



2025 Big Ten Outdoor Track & Field Championships

Saturday, May 17, 2025
Hayward Field (Eugene, Ore.)

ANNIKA WILLIAMS, OREGON **WOMEN'S HEPTATHLON**

On her thought process coming into today with the lead...

"My thought process was, really, just to recover and do what I needed to do. Like I said in all the previous interviews, I didn't do what I wanted to do in the first event, in the long jump. But I knew after that I just had to put myself in a better position going into the 800 because I knew I only jumped six meters, but I knew everybody in the second flight were better long jumpers than me. So, I just had to believe. It's mind over matter, really, so that's pretty much it."

On her recovery process...

"So, my recovery process, and as I finished the 200 literally had to walk all the way around, go inside, get my flush, then cold tubs, then dinner, then I watched a little Bridgerton, and then I went to bed. And then shook out like at 6:30 this morning, ate some breakfast and came out here and did what I needed to do."

On mentality waking up this morning...

"I told myself, 'You've been in this position before, you always go into day two either in the lead or second,' and anything can happen to anyone going into day two, especially recovery wise. So, I just told myself, 'Do what you have to do, trust yourself, trust your coach, trust your training, and everything will flow, as it's supposed to. One thing doesn't go as you want, just follow up in the next.'"

On her strategy this year for first full hep...

"So, my strategy this year was just, I basically had a long fall training, especially since I didn't have the indoor, so it was just a lot of speed work, a lot of jump work, just building on the stuff that I was weak in last year. I guess weak is a bad word. Things that I can improve in, because I still can improve on everything that I did this past weekend. So, there wasn't really training wise, everything was the same."



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TYUS WILSON, NEBRASKA **MEN'S HIGH JUMP**

On the season and possibility of coming back for NCAA Championships...

"Obviously indoors went really well. Can't be mad about being the NCAA Champion, but outdoors have just kind of been a little weird. Had probably one good-weather meet. I wouldn't really consider today's good weather, but there were some really good jumpers out there. The guys that finished second are both 7-3-plus jumpers, so for them to not even jump 7-1 today kind of shows what was going on out there. I can't be too upset about it, I'm always happy to win. You can't come to the Big Ten meet and have a bar or performance in mind, you have to just go out there and make the bar you're at and win."

On the rain shower ...

"It was kind of early in the competition, I wasn't in yet. The sun actually came out when I got out, but it didn't really affect anything too much. The surface was dry by the time I was done jumping."

On his mindset trying to win both the indoor and outdoor championships ...

"I think my mentality today was to just go out and have fun. It's my last Big Tens ever. Some people would say that I have a target on my back or whatever, but once you start doing that you're putting unnecessary pressure on yourself. I'm kind of the same with the outdoors, being a returner and indoor champ. I don't want to put a target on myself, I just want to go out there and jump freely and be in that freedom. I've kind of had a little mental block the past few weeks. I got sick last week, so obviously that didn't help, but it's better that it was last week rather than this week. So just working through that mental block. It's one of those things where my body wants to do one thing and my mind wants to do another and they're just clashing right now. So it's great to have a month ahead to really fine tune everything and I would rather have a performance like that today rather than a month from now at Nationals. Overall, I am very optimistic about the next couple weeks."

On working out of mental blocks ...

"Go straight to prayer. I was reading in on some mental blocks this week, just about what they are and like I said, it's when your mind wants you to do one thing and your body isn't doing that. Then you start to identify with your poor performance, then saying, 'Oh I am doing this or I can't do this.' At some point you have to compartmentalize and say that my bad jumping isn't who I am. It's something that I'm working through right now and so that's freeing and taking out the anxiety of it. I think when you take the identity out of track and you do track because you love it, not because it's who you are, that's when



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it starts to become more free. That's when you are able to jump freely and have good success. So, that's what the focus is for the next couple weeks. Just disassociate my identity and identity from the sport."

On Nebraska coming all the way out to Oregon ...

