

USD Sends 14 To NCAA Regional



P&D FILE PHOTO
South Dakota's Megan Glisar is one of 14 Coyotes who will compete in the NCAA West Preliminary meet, which begins today (Thursday) in Austin, Texas.

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It's barometer time for the University of South Dakota track programs.

The time each year when the coaches can evaluate where their teams stand on the national scene and how each program has progressed from the previous year.

With that in mind, the Coyotes sent 14 athletes – in a total of 17 events – to the NCAA West Preliminary track meet, which begins today (Thursday) in Austin, Texas. The meet serves as the precursor to the NCAA Championships, with the top 12 finishers in each preliminary event qualifying for nationals.

“Getting this number to this level is a statement to where our

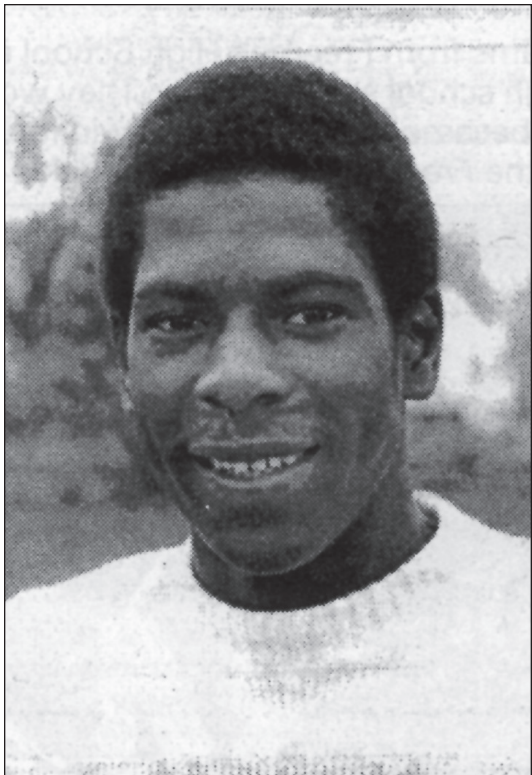
program is at.” USD women's coach Lucky Huber said Wednesday by phone from the Denver airport.

In the case of being a Division I post-season qualifier, USD is still relatively new to these waters. The first year the Coyotes could compete at the national meet was 2011, and that year, seven athletes qualified.

That number increased to 12 in 2012, then 11 in 2013 and 15 a year ago.

“I think we're really doing well for being new to Division I,” said junior Analisa Huschle, who qualified in two events. “Not many schools send that many people and also have as many as All-Americans as we did right away.”

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FREEMAN COURIER PHOTO

Former Freeman Academy standout Lawrence Miller, a two-time Olympian, still holds the state record in the 400-meter dash, set in 1982 at the state meet in Brandon. Another runner from Freeman, Brennan Schmidt, could break that mark at the state meet this weekend in Rapid City.

Freeman Academy's Miller Recalls Record Run In '82 State Meet

BY JEREMY HOECK
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As he drives throughout California with his three children, Lawrence Miller will occasionally pass by a large patch of asphalt or concrete and crack the same joke.

“That's what dad used to run on.”

It wasn't that long ago that Miller was competing on those kinds of surfaces as a record-breaking track star at Freeman Academy High School. And yet, at the same time, a lot has changed for the now 51-year-old former two-time Olympian.

“My knees and ankles are pretty beat up from those tracks,”



Jeremy
HOECK

Miller recalled by phone Tuesday from California, where he lives and co-owns – with his wife – a day spa and wellness center.

Miller, who came to the United States in 1978 from his native Dominica with his adopted parents, Terry and Ingrid Miller, quickly became a 3-sport standout at Freeman Academy – a highly-sought after Division I recruit in soccer and track, as well as basketball.

It was on those asphalt tracks, however, where Miller made his mark on the South Dakota record books.

The date was May 21, 1982. The location was Brandon. The setting was the S.D. State Class B Track Meet.

Miller, who already owned the state's top time in the 400-meter dash, clocked a preliminary time of 47.8, a performance that to this day – 33 years later – still ranks as the all-time best.

That record, which was nearly broken a decade ago, could fall this weekend. In an odd twist of fate, or perhaps only a coincidence, Freeman High School senior Brennan Schmidt has come perilously close to breaking Miller's time, as he enters this weekend's S.D. State Track Meet with a time 48.1 in the 400-meter dash.

Approached this week about Schmidt's pursuit of the record, Miller – who, yes, was aware of Schmidt's exploits – credited more than once the competition he faced in the area for his performance.

“The fact that my record still stands is sort of a credit to their efforts and the competitive environment I found myself in,” Miller said.

Not exactly shying away from his own competitive fire, Miller remembers that his goals for his senior season in 1982 were clear-cut: He was out for more.

“I set a goal to break every meet record I ran at, and I did,” he said. “I didn't want anyone to beat me. That was my mindset.

“I wanted to dominate every race all season.”

High school track at the time, while still years away from electronic timing, didn't feature in-season qualifying, like there is today. What that meant was South Dakota athletes had to rely solely on region performances to qualify for state – much like Nebraska uses now with the district meets.

