



PAC-12 CONFERENCE

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2017 PAC-12 TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS - DAY 2 QUOTES (5/14/17)

ROBERT JOHNSON - UNIVERSITY OF OREGON HEAD COACH

Q: Not too much drama there in today's meet - is that what you expected in the team race? Are you surprised by the margins?

A: Super surprised by the margin looking at it. We always have more of an optimistic view, but under the circumstances, I did not think it would be 50 or 60 points.

Q: You had a nice showing from Blake in the 1500. Do you feel like he is back to his old self?

A: Yeah, we thought we would do really well in that event and tried to be greedy and put Blake in the 1500 and the 800. No telling what would happen if we left the 800 off of that and kept him fresh for the 1500.

Q: Robert King led the way with those two sweeps. Is that what turned the means side into one side?

A: Yeah, I believe it. I feel those guys in the discus was a huge surprise for us to get those points, and then King kept it going.

MEN'S TRIPLE JUMP - ERIC SLOAN, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Q: How does it feel to win?

A: It feels good, it was a tough competition. I didn't really jump as well as I wanted to. It came down to the last jump - it felt good just getting one in.

Q: Did you know that last jump was going to be a good one?

A: It felt far - well, it felt far enough, so I didn't know if it was going to be good enough to beat the pack, but I knew it was going to be a good jump.

Q: After an injury how does it feel to come back and win a Pac-12 title?

A: Well, this is my first one, so it's just great to be here. It's been a long road; coming back and recovering from all the injuries, so it means a lot to be out here.

MEN'S DISCUS - RYAN HUNTER-SIMMS, UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Q: How did you feel going into that last throw?

A: I felt a little pressure, but my coach told me the third throw would be a dog fight. He said that whoever had the best right hook would take it all, and it happens that I had the best right hook today.

Q: Did you think your third throw would secure the win?

A: I thought it would have, but I knew I wouldn't take 58 meters to win. I was expecting to throw 59 today, but I'm still happy with the win.

Q: How did you react to the pressure?

A: I felt good, because pressure pumps me up more. That's the same thing that happened at Penn, where guys were throwing farther and farther. That just gets me going a bit more.

Q: Did your redshirt year help you this year?

A: I feel like it helped me. I feel like I got a little stronger and more technical. If you talked to my coach, he would tell you I've been a lot more technical than before. I'm fine-tuning a lot of small things. The technique feels good right now, and I'm ready to hit another PR soon.

WOMEN'S HAMMER - MAGGIE EWEN, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Q: Another meet over 70 meters - how does that feel?

A: It feels really good, it's kind of where I wanted to be consistent at this year. I was really happy that I was able to hit that mark.

Q: How does it make you feel that you are two-time Pac-12 Champion?

A: It feels great you know, but I am just trying stay focused on the next thing and get ready for discuss.

Q: What is it going to take to break the meet record in the Hammer?

A: Just more reps, more practice, and more time with coach. I have only had a couple months with him so far, so I'm looking forward to having a whole off season of working.

WOMEN'S 1500 - DANI JONES, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Q: What does this title mean for you?

A: This time last year, I was way out the back, so it just means I've made a lot of progress.

Q: You have had such an amazing year winning a lot of big things. What's feeding your success?

A: A lot of extra miles and a lot quality miles. Coming in as a freshman, it is all brand new. It's exciting, but it's scary, and you are definitely behind. I have Mark and Heather to thank for all the success I have had.

Q: There was so many good women in the final today. It almost feels like an NCAA semifinal. Do you almost treat it like that?

A: Yeah, I mean every step is a step toward the NCAAs. That's the Pac-12s for you too - everyone is good. Half of the pack will be out there come NCAAs, so it is just a great reminder that we are going to face the same competition over and over. You have to stay on your toes.

MEN'S 110 METER HURDLES - ASHTYN DAVIS, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Q: How does it feel to earn first place?

A: It feels great. I never would have thought I'd be up there on the podium this year.

Q: Are you aware of what's going on around you?

A: No. In this race, I was asked if I saw Marquis fall and I did not even notice until I looked up to see my time and he was still finishing.

Q: Did you know you had won when you crossed the line?

A: I had a feeling - I didn't know for sure, but I had a feeling. I didn't see anyone in my peripherals and it felt good.

MEN'S 400 - MICHAEL NORMAN, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Q: Pac-12 title as a freshman - tell me a little bit about the transition between high school and how it's gone for you?

A: It has been a bit of a roller coaster to be honest. I have had a lot of downs, and now I am working my way back up. Transitioning my way from high school to college is tough; I had a nice routine that worked in high school. But now, with the different workouts and the intensity of everything, I have had to make adjustments.

Q: Did you come to the start line thinking you were going to win today?

A: Of course. You always have to come into the race with the intent to win, or you are not going to be able to give it your all.

Q: You had to go chase down Chambers - what was that like the last 100 meters?

