

# Distance Runners Eye the Olympic Trials

MAY 22, 2021 • NEWS, 2021



**High school junior Roisin Willis charges to the win at the Trials of Miles NYC Qualifier, becoming the third high school athlete to achieve the women's 800m Olympic Trials Standard this year. Photo by Jay Bendlin**

**By Kate Walkup**

Novice and veteran distance runners alike achieved Olympic Trials qualifying times at the Trials of Miles New York City Qualifier at Icahn Stadium on Friday night.

All eyes were on the B heat of the 800-meter dash, which featured high school sophomore Sophia Gorriaran of Moses Brown High School in Rhode Island, who had already obtained the Olympic Trials qualifying time. However, it was another high schooler, junior Roisin Willis of Stevens Point High School in Wisconsin, who had the fastest final kick down the home stretch to capture the win.

Willis crossed the finish line in 2:00.78, just missing the Olympic standard with a time of 2:00.78 while turning in the fastest high school 800m in the country this season. Gorriaran finished fifth in the heat with a time of 2:02.93.

"This race meant so much for me," Willis said. "I was really trying to get that Olympic Trials qualifier, so that I knew that if I got that win, I would get that qualifier too."

Mary Cain's high school 800 meter record of 1:59.51 is looking more and more within reach for Willis as she seeks to break the two-minute barrier.

Distance specialist Sifan Hassan won the seeded heat of the women's 800m but finished with a time of 2:01.54, which wasn't quite fast enough to edge past Willis. However, Hassan's back-half surge propelled her from last to first in the final 300 meters of the race.

Abraham Alvarado came away with a PR and Olympic Trials qualifying time in his 800 meter win in the men's B heat of the race, clocking in at 1:46.15.

Eric Holt won the men's 1,500 meters, snatching the Trials of Miles triple crown with a time of 3:39.85.

"It feels great. I love the fact that all my friends are out here supporting me," Holt said. "I know I had more in the tank and I know I have more to give."

Tonatiu López cruised to an easy win in the men's 800 meters, crossing the line with a time of 1:45.24. Having already secured the Olympic standard, Lopez focused on his race strategy in preparation for Tokyo.



**Tonatiu López continues his hot streak in 2021 with another victory at Icahn Stadium on Friday night. Photo by Jay Bendlin**

Alexina Wilson just missed the Olympic standard in her dominant win in the 3,000 meter steeplechase, running a PR of 9:32.69. Wilson slowly stretched her lead throughout the entire race, finishing ahead of Katy Kunc who placed second with a time of 9:39.53.

In the men's 3,000 meter steeplechase, Canadian Jean-Simon Desgagnes finished with a time of 8:29.41. Americans Mike Leet (8:29.68), Brandon Doughty (8:29.98) and Travis Mahoney (8:30.12) all came in under the Olympic Trials qualifying time.

"The guys were coming, but I'm glad they were because we could challenge each other," Desgagnes said. "It's definitely more fun racing each other instead of knowing you have the win."

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