

OUT OF THE BLOCKS

The Official Newsletter for the Friends of Harvard Track | May 2016

A NOTE FROM COACH SARETSKY

Dear Alumni, Parents, and Friends,

What a winter! We said the same thing last year, but winter 2016 brought some even more remarkable performances. Luckily, it did not bring as much snow. The beautiful weather allowed for great training and prepared us to turn in some fantastic marks.

Harvard Track started 2016 off right with nine new school records, five all-time Ivy League records, two first team All-Americans, and a fourth consecutive Ivy League Women's Indoor Championship. At the conclusion of the indoor season, and with outdoor on the way, the Harvard women now own eleven of the nineteen Ivy League all-time performances.

Leading the charge for the women's team were Autumnne Franklin '16, Nikki Okwelogu '17, Gabby Thomas '19 and Courtney Smith '18. On the men's side, mainstays like Efe Uwaifo '17 continued their winning ways, and freshman Myles Marshall and junior Brandon Price stepped on the scene with high-level performances.

At the NCAA Championships, Nikki Okwelogu '17 once again made clear that she is among the best athletes in the United States. Okwelogu entered the meet in Birmingham, Ala., with the 11th-best performance nationally, but she was ready to dominate the competition. With her first throw of the competition, she shattered her own Ivy League and school record to grab the lead early on; she would hold on to first position until the third round. But the show was not over yet—in round four, Okwelogu broke her newly minted records again by 0.17m (~6inches), with a throw of 17.66m (57'11.25"). That performance would be good enough for third place overall and would earn her another First Team All-American award to go along with the one she earned last indoor season.

Courtney Smith '18 followed up her record-setting cross-country

season with an equally impressive indoor campaign. The sophomore would run the second fastest times in school history in both the 3000 and 5000m races, clocking 9:17.10 in the shorter distance and an incredible 15:46.44 in the longer. Her 5000m performance was the fourth best in the history of the Ivy League, a conference with formidable talent in the women's distance events. She would capitalize on her incredible fitness at NCAAs by surviving a blistering early pace that saw the leaders go through the mile in 4:52. Smith would battle to move up from 12th to eighth position over the last 1200m to claim her first-ever First Team All-American honors for the Crimson.

The Heptagonal Championship meet at Cornell's Barton Hall saw two days of fierce competition and fantastic performances. Highlights included:

- Senior Autumnne Franklin won the 60m hurdles for the fourth consecutive year and came back to take her second individual title in the 400m. She was honored as the Heps Track Athlete of the Meet.
- The men's 4x800m Relay team of Jonas Aranda '18, Myles Marshall '19, Malik Epps '16 and Gabe Montague '18 raced to victory at the Heps running 7:37.13.
- Freshman Gabby Thomas dazzled, bringing home 32.5 points and three individual titles, as well as leading off the first-place 4x400m relay.
- Junior and cross-country captain-elect Brandon Price came back from a disappointing 3000m to finish second in the men's 5000m, his first race of the season at that distance.
- Myles Marshall '19 delivered one of the most inspiring finishes of the meet: after an early fall in the 800m, he fought his way back to the field to take sixth and score for the Crimson.





The Crimson continues its outdoor track season, facing the challenge of besting a historic 2015 season. Key upcoming meets this season are:

- Heps Outdoor Championships, (Princeton, NJ), May 7–8
- NCAA Preliminary Round, (Jacksonville, FL), May 26–28
- NCAA Final Round, (Eugene, OR), June 8–11
- USA Junior Nationals (Oregon) Jun 24-26
- USA Olympic Trials (Oregon) July 1-10

As a team, we are not just rewriting the record books; we are establishing a legacy. A new standard of success is evident in our dominance at the Ivy League level and our burgeoning national presence. The women's team has now won six of the past seven Heps Championships, and is primed to continue besting the Ancient Eight for the foreseeable future. Our men continue to improve and are looking forward to even more success in the outdoor season. We are excited to add some top talent to both sides, thanks to an exceptional recruiting class made possible by our program's elite reputation. All this would not happen without your generous support; your contributions go towards giving our student-athletes the opportunities to grow and improve in their sport, and to learn the fundamentals that will help them succeed in all areas of life. We sincerely thank you for your help in establishing a culture of excellence and a winning tradition with Harvard Track and Field.

Go Crimson!

Jason Saretsky

The William W. "Bill" McCurdy Director of Track and Field

STUDENT-ATHLETE PROFILE

MARK HILL '16

Hometown: Sutton, MA

High School: Sutton Memorial

Event: Decathlon

What effect has your time at Harvard had on you?

