

2024 USATF Olympic Track & Field Trials

USATF Pacific Feature Athlete, Long Jumper Jason Smith

The College of San Mateo assistant track coach and lifelong San Bruno resident on Saturday qualified easily for Monday evening's long jump finals that will be held on June 24 at the U.S. Olympic Trials at the University of Oregon's Hayward Field.

Long jump competition begins at 5:25 p.m. Monday, with initial coverage on Peacock -- and then live on NBC for the remainder of the session -- which also includes track finals in the men's 1,500 and 400 meters and women's 5,000 and 800 meters. The other Monday field event final is the women's high jump.

Smith reached 7.94 meters (26 feet, 3/4 of an inch) on his second jump Saturday, putting him in fourth place at the time. That easily held up for the eighth finals spot when the 3-jump prelim competition concluded. The top 12 qualified for the finals -- which will select three candidates for the American team. None of the finalists have yet reached the Olympic qualifying standard of 8.27 meters (27-1 3/4).

But only eight athletes in the world have achieved it this year. That means World Athletics will likely use world rankings to determine the final list of Olympic entries.

Smith currently has the No. 2 outdoor mark this season among the finalists, 8.13 meters (26-8 1/4). He ranks No. 28 on the 2024 world list, which includes indoor performances (and which are now recognized equally with outdoor marks). That is well within the scope of the Olympic first round field size.

"We have a lot to clean up for Monday's finals," said Smith. "I could've been a little better today. I gave up 6 inches on my best jump. I was just getting eager today. I had a little bit of nerves on my first jump."

That initial jump was 7.56 meters (24-9 1/4), but still had him sixth in his flight group of a dozen athletes. JC Stevenson of USC, one of the Trials favorites after winning the NCAA championships with the leading USA outdoor mark of the year, 8.22 meters (26-11 3/4), fouled all three of his efforts here and did not advance to the finals.

Leading Saturday's qualifying round were two athletes who jumped 8.03 meters (26-4 1/2) -- Johnny Brackins and Will Williams. Of the finalists, only Brackins, a USC student-athlete, has jumped farther than Smith outdoors this season -- 8.15 meters (26-9) at the NCAA West Regionals. He has an 8.23 meter mark (27-0) at the USA Indoor Championships. That is the best overall performance by an American this season.

Track and Field News has published its usual "form chart" -- predictions for the Trials order of finish. It lists Smith in the No. 9 spot. "Favorite" is veteran Marquis Dendy, with a season best of 8.07 meters (26-5 3/4) -- but carrying the leading personal best of all contenders at 8.47 meters (27-9 1/2). His best prelim mark here was only 2 centimeters better than Smith, however, at 7.96.

And Smith is relishing "my best season." He is a Riordan High School (San Francisco) grad who won the 2016 Central Coast Section long jump title and finished fourth in the CIF state meet. He earned a scholarship to Cal State Long Beach, where he won Big West Conference championships in the long jump, high jump, and triple jump.

Courtesy of Fred Baer, USATF Pacific Media Chair

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Photos by Bridget Michelsen



Jason Smith, Long Jump, in action at the 2024 Olympic Marathon Trials Round 1 of the Long Jump, where he achieved a mark of 7.94 meters (26 feet, 3/4 of an inch).
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