

## BRAZIER, WILSON TAKE USA 800M TITLES

By David Monti, @d9monti

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. (25-Jun) -- Donovan Brazier and Ajeer Wilson captured the men's and women's 800m titles on the final day of the USATF Outdoor Track & Field Championships at Hornet Stadium here, and will lead strong half-mile squads into the IAAF World Championships in Athletics in London in August. Also, Evan Jager won his sixth consecutive national steeplechase title by a comfortable margin on a somewhat windy day which saw slightly cooler temperatures than the previous three days.



PHOTO: Donovan Brazier (right) about 20 meters from winning his first USA 800m title at the 2017 USATF Outdoor Track & Field Championships in Sacramento, Calif., ahead of Erik Sowinski (center) and Isaiah Harris (photo by David Monti for Race Results Weekly)

### FIRST TITLE FOR BRAZIER

Brazier, 20, who won last year's NCAA title for Texas A&M in a collegiate record 1:43.55 before turning pro with Nike, was determined to run his absolute best today. At last year's USA Olympic Trials, Brazier failed to get out of the first round and had something to prove.

"I wanted to prove to myself that I'm worth what they (Nike) got me for, and I'm just worth running in the Nike uniform," Brazier told the media wearing a pair of diamond studs in his ears.

Right from the gun, the race went Brazier's way. Erik Sowinski, three times a USA indoor champion, took up the early pace and Brazier happily tucked in behind him. Brazier was running comfortably behind Sowinski at the bell in 51.4 seconds, and the plan he and his coach, Alleyne Francique, had discussed was about to kick in.

"He just said I've got to get out there, run like hell, get my second position like I usually do, and when I feel like I'm ready to go, I gotta go," Brazier recalled. "No second doubts."

Sowinski kept pressing the pace, but with about 200 meters to go he began to tire. Brazier pounced, passed Sowinski, and was full of running down the homestretch. Going away, he won in 1:44.14 taking his first national title. Brazier credited Sowinski for setting a fast pace.

"Erik set it up perfectly," said Brazier. "He took a gutsy race. A lot of guys won't take it out."

With about 50 meters to go, Sowinski was still in second place, but he was beginning to tie up. Behind him Isaiah Harris of Penn State was running hard in lane two, and would soon go by to get second in 1:44.53. Sowinski still had a chance at the third and final team spot, but the former NCAA Division II champion for Ashland University, Drew Windle of the Brooks Beasts, was making up ground (he was last at the bell). Inside of the last 10 meters, the long-legged Windle loped past Sowinski to get third in 1:44.95 to Sowinski's 1:45.39.

"I said after the semi-final I wanted to be more up in the mix," Windle explained. "After watching the 1500 final yesterday I realized that this is a high stress situation. When it's high stress like that, people make mistakes. I just wanted to be in the hunt that last 100."

Unfortunately, last summer's Olympic 800m bronze medalist Clayton Murphy did not start the race. The hamstring injury he suffered in yesterday's 1500m final made it impossible to start.

"He was trying to warm up, loosen it up," Murphy's agent Paul Doyle told Race Results Weekly. "The soreness from yesterday was just too much, it was too tight. Had to make the decision to pull the plug. He's devastated; he really wanted to run."

Sowinski was gracious in defeat. "Three guys better than me today; hats off to them," he said. "I just didn't have it today."

## TEAMMATES WILSON AND LIPSEY FINISH ONE-TWO IN WOMEN'S 800M



PHOTO: Ajee' Wilson (right), Charlene Lipsey (center) and Brenda Martinez (left) finishing 1-2-3 in the 800m at the 2017 USATF Outdoor Track & Field Championships in Sacramento, Calif. (photo by David Monti for Race Results Weekly)

Teamwork played a role in the outcome of the women's two-lap contest. Training partners Ajee' Wilson and Charlene Lipsey, who run for adidas, worked together to assure a high pace from the gun.

Getting an assist from Oregon's Raevyn Rogers, the reigning NCAA champion, they went through 400m in 59.7 seconds, with Brenda Martinez of Team New Balance right behind.

"My coach just told me to go out, get out and control it, and run to how I felt," said Wilson, who won the national title in 2014. "And then Charlene was going to be right behind me, so I just wanted to run a perfect race for both of us."

On the backstretch, Wilson began to stretch the field out. Running against the rail with Lipsey behind her and Rogers on her right, Wilson knew it was her day. She confidently towed the field around the final bend with a one step lead, then hammered to the line to win going away in 1:57.78, the fastest winning time at these championships in 21 years.

For Wilson, the win was even more important because of the stress of a USA Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) investigation this spring to determine why trace amounts of zeranol, a growth promotant used by the American cattle industry, was found in her urine sample from last

February's NYRR Millrose Games. USADA found Wilson "without fault or negligence," for ingesting zeranol through her diet, but she lost her pending American indoor record of 1:58.27. She's clearly on the upswing now.

"Training's been doing great," Wilson said. "Just to get the opportunity to come out here and do what I know I'm capable of was awesome."

The moment was made even sweeter when Lipsey took second in a huge personal best of 1:58.01. She was quick to thank her training partner.

"She's strong and she gets the job done," Lipsey said of Wilson.

Martinez, who fell in the 2016 Olympic Trials final, hung on for third in 1:58.46, making her third consecutive IAAF World Championships team. She was the silver medalist in those championships in Moscow in 2013, upgraded from bronze after Russia's Mariya Savinova was disqualified retroactively for doping.

## JAGER CONTINUES TO DOMINATE THE STEEPLECHASE

In only his second steeplechase of the year, Evan Jager of the Nike Bowerman Track Club ran patiently, took control of the race with a lap to go, began to pull away from the field on the backstretch, then shot decisively ahead through the final water jump to clinch his sixth straight USA title in 8:16.88.

"I knew it was going to be hard," Jager said. "It was a little windy, so I didn't want to be out in the lead for four and a half laps like last year. So, I wanted to wait and kind of trusted my speed, my speed and my hurdling form, my technique, against the rest of the guys."

Two former Kenyans, Stanley Kebenei (Nike/American Distance Project) and Hillary Bor (U.S. Army), desperately tried to catch Jager in the homestretch and took second and third, respectively, in 8:18.54 and 8:18.83. Andy Bayer, Jager's former teammate at the Bowerman Track Club, ran an excellent 8:18.90, but finished fourth for the third consecutive time at these championships, and the fourth in five years.

"I'm tired in came fourth place," Bayer said. "It sucks. It's my fourth one in five years. I think eventually I'll get on there. Wait another

two years."

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USA Track & Field reported that the four-day attendance was 29,743.  
Saturday had the highest attendance: 8,020.

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