Looking back, I would say the biggest effect my time at Harvard has had on me would be transforming me into a more patient and persevering student, athlete, and individual. When most of us arrive on campus as freshmen, we are used to being the star of the team and expect instant success. Most of us have never experienced significant failure or setback. However, instant success only comes for a very few, and the rest of us are left frustrated with our performances and progress. This is when I learned patience and perseverance is important to future success. You may experience a year or even two or three full of rehab and grueling, occasionally monotonous practices before you make a significant contribution to the team. You have to persevere through your frustrations and self-doubt. But if you can learn to be patient, focus on the things within your control, and fight through your failures, eventually success will come. My time as a member of Harvard Track and Field has instilled in me these values, which have contributed to my athletic and academic success. I will hold these valuable lessons dearly as I approach the end of my athletic career and the beginning of the next phase of my life.

What has been your most memorable moment on the team?

As a four year member of Harvard Track and Field, there are many moments that stand out, however my most memorable moment was competing in the 2015 Indoor Heps Championship hosted at Harvard. It was the beginning of second semester my junior year, and it was the first chance I had to compete at Heps. The opportunity to compete on our home track heightened the excitement. However, the most memorable moment came when I finished my seventh event of the competition. The 1000m is the seventh and last event of the heptathlon, and it also happens



to be one of my worst events. When I crossed the finish line and collapsed to the floor I was immediately surrounded by all of my teammates who were congratulating me and telling me I had done it. I managed to place 4th in the heptathlon overall, scoring my first Heps points for the team. Realizing that the years of hard work had finally paid off brought on a wave of overwhelming emotion that still gives me chills today. Although I have since scored at Heps, I still consider that moment the most significant athletic achievement of my life, and being able to share it with some of my best friends and teammates makes it that much more memorable.

Of all your teammates over the years, who have you admired the most and why?

I have had the privilege of being teammates with some incredibly talented athletes and amazing people. But if I had to pick the one I have admired the most, I would have to say Lexie Schachne. Our freshman year, Lexie and I were the only freshmen in Coach Abbott's event group, so we had to endure the growing pains of transitioning from high school to Division I athletics together. We would share complaints, confusions, successes, and even injuries. Both of us dealt with long-term injuries our first two years on the team, and while you never want any teammates to be hurt, it was comforting to talk to someone else who was going through almost the same frustrations. The reason I admire Lexie is because she demonstrated the patience and perseverance I described above necessary to be a successful college athlete and student. She studies mechanical engineering and has had an intense academic schedule her entire time at Harvard. Even with this, Lexie showed the determination to overcome her injuries, and the patience it takes to transform into a successful athlete. It was not until this year, her last year on the team, that Lexie was able to score at Heps. She placed 3rd in the pole vault, and proved that with the right amount of patience and perseverance, almost all obstacles can be overcome and success can be achieved. This was the proudest I have ever been of a fellow teammate.

ALUMNI PROFILE

SAMMY SILVA '13

In the fall of 2009, I joined the Harvard cross country team with high hopes of leaving my mark in the Ivy League record books. As any athlete knows, one's body isn't always compliant with the demands of training, and injuries only allowed me to compete in about half of my 12 seasons as an eligible athlete. Being a part of that team is something I treasure to this day, but I was disillusioned by the fact that the results of my training ran counter to the dedication I held towards being a runner.

These sentiments were the impetus for my journey to the University of New Mexico, where I used my remaining eligibility as a graduate student. My Harvard track coaches were instrumental in setting up the opportunity and preparing me for the transition. I achieved All-American honors in my first season competing for the cross country team and my races garnered interest from shoe companies which led to contract offers. I had never considered pursuing running as a career, but my confidence in my running had only been substantiated by small improvements, and I felt that this was a fortuitous opportunity that needed to be embraced.

Last May, I signed a contract with Nike and became a member of the Bowerman Track Club, a Nike-sponsored team that trains at the Nike World Headquarters in Portland. As a member of the team, Nike provides us with a salary, coaching, treatment, travel, and gear. In return, we represent the brand on the world stage of track and field—the pinnacle of our seasons are focused on world championships and the Olympics.

Immediately upon joining the team I traveled with them to Park City, Utah, for altitude training. For a month, we were living at 8,000 feet above sea level and working out at about 5,000 feet above sea level. This is common practice for elite runners, as it increases red blood cell mass to boost the body's oxygen carrying capacity. Such training camps are done in preparation for important races—this one in particular was to prepare for the USA outdoor track and field championships which were held last June.

