



CU's Barringer cruises to U.S. steeplechase crown

Bufs senior bound for world championships

Camera staff and wire
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EUGENE, Ore. -- Jenny Barringer grabbed the lead at the start of the women's 3,000-meter steeplechase at the U.S. Track and Field Championships on Sunday and never let it go.

The University of Colorado senior pushed the pace despite windy conditions, to claim her second national title in the event. Barringer crossed the finish line in 9 minutes, 29.38 seconds.

"It was really windy out there so I wanted to take command of the race from the beginning and I wanted to race at my ability level and just see who came along," said Barringer, who also won in 2007. "I'm really happy with how it went and I couldn't ask for a better day."

Anna Willard, Lindsay Anderson and Bridget Franek tried to stay with Barringer, but could not. By the time she entered the sixth lap, Barringer stretched her lead to 25 meters and was able to cruise to the finish.

Willard finished in 9:35.01 and Franek, of Penn State, was third in 9:36.74. They will head to the World Championships in Berlin with Barringer in August.

Despite Barringer's easy victory, the steeplechase was not without controversy at the national meet.

In the preliminary round Friday night at Hayward Field, Nicole Bush took a spill after hurdling the water barrier and fractured her right foot.

Bush, who had just finished her senior year at Michigan State and finished second to Barringer at the NCAA Championships earlier this month, tumbled into the water on the third lap. Amazingly, she still finished the race.

It was later determined the barrier was set as many as six inches too high, perhaps at the men's level. The barrier is at 36 inches for the men and 30 inches for the women.

USA Track & Field CEO Doug Logan said he takes responsibility for the mistake.

"It's disappointing what happened," he said. "It's human error. I won't go any further than that. I don't throw people under buses ... I'm embarrassed by it."

Logan said he sought out Bush on Saturday to personally apologize and offer support with medical

treatment and rehabilitation.

"She's definitely in our plans for the future and I wanted to reaffirm that," Logan said. "I indicated to (Bush and her coach) that I was going to do all in my power to make sure that human error did not occur again in any event."

That feeling is shared by the athletes.

"Above everything, safety should be the No. 1 priority," said Barringer, who said she was among those who reported afterward that the barrier was way too high.

In the sprint races Sunday, Shawn Crawford, who was awarded an Olympic medal he felt he didn't deserve last year, won a national title by blowing away the field in the 200-meter finals in a wind-aided time of 19.73 seconds.

Allyson Felix joined Crawford as America's other 200-meter champion. A heavy favorite to win her fifth national title, Felix didn't disappoint, finishing in 22.02 (also wind-aided) to edge Muna Lee. Marshevet Hooker finished third.

The 31-year-old Crawford blew away newcomer Charles Clark by .27 seconds to win his fourth national title, dating to 2001. So instead of saying goodbye, Crawford is simply gearing up again.

"Before this race, I thought I was done," he said. "After this, maybe I got a little bit more in me than I thought."

Wallace Spearmon finished third to nab the final spot on the U.S. team heading to worlds later this summer.

Tyson Gay has already qualified in the 100 and 200 thanks to his world championships in 2007.

Bernard Lagat and Jeremy Wariner will also be on the team based on their 2007 championships, even though neither won anything this weekend. Lagat ran only one heat of the 800 and Wariner was eliminated in the semifinals of the 200.

Other American stars not as lucky include Lolo Jones, the top-ranked 100-meter hurdler from 2008 who fell in her semifinal heat, and Olympic heptathlon silver medalist Hyleas Fountain, who was leading before withdrawing with a neck injury. She remained at the hospital late Sunday for observation.

Sprinter Walter Dix and decathlete Bryan Clay, who have four Olympic medals between them, were injured earlier in the week and will also miss the trip to Berlin.

Former CU standout Stephen Pifer just missed qualifying for Berlin as he finished fourth in the men's 1,500-meter run. Pifer took the lead heading into the bell lap, but fell back with 200 meters remaining. He finished in 3:44.21.

CU volunteer assistant coach Emily Pearson was 11th in the women's heptathlon. She recorded 5,486 points in the meet. She was 18th in the long jump (17-04.00), first in the javelin (143-03) and was 11th in the 800 (2:23.53). Pearson graduated last year from Colorado State.

U.S. Championships

At Hayward Field**Eugene, Ore.****Top 3 and finals only****MEN**

200 -- 1, Shawn Crawford, Nike, 19.73. 2, Charles Clark, unattached, 20.00. 3, Wallace Spearmon, Nike, 20.03.

800 -- 1, Nicholas Symmonds, Oregon TC Elite, 1:45.86. 2, Khadevis Robinson, Nike, 1:45.97. 3, Ryan Brown, Asics, 1:46.67.

1,500 -- 1, Lopez Lomong, Nike, 3:41.68. 2, Leonel Manzano, Nike, 3:41.82. 3, Dorian Ulrey, Arkansas, 3:42.84. 4, Stephen Pifer, Oregon TC Elite.

400 Hurdles -- 1, Bershawn Jackson, Nike, 48.03. 2, Johnny Dutch, South Carolina, 48.18. 3, Angelo Taylor, Nike, 48.30.

High Jump -- 1, Tora Harris, Asics, 7-7. 2 (tie), Andra Manson, Nike, and Keith Moffatt, Nike, 7-5



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