

## **Conley, Back on Track, Competes in Strong Field at Stanford Invitational 10,000m**

By Mark Winitz

Following an extended injury cycle in 2017 and 2018, USATF Pacific's Kim Conley (Sacramento, Calif.) is back on the track, eager for a comeback year in 2019. On March 29, 2019 the two-time U.S. Olympian at 5,000 meters kicked off her track season at the Stanford Invitational, competing in a strong field that lined up for the featured event of the day—the women's 10,000-meter invitational.

The favored contenders were Molly Huddle and Emily Sisson. Huddle set the current U.S. women's 10,000-meter record of 30:13.17 at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio where she placed sixth. She won the women's U.S. 10,000m title in June 2018 for the fourth straight time. Huddle also holds multiple U.S. records on the roads.

Until today, Sisson held a 10,000m PR of 31:24.64 which she recorded in Sacramento in 2017. Conley scored her 31:35.88 PR on Stanford's track in 2017.

Early in this year's Stanford Invitational women's 10,000-meter race that featured over 30 strong competitors Conley settled into third place behind leaders Sisson and Huddle. Still climbing back into full form, Conley struggled to keep up the brisk pace. Sisson and Huddle eventually placed 1-2, crossing the finish 1-2 in 30:49.57 (meet record) and 30:58.46 respectively. Both marks are under the women's 31:50 qualifying standard for the 2019 World Track & Field Championships in Doha, Qatar. Conley faded to ninth in 32:20.53.

"I knew what Molly and Emily were trying to do was over my head," Conley said. "I knew a number of the women in the lead pack were looking for that sub-31:50 Worlds qualifying standard, however I'm just a terrible time trialer. Once I got caught by the pack I was able to tuck in with them for a while, but it was far from ideal for me tonight for sure. Now I'll just go back to altitude training and get ready for later in the season."

When asked about her ultimate goal of securing a qualifying mark for the 2020 Olympic Games, and at what distance, the two-time Olympian responded "5,000 or 10,000. I think after tonight I'll have a re-assess. I don't know."

Huddle and Sisson train together in Providence, RI and both plan to run the Virgin Money London Marathon on April 28.

"I ran today off the strength of my marathon training," Sisson said. "I've bumped my (weekly) mileage up to 110 or 120. I felt pretty strong doing it, but there's not much track work. So, I didn't know how that would play out tonight. But I ran a big 10,000-meter PR."

As for Huddle, after the Stanford race she said that her focus looking down the road will be on the Olympic Games Marathon.

"Luckily, you can go to the (U.S.) Marathon Trials and if you don't make the team you can regroup," Huddle said. "You have time to come back on the track. So, if I don't make the marathon team for whatever reason I'm going to try again in the 10,000 (at the U.S Olympic Track and Field Trials)."