

Women Take Championship in Impressive Fashion

by Zack Warren, BYU Athletic Communications



The BYU women's track team won both the 2009 indoor and outdoor conference titles. (BYU Photo/Jaren Wilkey)

LARAMIE, Wyo. (May 16, 2009) – For the second time in 2009, the BYU women's track team has been named Mountain West Conference champions, securing the outdoor title on Saturday.

The No. 10 nationally ranked Cougars won the event with 190 points. TCU took second with 125 points, followed by Colorado St. with 95.5 points. San Diego St. (87.5) and Utah (76) rounded out the top five.

“This was a team effort,” said BYU women's track and field head coach Craig Poole. “We wouldn't be here without great competitors, my incredible coaching staff and our excellent trainers. You can't run a track team without all of them.”

Along with winning the championship, Poole also took away the MWC Coach of the Year award.

A leading contributor to BYU's championship run was All-American Katie Palmer, who won the 1,500-meter event in a time of 4:30.58. Palmer set Wyoming's Louis S. Madrid Sports Complex record with

her regional-qualifying time.

“Palmer’s stadium record time in the 1,500-meter event may never be broken,” said BYU women’s distance coach Patrick Shane. “It could be the fastest time ever run at 7,200 feet. It was simply incredible.”

Trailing right behind Palmer in the 1,500-meter event was Lacey Cramer, who took second in a regional-qualifying time of 4:33.11.

With little time to rest the All-American duo of Palmer and Cramer were back on the track for a BYU-dominated 800-meter event.

The Cougars took four out of the top five spots in the 800-meter final, earning BYU 27 points in the event.

Cramer won the 800-meter race in a regional-qualifying time of 2:10.22.

Cramer’s time is also a Louis S. Madrid Sports Complex record and was closely followed by Palmer’s second-place time of 2:10.47.

Also placing in the top five in the 800-meter event were freshmen Sarah Yingling, who took fourth in a time of 2:12.92, and Sarah Edwards, who followed in a time of 2:15.63.

Perhaps the meet’s most exciting race was the 4x400-meter relay event, where Palmer and Cramer teamed up with Natalie Stewart and Nachele Stewart.

The foursome ran a blistering regional-qualifying time of 3:36.56, upsetting TCU by more than a second. Their time is a BYU and stadium record.

Natalie Stewart added to the BYU record books, taking fourth in the 400-meter dash. Stewart’s regional-qualifying time of 53.39 ranks second on BYU’s all-time list.

Another Cougar making her way on to BYU’s all-time list was All-American Mindy Neeley-McClurkin, who regionally qualified in the 100- and 200-meter dash events. Neeley-McClurkin’s time of 23.73 in the 200-meter dash is the fourth-best time in school history.

“Overall it was a great meet,” Shane said. “We got off to an excellent start this morning and just kept going. We never take a conference championship for granted.”

Helping win the conference championship was distance standout Cecily Lemmon. Lemmon, the 10,000-meter champion, came back on Saturday to win the 5,000-meter event in a regional qualifying time of 17:37.11. The junior earned 20 points for the Cougars.

Securing six more points for BYU was high jumper Ashley Payne, who ended her season with a solid

third-place finish (5-07.00).

Capping off her MWC career with a silver medal in the javelin throw was Ilze Gribule. Gribule's NCAA regional-qualifying mark of 167-07.00 ranks sixth on BYU's all-time list.

"Ilze did an awesome job," Poole said. "All of our seniors have done a great job. They are consistently the heart of our team and have added to the BYU track tradition and legacy. We will miss them very much."

Gribule, along with other NCAA regional-qualifying members on the team will compete at the NCAA West Regional held in Eugene, Ore. on May 29-30.

For complete results of the MWC Championships, go to <http://www.themwc.com/sports/c-track/stats/2008-2009/09-outdoor-women1.html>.