

USC Claims Team Title on Final Day of NCAA Championships

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The Women of Troy were crowned the 2021 NCAA Outdoor Track & Field Champions on Saturday. Photo by Otto Horiuchi

By Kate Walkup

EUGENE, Ore. – After taking the first title of the day in the women’s 4x100-meter relay with a time of 42.82, USC continued to pile up the points on the final day of the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships at Hayward Field. The Trojans won the NCAA championship with 74 points.

Second place Texas A&M (63 points) finished the night with a record-breaking performance in the 4x400-meter relay. Their finishing time of 3:22.34 broke the meet, collegiate and facility records set by Oregon in 2017. Freshman sensation Athing Mu anchored the Texas A&M relay, splitting a time of 48.85.

“I think that’s what pulled me to run the split that I did,” Mu said about USC’s lead going into the final leg.



Athing Mu splits a 48.85 anchor leg in the 4x400, leading Texas A&M to a new collegiate record, 3:22.34. Photo by Otto Horiuchi

Earlier in the day, Mu—the collegiate record holder in the 400 meters and the 800 meters—broke her own collegiate record in the 400 with a time of 49.57. Mu will run the 800 at the Olympic Trials in the hopes of making the U.S. Olympic team.

“When I go out to run the 400, I feel like it’s more of a fierce race,” Mu said. “I feel like I can chill just a little bit more in the 800 because it’s my event. I definitely have to come out here with the winning mentality [for the 400].”

Anna Cockrell of USC crossed the finish line with a sizeable lead over the field in the women’s 100-meter hurdles, clocking a time of 12.58.

After winning the 100-meter hurdles, Cockrell doubled back just 40 minutes later to win the 400-meter hurdles with a personal record of 54.68, extending her 2021 collegiate lead. Queen Harrison is the only other woman to have accomplished the hurdle-event double win back in 2010.

“Ever since I came to college this was my dream, to be able to double,” Cockrell said. “I knew only one other person had done it, and it’s been my dream, it’s been my goal for years.”

To follow Cockrell’s double win, Cambrea Sturgis of North Carolina A&T doubled back to win the 200-meter dash in 22.12 after taking the win in the 100-meter dash, clocking a time of 10.74. Sturgis, who ran the fourth fastest time in collegiate history and took the 2021 collegiate lead in the 200, also ran the fastest NCAA time in all-weather conditions. The +2.2 m/s wind prevented a record in the event.

Anna Camp of BYU ran a 62.11 for her bell lap and finished with a time 4:08.53—nearly a second faster than her personal record—to give her the 1,500-meter title. Camp’s kick in the final 200 meters blew her past Sage Hurta of Colorado who finished second in 4:09.42.

“I usually don’t like to go until about 100 meters left depending on how my legs feel,” Camp said. “I feel good about the way I executed it.”

In her first NCAA final as well as her first year competing in the event, Mahala Norris of Air Force won the women’s 3,000-meter steeplechase in 9:31.79.

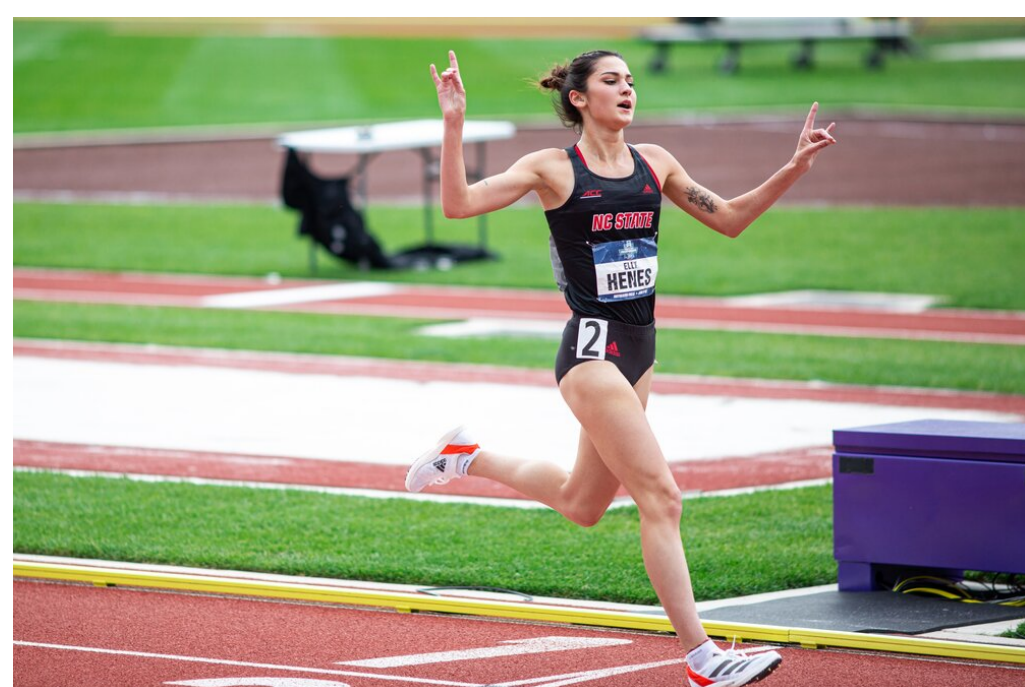
“A win on my home turf is always what I’ve wanted,” said Norris, a Roseburg, Ore., native.

