

# Pre Classic returns home to Hayward Field

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Photo by Jay Bendlin

By Kate Walkup

After three years away from Oregon, the Pre Classic returns to Eugene to close out the 2021 track and field season at Hayward Field. This year’s Pre Classic is the first time many international athletes will have the opportunity to compete at the reimagined Hayward Field. Olympic medalists from around the world will meet again this weekend for the first time since Tokyo.

Friday night kicks off a loaded slate of races with world-record watch for Sifan Hassan in the women’s 5,000 meters. All three Olympic medalists in the men’s shot put will compete on Saturday, led by Ryan Crouser who set a world record the last time he stepped into the ring at Hayward.

“I’m happy with how training has been going,” Crouser said. “Anytime you step out on a facility like that with the energy will be an opportunity for a huge throw.”

Sha’Carri Richardson will have the chance to line up with all three Tokyo medalists in the women’s 100 meters on Saturday. Richardson tested positive for THC after winning the 100 at Olympic Trials and was suspended from competition through Tokyo. This will be her first race since competing at Trials.

Athing Mu will return to Hayward for the third time this season after winning the women’s 400 meters at NCAA Championships and the women’s 800 meters at Olympic Trials. The now American record holder and Olympic gold medalist in the 800 will end her season at the Pre Classic, but still has her eyes set on one final goal, the Bowerman award.

“Overall I feel pretty good,” Mu said. “I knew this was going to be my last meet, so I mentally prepared for this meet. I’m just ready to go and compete and then after that be done.”

After winning the men’s 1,500 meters at the 2016 Olympics in Rio, Matthew Centrowitz finished ninth in the semifinal in Tokyo, missing his opportunity to defend his gold medal.

“I’ve always been someone who enjoys racing more than time trialling,” Centrowitz said. “These time trial races and Diamond League races have always been something that I’ve struggled with compared to championship style racing.”

Jakob Ingebrigtsen—the 20-year-old from Norway—set the Olympic record in the final at Tokyo, winning the event in 3:28.32. The two will toe the line in the Bowerman Mile to conclude the meet on Saturday along with silver medalist Timothy Cheruiyot.

The full meet schedule can be found [here](#).

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