The summer season is usually spent back at altitude preparing for a world championship or racing the track circuits in Europe with an altitude camp based in St. Moritz, Switzerland. This year's schedule will be different as it



is an Olympic year. We will be training to peak at the USA Olympic trials in July, and once again at the Olympics in August. Every member of my team focuses on a particular event, ranging from the 1500m to the marathon, and this determines training schedules along with time spent at altitude. Whether we are at altitude or training at home in Portland, days are filled with workouts, runs, weights, cross training and a plenty of recovery.

Being a part of the Nike community is quite unique, especially at the headquarters in Portland. Even as a new athlete I've been able to get a glimpse into product development as the employees are thoroughly interested in getting the perspective and input of the elite athlete. We run on the Nike campus and will often have employees find us after our workouts to get our feedback on a particular product. Now that I've seen the ingenuity and rigor that goes into every aspect of the products, I can't help but look at my gear with fresh eyes. It is astounding just how crucial a fractional increase in the efficiency of a product can be, as running is a sport where marginal gains make a huge difference.

There are a multitude of exciting experiences brought about by this career, but the benefits of running for a job are also its challenges. Running is not only my livelihood but my source of fulfillment in a career. It is a job that I take home with me every day and to even have the potential for success there is not much room for compromises to be made.

As I've gone through this transition I can't help but draw parallels to my years at Harvard. It is such a rare experience and the expectations are high. I've entered a distinct community of individuals who are extremely accomplished—a motivational environment to say the least. My initial instinct is to put blinders on and get to work, but I know I have to partake in every moment as this career has an expiration date. My time as an undergraduate went by so quickly, and holding that experience in retrospect offers perspective. It was not a particular race or competition that impressed my college career, but rather living a curious and introspective life while earnestly pursuing my passions that made my time in Boston so transformative. With that in mind, the running I do now is not so disparate from running with an "H" on my chest.



My college roommates Briana Jackucewicz '13 and Carolina Ragolta '13 came to support me at my first professional track race in the 1500m.

ALUMNI/AE NEWS

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of former Olympian **Samuel M. Felton, Jr., AB '48, MBA '50** on December 24, 2015. Felton was a hammer thrower who broke the University record four times during his four years at Harvard. He also held the discus record for three years. Felton finished fourth in the 1948 Olympics and also made the 1952 U.S. Olympic team.

Friends of Harvard Track stalwart **Warren (Renny) Little '55** shared his pleasure in hearing the news that both winners of the Rittenburg Hurdle Award at last year's HYOC meet were Harvard athletes.

William Tucker, MD, '62 writes: I'm sure this is not the kind of triumph that your readers have deservedly come to expect, but I cannot help passing on Coach McCurdy's legacy, which continues to play a significant part in my life. I wasn't a good sprinter—Frank Yeomans was the fast one on my team in '60-'61 and '61-'62—but I certainly learned a lot from McCurdy that helped me. I'll turn 75 in a few months, and I still manage to jog 3.5 miles, three times a week, in Central Park (down from 12.25 miles up until a year ago). I believe this activity has been a big factor in my continuing overall health, and without his inspiration, I never would have stuck at it. I've had a common heart rhythm abnormality for the past 35 years, and the jogging habit may be what's kept me from needing any more treatment than anti-coagulants. It's good for your heart to keep on jogging, but your knees have to be working, too. Back in McCurdy's days, no matter what your distance, you had to practice by doing 440's. Each one was a near-death experience for me. I'd wind up flopping my feet, flailing my arms, and gasping for breath. Under those circumstances everything hangs out. Then he called out, "Never run flat-footed, Tucker!" I got the point. Then, 20 years or so ago, in my 50's, I started to "feel" my knees a bit when jogging. It quickly became obvious that a little bit of plantar extension, just enough to move up toward the

toes, made that "feeling" go away completely, after just a few strides. Only a decade ago or so I read somewhere that the arch of the human foot is the best shock-absorber in nature. Thanks again, Coach McCurdy. (I bet Russell Chesney, from Knoxville, who ran 220's, would have some choice memories of him, as well.)

Tony Rossmann '63 JD '71 P '19 writes: In college I was a rower and sculler, and in law school coached sculling at Weld. But rowing was not an opportunity in California 45 years ago, so I turned to running and essentially traded lifelong sports: many marathons, many ultramarathons, some of them in the crimson singlet that Bill McCurdy bestowed on me in the late 1970s. This path ultimately led me to the Western States Endurance Run, the oldest and most prestigious trail ultra, in 1985, and one year later an invitation to join its board of trustees. For an event considered the quintessence of the West, we've had our share of Ivy runners and leaders. When I was elected secretary, our vice president was a Yale man (Fred Hornbruch Y '64) and our president a Princetonian (Doug Latimer P '61)!

