

Day One Recap: Ryan Crouser Breaks 31-Year-Old World Record to Kick off the Track and Field Olympic Trials

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Ryan Crouser celebrates his World Record mark on day one of the Olympic Trials. Photo by Matt Parker

By Kate Walkup and Caela Fenton

To open the 2020 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Track & Field at Hayward Field, Ryan Crouser broke a 21-year-old meet record with his throw of 22.92m in the prelims of the men’s shot put. Crouser’s preliminary throw gave him the top seed by nearly four feet going into the finals. In his fourth throw of the finals, the first 2021 Olympic Trials champion broke Randy Barnes’s 31-year-old world record throwing 23.37m—the first ever shot put world record set at the U.S. Olympic Trials.

Crouser’s record received a standing ovation from an admiring Hayward audience, and he discussed how special it was to set it at Hayward Field in his post-race interview.

“What makes Hayward special is not just the phenomenal stadium, it’s the fans. It’s TrackTown, USA for a reason,” Crouser said. “The pandemic has definitely pushed people apart, and kept them socially distanced, it was cool to see people start to come together.”

Abbey Cooper ran away from the rest of the field in the first heat of the women’s 5,000m, soloing her way to the Olympic “A” standard with her 15:07.80 finish.

Cooper, who competed in the 5,000 in the 2016 Olympics, was awarded the Rio 2016 Fair Play Award after she and New Zealand athlete Nikki Hamblin fell during their heat but helped each other to cross the finish line. Cooper was injured in the fall and was unable to compete in the final.

“The past five years since Rio have been so hard, so much harder than I ever could have imagined,” Cooper said. “Thank God I didn’t know how hard it was going to be. I kept going because this is a calling for me.”

Josette Norris (15:32.58) took the win in heat two.

Valarie Allman threw a meet record of 70.01m on her second throw in the women’s discus preliminary round. Her record-breaking throw moves her into the second spot in the world this year.

Jenny Simpson (4:11.34), Dani Aragon (4:13.34) and Elle Purrier St. Pierre (4:11.78) won their respective heats of the first round of the women’s 1500m. The top six athletes from each heat advance to the semi-finals, which take place tomorrow night.



Jenny Simpson and Nikki Hiltz lead the way in heat No. 1 of the women’s 1500 meters, earning them the top two qualifying times on the day, 4:11.34 and 4:11.42 respectively. Photo by Matt Parker

Simpson, who is attempting to make her fourth Olympic team, noted in her post-race interview that the Trials are a time during which she is emotional and grateful for having seen generations of athletes move through the event. The presence of so many collegiate athletes also impacted her race strategy.

“The collegians are really sharp, they’re really race ready, so if I really leave it to the last 200,” the 35-year-old said. “They’ve got a decade of youth on me now, so I wanted to make sure I was in it the entire way.”

Five collegiate athletes advanced to the semis in the event.

Allyson Felix (50.99), Quanera Hayes (52.34), Wadelaine Jonathas (50.64) and Kendall Ellis (51.02) crossed the

finish line first to advance in the women’s 400m. The top three finishers in each heat and the next four fastest runners advance to the semifinals on Saturday.

Felix is attempting to qualify for her fifth straight Olympic Games, her first after giving birth to her daughter.

In the first round of the men’s 400m, Trevor Stewart (44.75), Michael Cherry (44.86), Elija Godwin (44.81) and Wil London (45.46) won their respective heats to advance to Sunday’s semifinals. The top 16 in the first round advance and will compete in the semifinals tomorrow.

Abraham Alvarado (1:48.35), Donovan Brazier (1:45.00), Michael Rhoads (1:48.64) and 2021 NCAA 800m champion, Isaiah Jewett, (1:47.83) won their respective heats of the men’s 800m to advance to Monday’s finals. Brannon Kidder took second to Brazier in the second heat of the event, clocking a personal record of 1:45.06 and achieving his Olympic “A” standard.

Gabby Thomas ran 11 seconds flat to win the first heat of the women’s 100m dash first round, achieving the Olympic “A” standard in her personal-record race. Cambrea Sturgis (11.15), Javianne Oliver (10.96) and top qualifier Sha’Carri Richardson (10.84) also won their heats of the event to advance to the semifinals.

Keturah Orji jumped 14.29m to lead the top 12 women in the triple jump to the finals on Sunday. Twelve athletes advanced in the women’s high jump qualifying round by jumping a height of 1.87m. Rudy Winkler threw 79.13m to lead the top 12 in the men’s hammer throw into the finals scheduled for Sunday.

To conclude the first day of the Olympic Trials, Woody Kincaid won the men’s 10,000m final, running a time of 27:53.62. Grant Fisher (27:54.29) and Joe Klecker (27:54.90) finished second and third to complete the 10,000 Olympic team. Kincaid ran a bell lap of 53.47 to propel him to the win.

“It was hard to stay patient early in the race,” Kincaid said. “Patience was a big part of what helped me stay in that race today.”



Woody Kincaid (Center) celebrates atop the podium with Bowerman Track Club teammate Grant Fisher (Left) and Joe Klecker (right) after the men’s 10,000 meter final on Friday. Photo by Adam Eberhardt

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