"We love to think about being at Hayward Field and that kind of gives you a leg up at Nationals. We get to experience the facility and all that stuff. We're hosting the Big Tens next year, so we're super excited for that and for our outdoor track to finally be done. I haven't had an outdoor meet at home at all in my four years here. I don't think we've had the greatest performances, but we've had some people do some really nice stuff, so it's just been great. We really appreciate Hayward, Oregon and all the people putting on this meet."



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CHARLES GODFRED, MINNESOTA **MEN'S LONG JUMP**

On almost beating the meet record ...

"I knew I was supposed to do that for my first jump, but I was shocked when they raised the flag. I was just a pinch away. I think the jump was about 8.20 something."

On trying to match his first jump legally ...

"I've been doing it back home and when I talked to my coach, he told me I just need to move back a little bit and just do what I've been doing back home. I know what I am capable of doing and when I get something wrong, I just need to adjust my mark."

On trying to beat Jesse Owens' record...

"I know I can do that. I was expecting something big but the weather wasn't friendly today, so I am just happy to be injury free."

On not taking all his jumps...

"Due to the rain and bad weather, the board was a bit slippery and I didn't want to take the risk."

On potentially beating a 90-year-old record...

"I know I can do it. I know what I am capable of doing. I went to Iowa and was shocked I broke a 60- or 65-year-old record. I was surprised, but I do know what I am capable of, and I just thank God that I am injury free today, that is very important to me."

On his illegal first jump...

"I almost cried when I saw the red flag. I just turned to my coach and my coach said, 'Charles calm down, big stuff is coming.' He loved what I did because he knew something great was coming."

On taking confidence from his previous jumps and preparing for NCAA championships...

"I can definitely take confidence from my jumps because I know I am capable of doing something big. When I saw the red flag, I knew I had something I needed to prove. When I get back home, I just need to buckle up and tighten my seatbelt and make sure everything is well organized, and any errors are cleaned up and just get the work done. I know something big is coming at the regionals and also the NCAA."



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JASON SWARENS, WISCONSIN
MEN'S SHOT PUTT

On his last throw...

"Going into that last throw, I knew I had won it, but I was in the mindset that I was going to need one further, so I kept that the whole time. Got into the ring, got the crowd involved and used that energy then launched one out there. I could tell it was going to be a good throw and then sure enough, saw it land, looked up the board to check where it went and from there it was just pure energy."

On taking home the Big Ten title ...

"Even going into the last round, I knew I had won, but it still hadn't really kicked in until after I threw my big one at the end there. Just coming back from last year where I didn't do too great, so I made sure to get one in the first row and build from there."

On having a chip after last year...

"Definitely. Last year I didn't even make the finals, so it was good to just go out there and have fun with it."

On preparation heading into the meet ...

"I didn't really treat it any different than any other meet. This being my fifth year now, I kind of have that experience to just go and go into a meet like it's any other and I think that helps a lot."

On the confidence boost heading into regionals and nationals ...

"Yeah, I had a great throw at our home meet and then to continue to do that at this meet. I had a good series in the first three throws and that's what you need for regionals, so I'm happy with that."



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RAFAEL RAAP, ILLINOIS MEN'S DECATHALON

On being back at Hayward Field ...

"Actually, it was really funny, I was doing my warmup and the Duck came up to me and was like 'what happened?' I just looked back and said 'sorry!' Oregon is always special, though. It is a beautiful place to compete and even though I'm not wearing their colors right now, it is always a magical place to be. It kind of feels like coming home almost. I was here for a year and a half so I know everything about the place, so it definitely helps."

On his mentality before the race coming off day one...

"I'm telling myself that no matter if it went good or wrong, it's a new day, a new start and a new chance to put the best of me out there. What's difficult is that it wasn't a good first day but I knew that my second day was very strong, so I just knew I needed to go out there and execute. Knowing that my day two is strong gives me the confidence to go out there and execute and just do it. I don't try to overthink it; I know from experience when I do that it doesn't go the right way."

On going into the 1500 meter...

