

Day Two, 2014 USA Track & Field Outdoor Championships

Conley and Rupp Garner 10,000m Titles

By Mark Winitz

SACRAMENTO (June 26) — When U.S. 10,000 meter record holder Shalane Flanagan was an abrupt non-starter in the women's 10,000m final on the second day of the USA Track & Field Outdoor Championships in Sacramento, it opened a doorway for hometown favorite **Kim Conley** (New Balance/Sacramento Running Association). The 2012 Olympian (at 5,000m), who resides in West Sacramento, Calif. and graduated from nearby University of California - Davis, thrilled the Hornet Stadium crowd with a superbly planned race to win her first U.S. outdoor title.

"I've wanted to win a national title for so many years now," said Conley, who placed third in the 5,000m at the 2012 U.S. Olympic Track & Field Trials to make the team, and was fourth in the same event at last year's U.S. Outdoor Championships. "I have so many family and friends here from England and Australia. To win my first title here, with the Sacramento Running Association and the whole Sacramento running community who have supported me so much coming out of college, it's just perfect." (*Note: Conley was born in Berkshire, England and moved to the U.S. at an early age.*)

After a somewhat conservative first 5K hit in 16:26, Amy Hastings, Conley's 2012 Olympic 5,000m teammate, picked up the pace with Conley and Jordan Hasay (Ore., Nike Oregon Project) in tow.

"I know those two girls, and I know how fast they are, so I was just trying to take the pop out of their legs, commented Hastings, who trained in Mammoth Lakes, Calif. with the Mammoth Track Club for 4-1/2 years before moving to Rhode Island almost two years ago. "They just had an incredible last mile and an awesome last lap."

With about seven laps to go, Conley took control of the race with Hasay on her heels.

"I knew that she is a strong athlete and has a great finish," Conley said about Hasay, an Arroyo Grande, Calif. native who moved to Oregon to train under coach Alberto Salazar. "So I would need a little something extra. But I also planned to rely on the hometown

crowd to carry me in coming off the final turn.

“During the race, I just kept saying to myself one word over and over again: *Courage*, because it can be a dangerous place to be in the front, especially with someone like Jordan with you. I just reminded myself that if I could be with her with one lap to go, I’d use my heart to get me through.”

Indeed, coming off the last turn, Conley out-sprinted Hasay over the final 100m, recording a victorious time of 32:02.07. Hasay followed for the runner-up spot in 32:03.28. Hastings was third 32:18.81.

“I felt really, really comfortable behind Kim until the last 100 meters and I thought I had it,” Hasay reflected after the race. “It’s just one of those heartbreakers where I did everything I could, but she’s just a better runner. I don’t think I would have done anything different. It’s my strongest finish by far in a big championship race.”

Meanwhile, in the men’s 10,000m race, Galen Rupp (Portland, Ore., Nike Oregon Project) followed his U.S. record 10,000m run at the Prefontaine Classic several weeks ago with his sixth U.S. Championship 10,000m title, a national record. Rupp steadily moved up from 11th place on the fourth lap to second spot with six laps to go behind leader Chris Derrick (Nike/Bowerman TC), the former Stanford University standout.

“I’m working on my speed, and I think it’s getting better,” Derrick related. “I need to have the weapon to take a race out the way I want to, so I figured that this is a great race to practice that. Even if I blow up I need to be able to do it.”

With about 600 meter to go in the race, Rupp made his move and hit the finish line in 28:12.07. Derrick followed for second in 28:18.18.

“I didn’t want to make it any harder than it needed to be,” said Rupp, the 2012 Olympic silver medalist at 10,000m who plans to run the 5,000m race at a very competitive international meet, the Meeting Areva in Paris, on July 5. “My plan all along was just to sit back and then go hard with a lap to go.”

In other action by Californians:

Javelin thrower **Brittany Borman** (Laguna Niguel, New York AC) PRed (62.05meters/203 feet, 7 inches) on her third throw in the women's final, capturing second place behind winner Kara Patterson (Vancouver, WA) who earned her fifth USA Outdoor Championship, throwing 62.43m/204-10, also on her third attempt. The pair made USATF history as for the first time two women surpassed 200 feet at a U.S. Championships.

"It was a great meet and competition," said Borman who's originally from Missouri and has lived in California for the past six months. "I came out and PRed, but then Kara came back and got me, but it was great competition."

Borman is coached by Todd Reich, a former javelin standout at Fresno State University who competed in the 1996 Olympic Games.

"I've improved tremendously this year under Todd's guidance," Borman reflected. He's had me working on getting speed in my throw and following through. Hopefully, I'll keep improving this season and see where it goes."

Blessing Ufodiana (Manhattan Beach, unattached) finished fourth in the women's triple jump with a best mark of 13.46m/44-2 behind winner Amanda Smock (ASICS, New York AC) who leaped 13.77m/45-2.25.

Six-time USA Outdoor 200m champion and 2012 Olympic 200m gold medalist **Allyson Felix** (Santa Clarita, Nike) advanced to the semi-final of the women's 100m. She suffered a hamstring injury last August at the IAAF World Outdoor Track & Field Championships.

"This year, I'm dropping down to the 100m and working on speed work," Felix said. "It's been a tough journey getting back, so I'll work on getting some speed and going over to Europe and continue racing where I'll do the 200m and 400m. I'd love it if I can be running some good times by the end of the season. We'll just have to see how everything shakes out."

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