

Mountaineers Dominate Appalachian Open

Written by Ryan Bower
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Appalachian State University men's track and field dominated the 2012 Appalachian Open, capturing 10 first-place finishes on Friday at Kidd Brewer Stadium. In the Mountaineers' final meet before next week's Southern Conference Outdoor Championships, the Apps put together another solid performance.

Jared Stalling led the way with two first-place finishes in the discus and shot put events. His toss of 168'10" in the discus marked a new personal-best and gave him the third-best mark in ASU history.

Stalling's throw of 53'3.25" in the shot put fell just shy of his previous personal best, but was a full five feet better than his nearest competitor. His mark in the hammer throw (192') placed him second and topped his previous personal record to give him the fifth-best mark in school history. In addition to Stalling's performance, Nick Sansotta, Caleb Poplin and Zane Lail finished third, fourth and fifth, respectively, in the shot put while Poplin and Lail each finished in the top five in the discus. Poplin also took fourth in the hammer throw.

Jacob Stowe had a solid performance in the pole vault on Friday. His leap of 16'0.75" placed him first and also put him in a tie for third in ASU history.

Despite the absence of its top high jumper, Darius Purcell, the Apps still picked up a win in the high jump as Daryl Saunders' leap of 6'11" gave him the victory and moved him into seventh in school history.

Appalachian also fared extremely well on the track as its 4x100-meter relay team of Dennis Moore, Justin Thomas, AJ Dohanac and Landon Powell ran a blistering 40.55 seconds to take the top spot.

Dohanac also picked up an individual victory in the 110-meter hurdles with a time of 14.28 seconds, just four one-hundredths of a second off his personal best.

Powell and Thomas finished first and second, respectively, in the 100-meter dash with times of 10.82 and 10.91 seconds.

ASU's distance and middle-distance runners also put forth a strong effort. Raphael Rojas took first in the 800-meter run with a time of 1:55.19 while Ashton Smith (15:51.03) and Charles Wofford (15:58.17) placed first and second, respectively, in the 5,000-meter run.

On the women's side, Chelsea Farr picked up a victory in the pole vault competition with a leap of 12'6" to top her personal best and give her the third-highest mark in school history. Cassie Crawford took second in the pole vault while Meredith Wilson and Debra Domermuth tied for fourth.

Gayshawna Watkins came away as one of the day's top performers with three first-place finishes of her own. Her toss of 159'2" won the hammer throw while her throw of 151'4" in the discus was also good for first and a new personal record. Watkins also grabbed a win in the shot put with a mark of 44'6". The Apps were dominant in both the discus and shot put competitions as they grabbed the top four spots in each. Jasmine Suydam took second while Jocelyn Parnell and Katherine Lenhart finished third and fourth, respectively.

On the track, Appalachian was led by a first-place finish from its 4x100-meter relay team of Kristen Campbell, D'Shawrna McLucas, Shenita Martin and Breanna Alston, who finished a full two seconds ahead of second-place Wingate with a time of 46.36 seconds.

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Stephanie Chapman picked up the victory in the 3,000-meter steeplechase with a time of 12:34.39 while Maria Stickley and Kayla Schneider finished first and second in the 1,500-meter run.

Molly Vaughn grabbed the 100-meter hurdle title with a time of 15.01 seconds while Kristen Campbell blazed past her competition in the 100-meter dash with a time of 12.14 seconds. Breahna Morrison won the 400-meter dash with a time of 55.31 seconds, the third-best time in ASU history, and also won the 200-meter dash with a time of 25.96 seconds. Martin and Helena Shields finished first and second in the 400-meter hurdles to round out the top finishes for the Mountaineers.

The Mountaineers return to action next weekend at the 2012 SoCon Outdoor Championships in Cullowhee, N.C. where the men will attempt to win their third-straight outdoor title and the women attempt to win their second in a row.

Photo Courtesy: Gayshawna Watkins, ASU Athletics