

USATF Pacific Youth Features

Katelyn Peterson

Dixon, CA

Girls 17-18 Division, Golden State Throwers,
Gold, Hammer Throw



By Bob Burns

A throwing ring and protective cage set on some horse property in the southeastern Sacramento County hamlet of Herald served as the laboratory for a remarkable showing at the 2022 USATF National Junior Olympic Championships.

The Golden State Throwers, who train out of the throwing facility constructed by club founder/coach Mike Curry behind his rural home in Herald, claimed the first four places in the girls 17-18 hammer throw on July 25 at Sacramento State.

Katelyn Peterson won with a throw of 166 feet, 2 inches, 20 feet off her lifetime best but still far enough to edge teammate Angela Schykerynec (165-8). Golden State teammates Sariyah Horne and Hailey Hernandez completed the 1-2-3-4 sweep.

"This is the best Junior Olympic hammer team ever," Curry said proudly as the four posed for photos next to the team's weight room.

Peterson, a recent Dixon High School graduate who is headed for Princeton University this fall, was hoping for a better showing in her final meet of the season. A win's a win, but I wasn't too happy with my mark," Peterson said.

She could take solace in a terrific overall season. She'd set the bar high for herself in 2021, winning the girls 17-18 Junior Olympic title and throwing a career-best 175-4½.

In 2022, the 5-foot-9 thrower picked up



where she left off. Competing in the discus for Dixon High and the hammer in USATF events (the hammer is not contested at the high school level in California), Peterson just missed qualifying for the CIF State Meet in the discus, raising her best to 128-3.

In the hammer, she raised her best in February and topped 180 feet for the first time in mid-May. She won the Golden West Invitational with a Pacific Association Youth record toss of 186-1 and placed a strong fourth (182-7¾) against the top high school and college freshman throwers at the USATF U20 Outdoor Championships in Eugene, Oregon. She was pleasantly surprised to see at the U20 Championships that the top college freshmen were about her size.

A 4.3 student in high school, Peterson believes her success in the hammer circle helped her get into the Ivy League school.

"You need something else besides a great grade point average," she said. "I think the hammer helped me get in."

She began throwing the four-kilogram (8.8 pounds) hammer three years ago when Curry watched her throw the discus in a high school.

"I could see the skills," Curry recalled. "I said, 'Come throw the hammer for me and you'll be a national champion.'"



A former shot putter and discus thrower at Humboldt State who later won titles in the weight events as a master athlete, Curry focuses Golden State's recruiting and coaching on the hammer throw. The hammer is a scoring event at the NCAA level and coaches have a challenging time finding good ones since few states throw it on the high school level.

"I scout athletes at the local high school meets, looking for boys and girls with

throwing potential that translates well to the hammer," Curry said. "I pay attention to how they treat their teammates and their parents before I even approach them."

The daughter of a retired police officer and an accountant, Katelyn sounds eager to head off for college.

"I've always been independent," Peterson said. "I'm excited to start my own life."