpson)

Wed. 8/8: Semis, 12:45 p.m.

TV: Tape-delayed on NBC - no time is given

Fri. 8/10: Finals, 1:55 p.m.

TV: Tape-delayed on NBC - no time is given

SHOW MENU



CU's Emma Coburn finishes ninth in steeplechase at London Olympics

By John Meyer *The Denver Post* *The Denver Post*

Posted:

DenverPost.com

LONDON —Emma Coburn achieved one of her goals in the Olympics steeplechase Monday night, setting a new personal best. And she finished ninth, a good result for an aspiring young steepler still in college making her debut on the Olympic stage.

But the Colorado Buffs runner and two-time U.S. champion got nipped in a dive at the line by Germany's Gesa Felicitas Krause for eighth place, and that rankled Coburn just a little.

"I was happy to get a two-second PR," Coburn said.

"I wish I maybe would have not gotten dived at the line. I wish I would have held my eighth-place position. But overall I'm happy. A personal record and finishing ninth in the Olympics is something I'm proud of, and I hope to use this and my experiences in the future to prepare myself to race these women and hopefully do better against them in the future, finish a little higher up."

Yuliya Zaripova of Russia won the gold medal in nine minutes, 6.72 seconds. Coburn finished in 9:23.54. Habiba Ghribi of Tunisia claimed the silver medal and Sofia Assefa of Ethiopia the bronze.

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Jenny Simpson qualifies for 1,500 meters semis by less than a second

By John Meyer The Denver Post The Denver Post

Posted:

DenverPost.com

LONDON — The Olympics may help bring nations together, but when it comes to the 1,500 meters it's every woman for herself. And it can get downright nasty.

Jenny Simpson, a former Colorado Buff and the reigning world champion from Monument, decided to avoid the potential disaster at the front of the pack by running from the back in Monday's first round, and it almost cost her dearly.

In 11th place with 150 meters to go, Simpson had to kick with everything she had to secure the sixth and final spot in Wednesday's semifinal. After crossing the finish line, she had some anxious moments waiting to see the results on the scoreboard.

"Waiting for the names to come up on the board, I'm thinking, 'What a mistake, what a stupid mistake,' " Simpson said of the tactical decision to lay back that nearly backfired. "But then, once it comes up, I look on the positive: I move on to the next two rounds and I ran the slowest, easiest race to get in."

Simpson's margin in grabbing that last spot in the semi was 0.05 of a second over Ekaterina Martynova of Russia.

"It was so physical up front that I thought, 'Maybe if I let them go a little bit, I won't be tangled up when half the field goes down,' " Simpson said. "I thought, 'I'm running really comfortable so I'll just get close with 200-300 meters to go,' which is such a dumb thing to do. I knew with 100 meters to go, 'I gotta pull out something here, or I'm going to be sitting in my apartment in two days.'"

Simpson's experience illustrates the unpredictability of the 1,500 meters. Paces vary, collisions happen, favorites fail to reach finals. Simpson's heat was won in 4:13:55 by Lisa Dobriskey of Great Britain. The first heat went in 4:04.55 to Abeba Aregfawi of Ethiopia.

"At 4:13 pace, everyone can run that pace, and everyone can be really tactical and be ready to run (late in the race)," Simpson said. "Everyone's trying to get in good position, and at that point, like I showed in maybe not a great way, positioning is the most important thing when it's a slow race."

What's it like with all those sleek athletes crammed together at the front, running 14 mph, jostling and elbowing?

"It's not anything goes, but you have to stand your ground, you have to be willing to defend your space and be aggressive," Simpson said. "I don't think there was anything in the race that wasn't appropriate, it's just everyone's running within themselves, together, trying to get in position, and it just gets physical."

"When people dramatically go to the outside or dramatically make any sort of move, you can cut people off and you can cause a crash."

Simpson got away with a mistake once. She knows she won't get away with it again.

"Coming into the semi," she said, "if I want to make it to the final I cannot, under any circumstances, let that sort of gap exist."