A: I really had to dig down deep. He is a great competitor, so I had to stick to my form and just open up an finish strong.

WOMEN'S 400 METER DASH - KENDALL ELLIS, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Q: How does this win feel?

A: It feels great. I really wanted a conference title under my name, and now I finally have one.

Q: Did you do anything different on the last turn? Any last kick?

A: Honestly, I was really focused on the race pattern. I had my teammate right in front of me, and in my head, I just thought of this as practice.

CHAQUINN COOK - WOMEN'S TRIPLE JUMP, UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Q: Tell us about the competition and how today felt.

A: The competition was really good, and it helps we all had nice weather today. It was great coming back from long jump. I was able to get my first jump off, and I feel really good. I can't wait to see what happens at regionals.

Q: How important was it to get that big jump early?

A: It was very important actually, because I wanted to make sure I got it instead of scratching. Having to hurry up last minute, I thought I was able to have a little freedom and have some fun.

Q: Did you think you were going to be a Pac-12 Champion at the start of the year?

A: No, I actually did not, which I'm very excited I was able to accomplish it. I am ready to go out for more.

Q: What did it feel like being on top of the award stand?

A: It felt great having everyone cheer for me and all the coaches, and competition saying good job.

MEN'S 800 METERS - NICK HARRIS, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Q: You had a big kick there at the end. Can you talk us through that?

A: That was kind of how I was planning it. I just tried to lay off at the start. I knew it was going to be quick. It's a little scary when you get out there and there are eight guys in front on you. The leaders kind of get in the way, but I figured they'd kind of come back.

Q: Describe to us your surprised reaction at the finish line.

A: Well, you think you can win, and you try to win, but it's different actually doing it. I've been hurt all year, so I didn't really have any expectations coming in.

Q: How do you get around a huge pack of people?

A: I don't really know! I feel like I kind of made a move on the back stretch at the start. It's kind of scary going around people at the finish, so I tried to stay as calm as possible. At the end, I had no idea what was going on behind me; I was just running for my life.

MEN'S 1500 METERS - GRANT FISHER, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Q: How has this season gone?

A: It has been fun; it didn't open up for a little while. I was injured for all of the indoor season, so I took it easy coming into outdoor, and I've never felt better. I felt so good out there and every race I've run feels awesome. Everything seems like it's firing on all cylinders.

Q: How did you feel during the race?

A: Everyone realized early on that it was going to be a slower race. Every person in that race knows how to close, and how to get in position. I just try to do the same and monitor myself. I felt like it was time to go in that back stretch and I wanted to make it happen.

Q: What does this title mean for you?

A: This means ten points for my team. I came in with that in mind. I'm excited to get that done. Stanford has been historically known as a distance school. If I could be a part of a more complete Stanford, then that's what I'm looking for.

WOMEN'S 100 METER HURDLES - ALAYSHA JOHNSON, UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Q: How did that race go?

A: USC got out on both sides of me. I was pretty nervous, but I just trusted that everyone would come back to me. I just went with it. I feel as if I finished really strong. I was nervous, because I haven't had many clean races, but I knew I just had to clear those last few hurdles. I wanted it, so I went and got it.

Q: How did your team support you?

A: Our girls have a big group chat. Every morning we send motivating messages to each other. Today was basically us against everyone else, and no matter what, we wanted to put our color in front of all the other colors. That was the message - do everything we can do to win.

Q: What was it like to have Sasha Wallace scratch?

A: It was really hard. It wasn't the same without her. The dynamic is very different. When I got up there and there were all these other colors, I thought, 'I'm going to war by myself today.' I just kind of had to step up to the plate and do what I could do. It's not the same on the podium without her.

MEN'S 400 METER HURDLES - RAI BENJAMIN - UCLA

Q: Tell us about the race today.

A: It was pretty good; the first five, six hurdles were excellent actually, then coming home, I knew I had to stay connected mentally. That is where I started to falter. Coming off eight and nine, I chopped and switched; I knew I made a big mistake, because CJ was right behind me. But, I just trusted my training and I knew where my fitness was.

Q: How do you feel about this year compared to last?

A: This year, I feel much better. I broke my foot last year at the beginning of the season and didn't compete until this meet and ran one heat. Luckily, I just made it to the regional list and went down to Kansas ran a pretty good race.

WOMEN'S HIGH JUMP - LISANNE HAGENS, UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Q: How did it feel today?

A: I was a little nervous, because I had been waiting around a lot. I didn't start for an hour, because I skipped the first two heights. It was a lot of waiting around and trying to keep myself warm. Thankfully, I managed to stay focused.

Q: What is it like to defend your Pac-12 title?

A: It's very exciting. I was hoping to do it again. Obviously you still have to prove yourself. I was still very nervous, so it's not like it makes it easier; I felt that pressure. It makes it even more exciting, and I love this track. I love jumping here.

WOMEN'S 200 METERS - DEAJAH STEVENS, UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Q: Were you planning to run this fast?