The performance put Norris sixth on the all-time collegiate list with a six-second personal record. Her final surge coming off the last barrier propelled her past Joyce Kimeli of Auburn who finished second in 9:31.84 and Katie Rainsberger of Washington who finished third in 9:32.12.

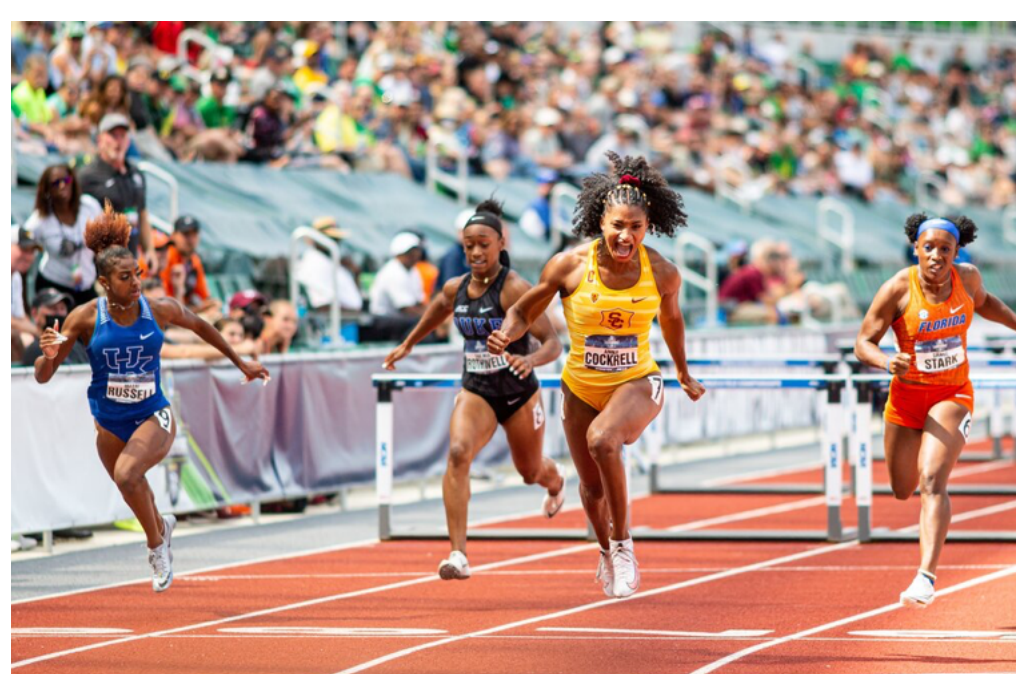
Indoor 2021 NCAA pentathlon champion Tyra Gittens of Texas A&M won the heptathlon with 6,285 points. Gittens also competed in the high jump and the long jump at the NCAA Championships, placing third in the high jump and second in the long jump.

“This weekend has been the hardest weekend of my collegiate career,” Gittens said. “To be able to finish such a difficult meet and finish top three in all three of my events means a lot.”

Michaela Meyer of Virginia took the win in the women’s 800-meter dash with a personal record of 2:00.28. Her kick down the home stretch pushed her past Laurie Barton of Clemson who ran a personal record of 2:00.65 to place second.



NC State’s Elly Henes celebrates as she wins the women’s 5000-meter national title at Hayward Field. Photo by Otto Horiuchi



USC’s Anna Cockrell wins the 400m hurdle and 100m hurdle national titles at Hayward Field on Saturday. Photo by Otto Horiuchi

South Carolina freshman Rachel Glenn won the high jump, clearing 1.93 meters. Jorinde Van Klinken of Arizona State took the 2021 collegiate lead on her final throw of the meet with her personal record and meet record throw of 65.01 meters in the women’s discus. Ruth Usoro of Texas Tech jumped 14.19 meters to claim the triple jump championship.

To close out the individual portion of the NCAA Championships, Elly Henes of North Carolina State won the women’s 5,000 meters with a time of 15:28.05. Her bell-lap kick gave her the edge against Katie Wasserman of Notre Dame who placed second in the event with a time of 15:28.68. Henes’s mother—also her coach—was the last North Carolina State NCAA Champion in that event.

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