



Barringer advances to steeple final

Buff standout finishes third in qualifying heat

By Nick Gholson Scripps Howard News Service
Friday, August 15, 2008

BEIJING -- Four women in the 3,000-meter steeplechase heats automatically qualify for the Olympic finals. And for much of Friday night's second heat race, Jennifer Barringer was running fifth.

But with just under 1,000 meters to go, the University of Colorado senior finally passed Sophie Duarte of France, then survived a stumble by a couple of runners on the final water hurdle and finished third.

Her time of 9:29.20 was less than a half-second behind winner Tatiana Petrova of Russia (9:28.85) and runner-up Roisin McGettigan of Ireland (9:28.92).

"I felt the last couple of races I have been in I've had a really great kick. In the trials I thought in the race, 'Man, I'm dying' and I wasn't kicking as well as I normally do," Barringer explained. "But I still ran around 70 seconds for the final lap, so I was very confident that if it came down to a kick, I was going to be there.

"Then on that last water jump, a couple stumbled on the water, so it came down to being heady, focusing on the barriers and kicking hard. I am really glad I rose to the top under those circumstances."

Once she finally passed Duarte and held that fourth qualifying position, Barringer knew she could not let her guard down. After all, these are the Olympics, where the competition is the best in the world.

"I remember thinking I'm in the most dangerous position. I'm in fourth place. The target is on my back," she said. "So I thought 'don't make any big moves.' But you've got to race.

"So I began racing purely for the gift of running another one. For the last three laps, I didn't feel like I was in the Olympic semifinals. Jenny Barringer is racing for the chance to race again, and I love it. I love it. I get to go over seven more water jumps."

The finals will be held on Sunday.

This is the first year that women have raced this event in the Olympics, so Barringer and the other 14 finalists will be making history. The medal winners can make even more history.

"I am thrilled. I came out of Osaka (World Championships) last year and said I don't want to come to a World Championship or an Olympics again and not be in the finals. I made good on that promise," she said.

Malone doesn't

advance in discus

Four years ago, Casey Malone didn't have very high expectations in his first Olympics.

He finished sixth in men's discus.

So coming here, the Colorado State graduate's goal was to farther than he threw in Athens.

That didn't happen.

Malone's best throw was his third and final one, a 61.26, quite lower than the 64.33 he threw in 2004.

That most 61.26 most likely won't be good enough to get him in the finals here. It was 11th best of the first 19 qualifiers with another group of 18 left to throw. Only the 12 best make the finals.

"I felt like I was prepared to do better than I did in Athens," he said. "Maybe that's because the first time around there are lower expectations and no pressure. The second time around you expect more and maybe that could add a little pressure to the situation."

Malone, a 31-year-old coach who competed for Colorado State and coaches at Colorado, admitted his first two throws (a 59.48 and a scratch) were "probably a little bit of nerves."

"I was using too much of my upper body and not being as fluid and rhythmic as I had been in practice," he said. "The third one was definitely going in the right direction. I wish that third throw had come on my first. I was getting in my rhythm on that throw."



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Nelson starts fast but falters in qualifying

Former Buff doesn't advance in steeplechase

By Steven Ahillen Scripps Howard News Service
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BEIJING - It wasn't exactly the first Olympic experience Bill Nelson had planned, but at least it's something to build on.

After going out hard and running second for a short time, Nelson ran out of steam toward the middle of his heat in the steeplechase and finished 10th, not accomplishing his goal of making it to the finals. His finishing time of 8 minutes, 36.66 seconds was also well off of what he had hoped.

"Stepping on the track I was really excited. It was definitely the most people I have ever run in front of," Nelson said. "I gave them a pretty bad showing. My first impression is that I kind of bombed it."

"But, I will let it sink in a couple of days then I will realize that I was here and making it here is the main point. This is the prize you get for the hard work. That's what I'm going to take from here."

It has been a fast rise to the international scene for Nelson, whose biggest win was the Big 12 championship at Colorado. He finished second at the Olympic trials with a personal best of 8:21.47 to make it here.

Saturday, he said he wanted to get out fast in the race.

"I didn't want to be bunched up," he said. "It started out like the (Olympic trials), then I just kind of fell apart. It's really dry out there. My mouth was really dry. And, I just kind of fell flat. My legs just weren't there today."

Nelson was running with a full head of steam and tracking teammate Anthony Familglietti for the first three laps. But, he visibly began faltering and soon found himself fighting to stay with the pack.

"I wanted to make the finals," he said. "Ultimately, I wanted to go under 8:20. That was my goal. Making the finals would have been huge."

It also would have been a bonus in a way. He knew going in that these likely wouldn't be his Olympics.

"I keep telling myself that four years from now is Olympics I am going for," he said. "And to be here and to make it the way I did. It's my first time here. So I'll have to be happy with however it went. In four years I'll be older, I'll be stronger. I'll be tougher. That's what I have to look forward to."

Familglietti finished third in the heat -- by far the fastest of the three run -- and advanced to the finals to be run Sunday night.



Ex-Buff Goucher slips to disappointing 10th in 10,000

But Boulder-born Flanagan runs to bronze medal

By Nick Gholson Scripps Howard News Service
Friday, August 15, 2008

BEIJING -- After finishing third at the World Championships last year, Kara Goucher came to these Olympics with high expectations.