Running Western States (www.wser100.org) proved a life-changing experience and investment in self-confidence and professional achievement. Came to the race to escape my practice of land and water law, and instead spent the past quarter century helping preserve the race and its historic Western States Trail. Retired from running the event the year before our twin daughters were born, but continue to help present it, ranging from addressing regulations in the Tahoe National Forest to leading the annual memorial service at Emigrant Summit for those runners we have lost in the year before.

The Run takes place on the last full weekend in June, starting in Squaw Valley and finishing in Auburn, California. We welcome any track and XC alums to visit—or enter our

daunting lottery to run! If you plan to head our way, please drop me a line at ar@landwater.com.



Tony Rossmann '63 Leading the flag raising ceremony, Emigrant Pass, 2014.

Tim Hatfield '67 finished his 11th (and perhaps final) Marine Corps Marathon in D.C. last October as a 70 year old. The first 10 were run with his wife Susan, but he wanted to see if he had one more in him to welcome in his 8th decade. His long jumping career ended many decades earlier, however.



Tim Hatfield '67 with his wife, Susan, his oldest son Adam and his daughter Megan at the Marine Corps Marathon.

ALUMNI/AE NEWS CONTINUED...

Congratulations to **Ed Baskauskas '72** who competed at the USATF Masters Indoor Championships in Albuquerque, where he won the 60m hurdles and took second in the high jump in the men's 65–69 division. Ed writes: It was good to renew friendships with several Ivy-league contemporaries who regularly compete in masters meets. Hope to see other Harvard T&F alums at future meets!

Jim Hughes '79 writes: I hung up the spurs as the ConocoPhillips' risk & insurance manager after 25+ years, and am now entertaining risk management and insurance consulting, mediation and expert witness gigs in addition to teaching ESL, working at a food pantry, etc. I'm always happy to go for a run with anyone brave enough to handle Houston's weather.

Patrick Whelan, MD PhD '82 writes: After 20 years at Harvard Medical School and the MassGeneral Hospital for Children, we moved home to Los Angeles this year. My son Olivier competed many years, almost from birth, in the annual family meet at the Gordon Track. He's now a sophomore at Loyola High School, and I am lecturing in the medical school at USC. Looking forward to staying in touch with all my former teammates and beyond.

David Silver '82 writes: I love participating in the annual alumni and family meet when I can make it, and this year I had fun putting the shot with our oldest daughter. There are always some alumni running in the track events, but please come back to the Gordon track and do the field events—they are a rare treat. Warm wishes to all my track & field friends.

Melissa Marsted '88 writes: In honor of my 50th birthday this past September, I set a goal of running my first 50K. Since then, I have now run three 50Ks and one 55K. As a recent transplant to Park City, Utah, my passion for running has hit new heights with these ultra races. I am tying in my love of running and writing and am about to publish my fifth children's book, Buzzy and the Red Rock Canyons,

highlighting Utah's five national parks (Arches, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef, Bryce and Zion). As a test runner for Hoka running shoes, I am exploring the red rock canyons of Utah and beyond with additional state by state children's books to honor the 100th anniversary of the national parks.



Melissa Marsted '88 running on Antelope Island.

Suzanne (Jones) Walmsley '91, who serves as the Boston Athletic Association Youth and Community Engagement Director writes: The BAA has partnered with the Peabody Museum at Harvard and Professor Dan Lieberman to celebrate Native American running traditions and the Boston Marathon's Native American champions. There was a symposium at Harvard on Friday, April 15, and a number of events over Boston Marathon weekend.

Congratulations to **Brittan (Smith) Berry '09**, who will be graduating with her Masters in Business Administration from Yale School of Management in May, where she is the Student Government President. She will be moving to Cleveland after graduation with her husband, Andrew Berry (football '09).

STAY CONNECTED, FOLLOW THE TEAM!



Leslie Cooper Golemme '86 | Friends Co-Chair
lesliegolemme@gmail.com

Joe Ciollo '99 | Friends Co-Chair
joeciollo@hotmail.com

Bill Blair '78 | News Editor
FOHNewsletter@gmail.com

Jason Saretsky | The William W. "Bill" McCurdy Director
of Track and Field/Cross Country
Jason_saretsky@harvard.edu

Kristan Strout | Friends Group Liaison
strout@fas.harvard.edu

2015-16 Schedule

News & Links