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Jenny Simpson narrowly makes semifinal in 1,500-meter run

LONDON – When former Iowan Jenny Simpson decided to avoid a fight during the first round of the women's 1,500-meter run at the Olympics, she ended up in the fight of her athletic life.

A jostling, elbowing, wreck-waiting-to-happen mob ruled the front of the race on Monday at the Olympic Stadium.

Simpson, who was born in Webster City and now lives in Monument, Colo., chose to slip behind the lead group to avoid trouble. The problem: When it was time to accelerate, Simpson had fallen too far back.

A sprint in the closing meters allowed Simpson, the defending world champion in the event to grab the 24th and final semifinal berth – and earned her an Olympic-sized sigh of relief.

"I knew with 100 meters to go, 'I gotta pull something out here or I'm going to be sitting in my apartment in two days,' " Simpson said.

Simpson finished in 4 minutes, 13.81 seconds – more than nine seconds off the pace of top qualifier Abeba Aregawi of

Ethiopia, and just .05 ahead of being bumped from the Olympics.

As she watched the results board inside the stadium, waiting for the outcome, she thought: "What a mistake. What a stupid mistake."

American teammate Morgan Uceny, who was ranked No. 1 in the world in the event a year ago, agreed that the physical nature of the race created concerns.

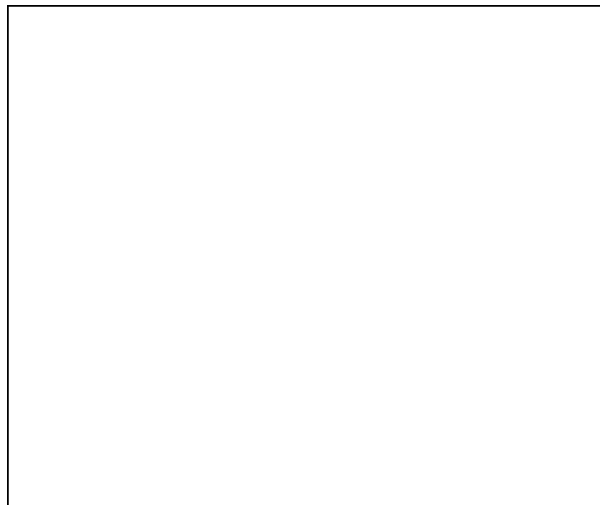
While practicing, Uceny's coach intentionally elbows her to simulation the rough-and-tumble nature of the race.

"He thinks he's doing this to annoy me, which he is, but it's also to prepare me for my races," Uceny said.

U.S. qualifier Shannon Rowbury finished with the seventh-fastest qualifying time - 4:06.03.

No American woman has won an Olympic medal in the 1,500 - and the U.S. odds

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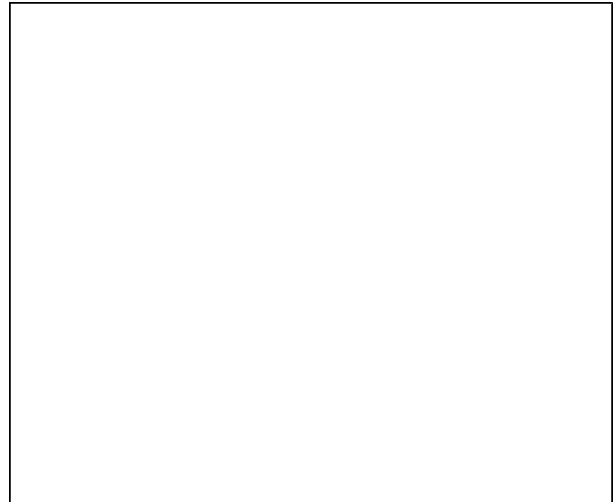
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were almost cut by a third.

The near-miss for Simpson provided a valuable lesson, she said.

“You certainly have to stand your ground. You have to defend your space, be aggressive – and defend what’s yours,” said Simpson, 25. “I cannot, cannot, cannot – under any circumstances – let that gap exist.”

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