"I'm crazy. I thought I could win," the University of Colorado graduate said just minutes after placing 10th in the women's 10,000-meter run here Friday night.

While it was disappointment for Goucher, it was happiness for Shalane Flanagan.

Flanagan, who was born in Boulder, won the bronze medal despite finishing 26 seconds behind runner-up Elvan Abeylegesse of Turkey.

Tirunesh Dibaba of Ethiopia won the race in an Olympic record time of 29:54.66, followed by Abeylegesse at 29:56.34 and Flanagan at 30:22.22.

After crossing the finish line, Flanagan held up three inquisitive fingers, unsure where she had placed.

"I had no idea what place was what because we were lapping people. I thought I had finished third, but I didn't want to celebrate too soon because I thought maybe I was fourth," she said.

Goucher, on the other hand, didn't really want to know her finish

Her 10th-place time was 30:55.16.

"I think I'm better than that," she said. "I don't run to be 10th in the Olympics. I didn't race well today. I'm disappointed. I think I let a lot of people down."

Goucher admitted slowing down when she knew she was out of contention.

"I'm not saying I would have done any better, but I definitely did not risk it. And that was my only goal for the race, to risk it" she said.

"I still had the 5K coming up, but I didn't make a decision because I was going to shut it down and save myself for the 5K. It was a weak decision. It was weakness."



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American captures bronze in women's 10,000 meters, CU's Barringer qualifies for steeplechase final

By John Meyer
The Denver Post

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From left, Jessica Augusto of Portugal, Sophie Duarte of France, Jennifer Barringer of the United States, Tatiana Petrova of Russia and Roisin Mcgettigan of Ireland compete in the Women's 3000m Steeplechase Heats at the Beijing Olympics on August 15, 2008. (Getty Images AsiaPac | Michael Steele)

BEIJING — Shalane Flanagan won a bronze medal in the 10,000 meters and University of Colorado senior Jenny Barringer qualified for the first-ever Olympic women's steeplechase today as the track and field program got underway.

Flanagan broke the American record she set at the Olympic Trials, finishing in 30 minutes, 22.22 seconds, to become the second American woman to win a medal in a track distance event at the Olympics. Lynn Jennings won a bronze at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

CU grad Kara Goucher, who won a bronze medal in the 10,000 at last year's world championships, was 10th.

Flanagan said she took inspiration from

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Goucher's breakthrough last year and Deena Kastor's bronze medal in the marathon at the Athens Olympics four years ago, two pivotal events in the



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resurgence of American distance running.

"Deena really kick-started things," Flanagan said. "She's been a phenomenal role model. She really allowed me to think it was possible, it was attainable. Kara reinforced it last year."

Flanagan was born in Boulder but grew up in the Boston area and lives now in North Carolina. Her

father and mother were distance runners who came to Boulder in the late '70s when it was just beginning to attract elite distance runners following Frank Shorter's medal-winning performances in the 1972 and 1976 Olympic marathon.

On Tuesday Flanagan was wracked with severe gastrointestinal distress that made her dehydrated and jeopardized her race. Only Thursday was she certain she would be able to compete.

Goucher was filled with regret for her effort, because she allowed her mind to drift to Tuesday's 5,000-meter semifinals and backed off the pace in mid-race, but she found solace in Flanagan's achievement and the statement it made for American distance running.

"For me, the silver lining of the night is that Shalane proved tonight that U.S. distance running is on the world level," Goucher said. "There's no fluke that America's back and it's so awesome that she ran well."

"I'm so glad, because otherwise I'd be crying."

It was hard to overstate the significance of Flanagan's race for American distance running.

"Deena led the way, Shalane will be the best (American) we've seen, at every distance," said Mary Wittenberg, president of the New York Road Runners and a major player in the distance running scene. "Shalane is a thoroughbred and ran a brilliant tactical race. It shows we can compete with anybody."

The steeplechase is a 3,000-meter race with four barriers on each lap, one with a water pit. The American record holder and NCAA champion, Barringer was third in her heat in 9 minutes, 29.2

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seconds. The women's steeplechase will be held Sunday.

Barringer qualified for the world championships last year in Osaka, Japan, but failed to get out of the semifinals.

"I am thrilled," Barringer said. "I came out of Osaka and said I never want to go to world championships or Olympics and not make the final. I feel like I made good on that promise, and I'm really looking forward to the next race."

Barringer, 21, kept herself in the lead pack of four for the entire heat and kicked at the end to make sure she would advance. The top four in each heat automatically qualify.

"With three laps to go I remember thinking, 'I'm in the most dangerous position, I'm in fourth place, the target's on my back,' " Barringer said. "I thought, 'Don't make any big moves, but you've got to race.' I remember thinking, 'I want to race purely for the gift of running another one.' "

Also advancing to Sunday's final was Anna Willard, (9:28.52) of Ann Arbor, Mich., who was the American record holder until Barringer usurped her last month.

The one major disappointment of the first day involved American shot putters, who were thought to have a chance to sweep the medals. Christian Cantwell won a silver medal, but Reese Hoffa finished seventh and Adam Nelson fouled on all three of his attempts.

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