"I'm always nervous for the 1500 meter, it's a love-hate relationship and today was hate for sure. It's a mental game and it's what you tell yourself. At that point my body was hurting and trying not to cramp up. I'm not really happy about it but knowing that I finished it and finished another decathlon I feel is a good accomplishment."

On the significance of this performance in his career...

"To be really honest, I am not happy with this, mostly because I didn't qualify for nationals. I know that my potential is way higher than what I am doing right now. I can blame it on a lot of things, injuries and stuff like that, but at the end of the day it's me out there trying my best and this is all I got right now."



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TACORIA HUMPHREY, ILLINOIS **WOMEN'S LONG JUMP**

On getting her third Big Ten title and setting the new meet record ...

"I felt pretty confident going into it. I put out some big jumps throughout the season and this is only my third year long jumping, I started my sophomore year. With the big jumps I put out early in the year, I came into the Big Tens feeling confident. I just trusted my training because I didn't have really good practice jumps so I just made sure that my mindset was really positive because positive mindsets lead to positive outcomes."

On expectations going into today...

"I came in here pretty confident after putting out some really big jumps earlier in the season. I did kind of come in expecting to get first place or at least medal."

On getting so far into her career without long jumping...

"Yeah, I was a two-time state champ high jumper in high school. I was a 5-10 high jumper in high school. My sophomore year I jumped 5-9, then COVID happened my junior year and senior year I jumped 5-10 at state. I got recruited for high jump and that was my main event until my freshman year. I jumped 6-0 and that's when my coach told me I'd probably max out pretty soon, so that's when he introduced me to long jumping."

On the transition from high jump to long jump ...

"I really liked it. I feel like high jump is more technical, so it's kind of a little more stressful. Where long jump you kind of just run and jump, so it is more straight to the point and I've definitely loved the transition."



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BENJAMIN BALAZS, OREGON **MEN'S STEEPLECHASE**

On being the front runner during the race...

"I went in knowing I was probably the favorite and I believe in my kick a lot. I didn't really have a plan, I just like to see how things unfold and when I got off the line I got into first place right away and no one went around me. I felt pretty comfortable at the front, so I just stayed right on the rail. I ran a pretty honest pace, something that I knew would tire people out a little bit, but I'd still have every single gear I need at the end. I kept waiting and then about 600 meters to go felt right and started winding it up. In most races you probably don't want to lead but in the steeple it's one of those weird events where having wide open space in front of you and being able to see the hurdles and see the water jump you are able to execute it more cleanly."

On his feelings crossing the finish line ...

"I was so happy. It's a close team battle right now and I know it'll be a struggle all the way. Our whole team's been showing out, we got 23 points in the 10k, now 16 in the steeple and more to come. It just felt great. Also, I DNF last year at the Pac-12 Championship in the steeple when I was number one-seed, so I had a chip on my shoulder and had a lot of things to prove, which I feel like I did."

On going from DNF last year to winning gold ...

"It's a lot. I could have won last year but for whatever reason I didn't have it in me and now I did it. Last year was at altitude in Boulder so it was an extra challenge that I wasn't used to. I was in the lead pack until about 2k when I started feeling the altitude really quickly and I blew up and had to step off. I also DNF in another steeple last year too, and this year has only been win after win, and good time after good time. It's a huge weight off my shoulders and a big turnaround this outdoor season."



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KATELYN STEWART-BARNETT, MICHIGAN STATE WOMEN'S STEEPLECHASE

On her plan going into today's race...

"My race plan was just to go to the front and just run the pace that I felt confident and calm and just ready to compete that last K and I'd say I executed that pretty well. There was a little more stress than I anticipated from Washington, but I was just ready to move in the last lap."

On being surprised to see the Washington runner so close at the end of the race ...

"Yeah, I was surprised to see she was as close to me as she was, but she ran an amazing race, and it was nice to have competition there. It definitely pushed me there at the end."

On the competition today ...

"I guess just coming in, my PR was quite a bit ahead of everyone, but I'm used to being beaten by great athletes so that was no different."

On her mentality going into today...

"I usually come in with an underdog mentality and today I just wanted to be confident in my ability and ready to move when the moment came."