

# Stanford Perfect Host for Prefontaine Classic

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By Mark Winitz

For me track and field at Stanford University is home. *My* home. Stanford's Cobb Track and Angell Field is a 20-minute drive from where I live in Los Altos. When it was first announced that the 2019 Prefontaine Classic would be held at Stanford during the renovation of the meet's home facility of Hayward Field on the University of Oregon campus I was euphoric. The IAAF Diamond League event—considered by many as the most competitive world class track meet held annually on U.S. soil—was literally coming to town. And, to Stanford, no less.

Stanford holds a special place in my personal track and field outings. Decades ago, in 1962, I received a memorable introduction to the sport at Stanford. I was 12 years old. That year my father took my young brother and I to the one of the most poignant and competitive track meets ever held in America: the U.S. vs. USSR meet which drew 152,000 spectators over two days to Stanford Stadium near the height of the Cold War.

This year's Prefontaine meet, held on a comfortably warm day under blue skies for almost 8,000 attendants included a number of notable performances as world-leading marks were set in six track events: Here are just a few highlights:

- In a superb women's 3,000m European 5,000m champion Sifan Hassan (Ethiopia/Netherlands) took the win in 8:18.49 – the fastest time in the world since 1993 and a three-second improvement on the European record.

- Kenya's Faith Kipyegon registered the fastest women's 1,500m time ever run in the state of California—a 3:59.04—as four women ran under 4:00.

- World record holder Beatrice Chepkoech of Kenya emerged as victor in the women's 3,000m steeplechase registering a world-leading time of 8:55.58. Reigning World Champion Emma Coburn (U.S.) tangled her feet and fell during the race but recovered to take second place in a fast 9:04.90.

“I'm really happy with it. I really tried to change my mind and my body to get out hard,” Coburn said. “Even though I died the last kilometer my last two water jumps were really good.”

- Two-time Olympic gold medalist Caster Semenya (South Africa) easily won the women's 800m in 1:55.70 amidst new IAAF regulations placed on female track athletes with high levels of testosterone in their blood.

- In the last event of the day, the men's Bowerman Mile, all 15 finishers ran under 4:00 minutes. Kenya's Timothy Cheruiyot placed first in 3:50.49. Craig Engels was first American, capturing fifth in 3:51.60.