



Barringer 9th in steeplechase

Buff senior sets American record

By Nick Gholson Scripps Howard News Service
Sunday, August 17, 2008

BEIJING -- Jenny Barringer had just run and leaped 3,000 meters. And she was ready to run some more.

"To be a part of a race and feel like I can be competitive in a field of women that broke the world record -- I want to come back and do better tonight. That's how it makes me feel," the University of Colorado senior said.

But she settled for an American record time of 9:22.26 and a ninth place finish (out of 15 finalists) in the Olympics' first women's 3,000-meter steeplechase Sunday.

Guinara Galkina-Samtiova of Russia became the first woman to break the 9-minute barrier in the event, winning the gold medal in a world record time of 8:58.81.

But the smile on the Russian's face was no bigger than the grin that Barringer had on hers.

"I didn't even know I was close to that (record)," a beaming Barringer said. "I was waiting for my name to come up on the board to see what place I was. And then when I saw the 'AR' next to my name, oh, it hit me."

She heard Americans cheering and chanting "USA."

The only family members of the bunch were two distant relatives who live in China -- "my grandmother's sister's son's children," Barringer said.

The 21-year-old runner had hoped to break the American record at the Olympic Trials in Eugene, Ore., last month. When that didn't happen, she went to Belgium and ran 9:22.73.

"I was very disappointed in Eugene for not having the American record there, but to get it here was a much, much better gift. So I'll take this," she said.

"To be here in a USA uniform and to do it with people chanting 'USA,' this is a memory. The steeplechase, the first final for women, will go down in history books. But this will go down in my history book," she said.

Barringer dedicated the record to Colorado coaches Mark Wetmore and Heather Burroughs.

"Tonight my coach told me, 'We are already proud of you -- go out and run this one for you.' It was then I decided I wanted to give this to them," she said.

Barringer will spend a little tourist time here before going home and "being a normal college student for a semester."

"Cross country is my first love," she said. "I want to go back and run on the grass, on the field with my team and potentially win a title. That is where my heart is."



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olympics

CU's Barringer sets American record in steeplechase

By Anthony Cotton
The Denver Post

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Jennifer Barringer of the United States competes in the women's 3,000-meter steeplechase final held at the National Stadium on Day 9 of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games on Sunday. (Stu Forster, Getty Images)

sounding just as sunny.

There was excitement about the prospect of being a tourist in Beijing for the next week or so, which was almost as thrilling as returning to Boulder and resuming classes at Colorado. There was happiness at the reception from the massive crowd that greeted her when she moved to the starting line; an audience that included two relatives from China that she didn't know existed.

And, oh yeah, there was the race itself. Barringer didn't win, Gulnara Galkina-Samitova of Russia shattered the world record with a time of 8:58.81. But each of the top finishers set some sort of personal or national mark; that included Barringer, who while finishing ninth, still compiled an American record with her time of 9:22.26.

BEIJING — Jenny Barringer came off the track Sunday night at National Stadium following the 3,000-meter steeplechase looking as fresh as a daisy, and

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given she and fellow runner Anna Willard, the 10th-place finisher, plenty of time to make their marks.

"To feel like I can be competitive in a race of women who set the world record; I want to come back and do better," Barringer said. "Anna is a year out of college, I'm not even out of college. We're both young, we've got years ahead of us to put into technique. We'll be right up with them in four years."

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"I didn't even know; I was waiting to see where my place was, and when I saw the 'AR' next to my name it just hit me," she said to reporters afterwards. "I looked around and everyone, the U.S. was out there, you guys. Everyone was going crazy and cheering.

"To be here, in a USA uniform, and to do it with people chanting USA, it will be a memory. People say the first Olympic steeplechase for women will go down in the history books."

It's not outside the realm of possibility that Barringer will be able to craft more Olympic memories. The CU senior will turn 22 on Saturday,

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Torres struggles to 25th in 10K

By David Lassen Scripps Howard Service
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BEIJING -- It was not the experience Jorge Torres had hoped for, but he came away from his first Olympics Games feeling that experience was valuable nonetheless.

"It didn't go well today," said the 27-year-old Boulder resident and former University of Colorado runner after finishing 25th in the men's 10,000 Sunday night at Beijing's National Stadium. "But the experience overall was great. I'm an Olympian; no one can take that away from me. I wish I could do better, represent the country better, but unfortunately today wasn't my day."

Kenenisa Bekele of Ethiopia won the race in 27 minutes, 1.17 seconds, pulling away in decisive fashion to break the Olympic record of 27:05.10 he'd set four years earlier in Athens. Sileshi Sihine of Ethiopia was second in 27:02.77, followed by Micah Kogo of Kenya in 27:04.11.

The top U.S. finisher was Galen Rupp of the University of Oregon, 13th in 27:36.11. Abdi Abdirahman, a Tucson resident born in Somalia, was 15th in 27:52.53.

Torres, finishing in 28:13.93, had the unfamiliar and unwelcome experience of being lapped by the medalists.

"It's the first time I ever got lapped in a race," he said. "But those guys are pretty good out there, two of the best runners by far in the history of the sport ... It's not a shame to be lapped by them, but at the same time, it's not a good feeling."

The 5-foot-6, 123-pound Torres, a national champion in the 10,000 in 2006 and third at the Olympic Trials this year, had problems from the start.

"I couldn't breathe at first," he said. "It took me a while to start breathing normally. I was like hyperventilating. I don't know what it was. It wasn't like I was nervous or anything. I just wasn't feeling comfortable."

It took him to the midway point to catch up to the main pack of runners, "and then of course, that's when they started accelerating," he said. "And I just wasn't ready to accelerate with them, so I dropped back, and then it was another struggle to try to catch back up."

In looking ahead, Torres thought back to another U.S. runner who made a difficult Olympic debut in the 10,000 and later found great success -- Deena Kastor, the bronze medalist in the 2004 women's marathon.

"(I'll) just keep my head up," he said, "because you never know what could happen. I could come back here four years down the road in the marathon and I could have a day like Deena had four years ago."

"You can never give up. It's a sport where funny things happen, and good things happen for those who are patient and run smart and train hard and dedicate themselves, because one of these days it could be my day."

Bekele said his victory was "all my dreams come true. I'm happy for myself and my country. This (race) was the best athletes of all time."



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