



Junior Ryan Foster competes in qualifying heats for the 1,000-meter run Saturday during the Penn State Northeast Challenge.

Record run paces Lions

By Anthony Barton
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

As junior Ryan Foster crossed the finish line in Saturday's 1,000-meter run, he had no idea what he just accomplished.

Not only did he break the Penn State school record with a blazing first-place time of 2: minutes, 19.60 seconds, he also set the mark for both the meet and the facility. He wasn't done there.

His time is officially the fastest indoor 1,000-meter run ever by an Australian. Not only that, it was also the second-fastest time run in the 1,000-meter in NCAA indoor track history and currently sits atop the charts as the current 2010 world's fastest time.

The performance led an impressive meet for the men's indoor track and field team.

"I'm pretty excited," a humble Foster said, referring to the Australian national record. "It was nice to get a Penn State and facility record as well. It was a good day."

Head coach Beth Alford-Sullivan was very pleased with the effort. She said Foster has been on a mission since struggling with injuries earlier in his Penn State career.

"[Foster] trained well over the

summer and fall, and that translation is that his strength is up and he is ready to run," Alford-Sullivan said.

Along with Foster, fellow junior Owen Dawson had a great race, also finishing under the former Penn State record in 2:21.98.

With performances like this one, the team may see a move up in the indoor track national rankings. In its preseason rankings, the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCA) ranked Penn State's men's team No. 50 in the nation.

Alford-Sullivan believes her team will be a lot more competitive than the early prognosis suggests.

"I think we are much better than the 50th-best team," Alford-Sullivan said. "I think you will see our guys gain a lot of ground."

Besides the 1,000-meter run, the team saw many other solid performances throughout the day, including an exhilarating 4x400 race. After the first three legs, the Nittany Lions were behind, but freshman Casimir Loxxom pulled off a come-from-behind victory. The team completed the race in a season-best 3:14.50.

"I don't think I've heard this place rocking like this since Big Ten's last year," Alford-Sullivan said. "It's just an exciting way to do it."

Alford-Sullivan said it has always been her vision to have great relay teams. She said a terrific 4x400 team is important because it's the primary relay in track.

In the field, junior throwers Blake Eaton and Joe Kovacs continued their success in the shot put, posting throws of 57 feet, 9.75 inches, and 58 feet, 67.5 inches, respectively.

"Today we pretty much came in with the plan to be consistent," Eaton said. "We pretty much showed that, so I was happy with the performance."

When Foster looks overall at the team, he is pleased where the Lions currently sit.

"I think we're coming along really well," Foster said. "The throwers have been stepping up and the middle-distance guys have kind of kept going where they were last year. We're as good or getting better than we were last year."

Last year the team had its highest finish ever, placing third in the Big Ten. That said, Foster knows the team cannot be complacent.

"Anything less than a step forward is a step back," Foster said. "This program has been built to a point where this is a team that needs to put itself in position to win the Big Ten title."

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Runners qualify for NAAs

By Zack Feldman
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

It's only two meets into the season, and the Penn State women's track and field athletes have already qualified for the NCAA national championships in five events.

And in those two meets, junior Shavon Greaves has qualified in four of those events.

Greaves, in her third year of eligibility, contributed a great deal to the Nittany Lions' success Saturday, putting up NCAA qualifying times in both the 60-meter and 200-meter races in the first meet of the season, while posting a qualifying 400-meter time Saturday.

Greaves spent the entire offseason training and said she's happy with her performances this far into the season.

"I've taken a lot of time off of last year's times. I'm definitely where I need to be," Greaves said. "There's still room for improvement, but I'm in a position where I can be an All-American."

Greaves also contributed to yet another NCAA-qualifying mark, running the third leg of the women's 4x400-meter relay.

Preceding the relay was a pair of "We are ... Penn State" chants, led by race anchor Fawn Dorr, motivating the crowd of Penn State runners and fans.

Following the first half of the race,

"We'll certainly continue to press on the 4x4. We'll be a national player in the 4x4."

Beth Alford Sullivan
Penn State head coach

in which Doris Anyanwu and Caitlin Defusco led for a portion but eventually yielded to the three other teams, the race became critical for Greaves and Dorr.

Greaves took Penn State from fourth to second place by the end of her 400 meters while Dorr quickly took over first place, clinging to the lead while running past her cheering teammates and edging out Seton Hall's anchor Jernail Hayes by 0.6 seconds.

The win was great to see so early in the season. Greaves said, especially after losing two parts of the relay team — 2009 graduate Gayle Hunter and Aleesha Barber, who only has outdoor eligibility this season.

"Right now, we're set where we are," Greaves said. "We're kind of in a rebuilding phase, so right now we just want to edge off time each race as we go."

Though three athletes and the 4x400 team have qualified provisionally for the NCAA championships, Penn State coach Beth Alford-Sullivan insists there is more to come for both the relays and the entire team.

"The women have really developed back with coach [Chris] Johnson," Alford-Sullivan said.

"We'll certainly continue to press on the 4x4. We'll be a national player in the 4x4."

Alford-Sullivan said after a full season of training and competing during cross country, the team's distance runners, who haven't competed yet, will be eased back into action. She expects the team to be back at full strength by the Penn State National on Jan. 29-30.

Although most distance events lacked Penn State runners, one of the many bright spots Saturday was sophomore runner Caitlin Lane, who clocked a 4:52 mile, only four seconds away from a provisional NCAA qualifying time.

Distance runners will continue to "open up" at the Penn State National, Alford-Sullivan said, including Big Ten runner of the year Bridget Franek and Big Ten freshman of the year Nicole Lord.

But until the Penn State National, Alford-Sullivan is happy taking next weekend for runners to train rather than compete.

"The future looks good," Alford-Sullivan said. "But right now we'll take a week off of competition and train through and that will be very good for us."

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