

## Smith Chosen to Coach at Pan-American Games

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Appalachian State University track and field coach April Smith will be traveling to South America this week as the head women's throws coach in the Pan American Junior Championships. Smith leaves for Medellin, Columbia on Tuesday where she will coach seven young women in shot put, discus, hammer and javelin while they compete at the games.

The Pan Am Junior Championships consist of track & field events between qualifying athletes of the Americas. The event will occur Aug. 23-25 and will showcase many of the top junior athletes in the world.

"This will be my first international competition as a coach," said Smith. "I've done two or three as an athlete but I've never gotten to see it from the coaching side. I'm really looking forward to the experience because it's a level of coaching that I've wanted for a long time."

Smith was selected amongst the best track & field coaches in the country to represent the United States. She found out she was chosen as the women's coach in January, after completing a thorough application process. Coaches are chosen based on their success and credentials in the sport, making it a highly competitive opportunity.

In preparation for the championships, Smith met the athletes at the qualifying meet and spoke with their coaches. She learned the routines and cues that each of the athletes use while they practice with their coaches at home.

"These athletes are some of the best in the country," said Smith. "My job will be less about coaching them and more about keeping them calm and creating the most familiar environment possible."

Smith will be enter her twelfth season as the men's and women's throws coach at App State where she has guided over 50 conference champions and was awarded the Women's Assistant Coach of the Year Award for the NCAA in 2006. As an athlete, Smith attended Doane College where she was a three-time NAIA National Champion and nine-time all-American.

"I've been looking forward to this trip since I found out in January," said Smith. "Being at the Olympic level has been my aspiration since I was little, so this is a huge honor for me."