A: No, I just wanted to go out there, execute and do everything I know I should do. The time comes with it.

Q: Does it help you to run multiple events?

A: Of course. The 4x100 meters always gets the day going well. The 100 and the 200 keep the momentum going.

Q: Did you expect to win the 100 and 200 today?

A: I did. You always want it to be your moment. You always strive to do your best. Sometimes you don't, sometimes you do, and even when you do your best, you might not win. You just have to go with the flow and work hard.

Q: Does being an Olympian put extra pressure on you?

A: I don't really let any of that get to my head because anybody could come and beat you. You never know what might happen that day. You just have to try your best every time you run.

WOMEN'S 400 METER HURDLES - SAGE WATSON, UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Q: Break down your win for us.

A: I just wanted to go for the win - it's my senior year, and my last Pac-12 championships, so I just wanted to leave it all out on the track. I'm just excited and happy to be here.

Q: Did you know you won when you crossed the finish line?

A: Yeah I did. I felt strong coming home, and I couldn't feel anybody around me. I was just trying to give it all through the line.

Q: How did it benefit going to the Olympic games then back to college?

A: It definitely gives you a confidence boost knowing that you competed at the highest level. You take it coming into these meets. I have extra confidence knowing that I'm an Olympian, and that I'm capable of doing what I am able to do.

MEN'S 100 METERS, MEN'S 200 METERS - KYREE KING, UNIVERSITY OREGON

Q: Has winning become an old hat for you?

A: A little bit. I'm trying to get in the habit of winning at Oregon. I had to come through one time.

Q: How did you feel about your starts today?

A: I felt like my mechanics went well, but my reaction time wasn't that good. It's something I know to work on though, so that's good.

Q: How does it feel to accomplish the double win?

A: It feels great. My main goal is to help my team as much as I can. With the double, I did that and with my teammate coming in second behind me, we swept both runs, so that was good too.

WOMEN'S DISCUS - MAGGIE EWEN, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Q: How does it feel to take home your titles?

A: I couldn't have asked for anything more, and I couldn't have done any more. It's what we have been training for all year, and I'm just so happy it came together when it needed to.

Q: How does your previous Pac-12 experience help you?

A: I think it always helps knowing what to expect out of your competitors. I think I'm mentally stronger this year. I know how to handle the pressure and the stress a little bit more.

Q: How do you approach three different events?

A: You have to approach them individually. They seem really similar, but they're all pretty different in their own little ways. You really have to put yourself in a different mindset for every event.

MEN'S 5000 METER - ZACH PERRIN - UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Q: Tell us about today's race.

A: I went out pretty slow to start and my plan was to sit there and see how I felt. I ended up feeling really good and then I was able to win. I was super excited.

Q: You have battled injuries in your career. What is it like to get a win out here?

A: I am kind of injury prone I guess, but it was good to come out today and win after yesterday didn't go so well during the Steeple. That was kind of embarrassing, so I'm happy I was able to get some redemption.

Q: Did your strategy change when you found out Cheserek was not in the race?

A: Obviously when a guy like that is out, you start to feel a little more hopeful and feel like you can win it. I just came out here today with a goal to place as high as I could, and with a couple laps to go, I thought I was able to do it today.

WOMEN'S 5000 METER - DANI JONES, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Q: What race was more satisfying to you?

A: The first one I think, because the second one was so unexpected. It hasn't really sunk it yet.

Q: Any stress or worry in your mind about running the 1500 and 5000 on the same day?

A: Yeah, I've never ran a 5 in general, so I was nervous about it - especially after a 15, but I'm definitely just taking one race at a time.

Q: Any strategy for running the 5000?

A: Just hold on for dear life! Kind of keeping the top eight in sight just to score points, that was the main goal.

WOMEN'S 800 METERS - RAEVYN ROGERS, UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Q: How did your race feel today?

A: That was crazy - it was a good race. I definitely wanted to come out in my finals with an eased mind. I went to church and everything; I just to have a clear spirit going into the race and to not feel too much pressure. I really just had a normal day and came to the track and went out there and executed the plan.

Q: How was it to start off the 800 with a large lead?

A: It put me back in my old grounds. I ran from the front before I came to college. In high school, I was only a front runner. I didn't like the pack - just with all the stuff that goes on in there. I was really excited to go back to those stomping grounds of my childhood.

Q: What is it like to not lose races?

A: I would say that not losing causes me to put a lot of pressure on myself. I want to go out there and do the best that I can, but I'm also fine with losses, because I know that they'll still teach me. Regardless of if I win or lose, I still see it as the same race, because I get to learn something from each of them.

Q: Did the team feel good coming into today?

A: Everyone went out there and competed. We didn't even think about points. That's what our coaches wanted. They don't want us to think about the points. They just want us to go out there and compete. I think we went out there and surprised people, because we're showing people what we can do as a team.