Breezing his way through regions, Miller turned his attention to the state meet in Brandon.

“Running a sub-48, that was a big deal,” he said. It was a cool Friday afternoon in Brandon that day.

Miller, as he remembers now, wasn't so much focused on the 400-meter dash as he was to break the state record in the 200-meter dash. Slotted in lane two of the 400 prelims next to Colome's Brad Vaughan (the reigning 100-meter dash champion), Miller was suddenly provided all the motivation he needed.

“I was annoyed that he was in the 400,” Miller recalled, managing a chuckle.

The stage was set for an epic showdown.

“My goal was to make sure I was even with him in the first 100 meters, to send a message, like, ‘You'll have to work really hard to beat me,’” Miller said.

It didn't take long for Miller to catch up to Vaughan, and once he was out front, the Bobcats standout never slowed down.

“On the back end, I heard the crowd reacting, so I thought he was catching up to me,” Miller said. “I dug deeper.”

Yet, the harder Miller pushed himself, the crowd noise intensified, reaching a fever pitch as he rounded the final turn.

“I literally thought he was coming up on me,” Miller said. “I didn't want anyone to beat me.”

Nobody did, and Miller had crossed the finish line with a time – from a stopwatch, of course – of 47.8 The downside of his record, however, was that Miller had suffered an injury, serious enough to keep him out of the next day's finals – he was on crutches, cheering on his teammates.

That record-breaking Friday afternoon was far from the highlight of Miller's track career, however.

The Quest For State Meet Gold



P&D FILE PHOTO
Freeman's Brennan Schmidt celebrates after anchoring the Flyers to victory in the 1600 relay at the 2014 South Dakota State Track and Field Championships. Schmidt and the Flyers aim for more hardware when they and other area teams head to Rapid City for the 2015 state meet, which begins Friday. Class B teams will compete in Rapid City both days.

Area Teams Aim To Climb Awards Stand

FROM P&D STAFF REPORTS

Teams from across Region 5B will look to repeat their performances at the South Dakota State Class B Track & Field Championships, which begin Friday at O'Hara Stadium in Rapid City.

also

■ A Preview Of The Yankton Bucks And Gazelles In The State Meet. Friday

Parker returns as the defending Class B boys' champions, while Freeman was third and Irene-Wakonda fourth fifth last year.

On the girls' side, Ipswich looks to repeat its championship, while Region 5B was heavily represented last year, with Irene-Wakonda second, Freeman fourth, Gayville-Volin seventh and Parker eighth.

All three classes will converge on O'Hara Stadium for Saturday's final day of action.

Here is a look at the area Class B teams and athletes, in alphabetical order.

Alcester-Hudson

Alcester-Hudson qualified three girls to state, including Julie Dickau in the long jump, Kendra Jensen in the 1600, and Amelia Stene in the 300-meter hurdles.

For the boys' team, Samuel Jensen will run in the 1600-meter run, Christopher Klemme in the 800-meter run, and the Cubs will run in the 3200-meter relay.

Andes Central-Dakota Christian

In the first year of a new co-op, Andes Central-Dakota Christian looks to have enough pieces in place on the girls' side to at least score some points at state.

“We have pretty high hopes,” coach Cliff Johnson said. “In the first year together, they (the



P&D FILE PHOTO
Irene-Wakonda senior Lauren Sokolowski flies over a hurdle during a meet earlier this season. Sokolowski will be going for a fourth consecutive Class B 100-meter hurdles title during the state meet this weekend.

athletes) took to each other right away.”

Senior Payton Johanneson boasts the top Class B mark (5-feet-6) in the high jump, while freshman Beulah Blackcloud could also score in the high jump (5-1). Andes Central-Dakota Christian qualified three girls in the long jump, led by junior Lydia Hansman who has the fifth-best mark. Also qualified in the event are senior Brooke Deurmier and Johanneson, while Deurmier will also compete in the triple jump.

“On any given day, any of them could come out on top,” Johnson said.

On the track will be junior Erica Kitchenmaster and fresh-

man Brooklyn Brouwer in the 100-meter dash and 200-meter dash, while seventh-grader Anna Medicine Horn will run in the 300-meter hurdles.

The girls also qualified their 400-meter relay quartet, but Johnson said that group hasn't run much together this season.

Andes Central-Dakota Christian qualified two boys athletes, highlighted by sophomore Leo Hopkins who is ranked seventh in the triple jump.

“If he can get a good one, he'll be in contention,” said Johnson, who pointed out that Hopkins is bypassing rotator cuff surgery until after the season.

Sophomore Michael Maas

qualified in the 200-meter dash and 400-meter dash.

Avon

The Avon girls will look to improve on a seventh place finish in 800-meter relay and fifth place in the medley relay. Kacie Mudder qualified in the 300 hurdles and the triple jump, while Lauren Sees will run in the 200-meter dash and the triple jump.

Jacob Cihak will compete in the long jump and Jacob Knodel will throw the discus for the boys.