

McKaig Falls Short At Olympic Trials

Written by Mike Kelly

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Zap Fitness Foundation of Blowing Rock had a strong showing on Saturday at the Olympic Marathon Team Trials in Houston, Tx. And Alissa McKaig of Zap Fitness turned in the best performance of her career in the women's race.

McKaig, a native of Fort Wayne, Ind., who attended

Michigan State University, turned in an eighth-place finish on Saturday afternoon. She also shaved five minutes off her time and ran finished the race in the personal-best time of two hours, 31-minutes and 56-seconds. The top three finishers in the men's and women's races made the US Olympic team. The Summer Olympics will be held in London, England beginning in August.

She missed the cut by five seconds. Kara Goucher of Portland, Ore., and a member of Oregon TC Elite, finished third in 2:26:06. Goucher's teammate, Sharlane Flanagan won the race in 2:25:38.

"Alissa had a terrific race," said Pete Rea, the Elite Athlete Coordinator at Zap Fitness. "She ran real strong against a very competitive field. She was the youngest finisher (at 25-years-old) to finish in the top ten. She's still young, and her best races are yet to come."

Teammate Esther Erb finished 27th with a personal best effort of 2:37:22, shaving two-and-a-half minutes off her time. And Erb even had the honor of singing the national anthem on national television (the NBC Network televised the event) before the race.

"The lady that was suppose to sing didn't show up, and one of the coordinators at the event asked me if Esther would do it" Rea said. "He knew she had majored in music in college. 'I said, 'I don't know, I'll have to ask her.' I did, and she agreed to do it. She said it took some of the pre-race jitters away."

Erb was a music/voice major at Case Western Reserve University, a Division III school in Cleveland, OH. On the men's side, Jesse Cherry finished 29th in 2:16:30; Chris Clark was 82nd in 2:30:10. Joe Driscoll was scratched before the race with an ankle injury and David Jankowski did not finish the race. He dropped out at the 20-mile marker. Meb Keflezighi of Mammoth Lakes, CA., and a member of the New York Athletic Club, won the race in the blistering time of 2:09:08. Ryan Hall of Mammoth Lakes, CA., and a member of Asics, finished second in 2:09:30; Adbi Abdirahman of Tucson, AZ., and who was running for Nike, finished third in 2:09:47.

"It was real disappointment for Joe and David," Rea said. "Joe just had problems with his ankle from the time he stepped off the plane, and David just struggled in the race. But those things happen. They'll get another shot at it. David has all ready qualified for the Olympic trials in track, and he'll get another try at it this summer.

"Jesse ran real well. He had an excellent time, but the field was incredibly fast. It was a good experience for all of us, and the High Country was well represented."

Zap Fitness has six qualifiers attending the Olympic Team Track Trials this summer in Eugene, Ore., June 22-July 1. McKaig has qualified in two events, the women's 5,000-meter run and the 10,000-meter run. Sarah Porter, who had a strong showing at the New York Marathon last fall, will join McKaig in the women's 10,000.

The men have four qualifiers, so far. Landon Peacock in the men's 5,000, Cameron Bean in the 3,000 steeple chase; David Jankowski and Michael Crouch in the men's 10,000.

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"And we could add up to three more," Rea said. "We got a few months to get our people ready."

Photo Courtesy: Alissa McKaig, Zap Fitness Foundation