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Notre Dame Track And Field Sends Eight Competitors To NCAA Championships

2002 SCHEDULE

INDOOR SEASON

Jan. 11	Purdue Open	NTS
Jan. 18	vs. Ball State, Western Michigan	W - 1st M - 3rd
Jan. 25	vs. Michigan St.	W - 1st M - 1st
Feb. 1 - Feb. 2	Meyo Invitational	NTS
Feb. 9	at Windsor Invit. (Windsor, Ont.)	NTS
Feb. 16 - Feb. 17	BIG EAST Champ. (Syracuse, NY)	W - 1st M - 3rd
Mar. 1 - Mar. 2	Alex Wilson Invit.	NTS
Mar. 8 - Mar. 9	NCAA Champ. (Fayetteville, Ark.)	9 a.m. 9 a.m.

OUTDOOR SEASON

Mar. 23	Baldy Castillo (Tempe, Ariz.)	All day
Mar. 29 - Mar. 30	Purdue Invit. (W. Lafayette, Ind.)	All day
Mar. 30	Stanford Invit. (Palo Alto, Calif.)	All day
Apr. 6	Spring Opener	All day
Apr. 13	Missouri Invit. (Columbia, Mo.)	All day
Apr. 20 - Apr. 21	Mt. SAC Relays (Walnut, Calif.)	All day
Apr. 20	Indy Invitational (Indianapolis, Ind.)	All day
Apr. 26 - Apr. 27	Drake Relays (Des Moines, Iowa)	All day
Apr. 26 - Apr. 27	Boilermaker Open (W. Lafayette, Ind.)	All day
May 3 - May 5	BIG EAST Champ. (Storrs, Conn.)	All day
May 11	at Billy Hayes Invit. (Bloomington, Ind.)	All day
May 17 - May 18	at Ga. Tech Invit. (Atlanta, Ga.)	All day
May 29 -	NCAA Champ.	All day
Jun. 1	(Baton Rouge, La.)	
Jun. 21 -	USTAF Nationals	All day
Jun. 23	(Palo Alto, Calif.)	

Home meets in bold • All times local to site.

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2002 NCAA Indoor Championships

Tyson Center • Fayetteville, Ark.

Friday, March 8 (12 p.m.) and Saturday, March 9 (2 p.m.)

Notre Dame track and field in the running for a number of titles at the NCAA Indoor Championship: The University of Notre Dame men's and women's track and field teams will send multiple competitors to the 2002 NCAA Indoor Championship in Fayetteville, Ark., this weekend. The men's team will be represented by seniors Ryan Shay and Luke Watson, marking the first season since 1999 that the team will send multiple competitors to the NCAA indoor meet.

On the women's side, the 2002 BIG EAST Indoor Champions will send a record number of athletes to the NCAA indoor meet. Senior Liz Grow will compete in the 400 meters for the third time in her career and will also be a member of the 4x400 relay team along with Kristen Dodd, Ayesha Boyd and Kymia Love. Boyd will compete in the 200 meters as well and junior Tameisha King will be in the long jump field. Freshman Lauren King will make the trip to Fayetteville and will be running the mile.

The four athletes who have qualified as individuals for the women's team is a record number for the Irish, eclipsing the 1999 season when Grow, JoAnna Deeter and Jennifer Engelhardt competed. The 4x400 relay team is the first squad to advance to an NCAA Championship from the Notre Dame women's team.

When will the Irish compete? Here is a quick run down of the start times for the events in which Notre Dame athletes are entered:

Friday, March 8, 5:10 p.m., women's 400 meter preliminaries

Friday, March 8, 6 p.m., women's long jump

Friday, March 8, 6:15 p.m., women's mile run preliminaries

Friday, March 8, 8 p.m., men's 5,000 meters

Saturday, March 9, 6:05 p.m., women's mile run finals

Saturday, March 9, 6:45 p.m., women's 400 meter finals

Saturday, March 9, 7:40 p.m., men's 3,000 meters

Saturday, March 9, 7:55 p.m., women's 4x400 relay

Most Irish competitors have a history at the NCAA Championships: As the Notre Dame representatives prepare to compete this weekend, a number of the athletes can fall back on their success in the NCAA Championships for motivation.

Ryan Shay's 10,000-meter championship at the outdoor meet in 2001 is an example of the senior's ability to put together a great race at the right time. Shay will be gunning for a record seventh All-American honor this weekend, which would make the Central Lake, Mich., native the most decorated Irish track and field athlete of all time. Out of the six

All-America honors Shay has previously earned, one occurred in the 5,000 meters at last year's indoor meet (a ninth-place 14:02.35 effort).

Shay will enter the 5,000 meters on Friday as the defending two-time BIG EAST Champion and holding the second-best time in the nation this season, a 13:46.80 career-best effort at the 2002 Meyo Invitational.

This year's championship meet will mark the first time Shay will compete in two events. He will join classmate Luke Watson in the 3,000 meter field, as Shay has the 12th-best time in the nation (7:58.73) this season and also won the 3,000 meters at the BIG EAST Indoor Championship.

Watson could combine with Shay to give the Irish individual victories in both distance events at the NCAA meet. Watson's blistering 7:54.02, 3,000-meter time from the Meyo Invitational ranks #2 in the nation this year and puts the Stillwater, Minn., native in the mix for his first NCAA title. He does have experience at the NCAA level as well. Watson was a member of the 2000 Distance Medley Relay team that finished sixth and also competed at the 2000 outdoor meet in the steeplechase.

Liz Grow became the first Irish women's sprinter to earn All-America honors in the 400 meters at last season's NCAA indoor meet and will return to the field in 2002. This will be Grow's fifth NCAA Championship event, as the Irish senior has qualified for two indoor and two outdoor meets previous to this weekend's competition.

Grow will be looking to advance into the 400 meter finals. Her 53.34 time from the Alex Wilson Invita-

tional last weekend is the 11th-best in the field. The 2002 NCAA indoor meet will also mark the first time Grow will compete in two events at the national level. The New Braunfels, Texas, native runs the anchor leg of the 4x400 relay, which is ranked third entering this weekend's meet.

Junior Tameisha King returns to the national stage this weekend as well. An All-American outdoor long jumper as a freshman in 2000, King will compete in her first NCAA indoor meet this weekend. Her 6.27m (20-7) measurement from the Meyo Invitational is ranked 14th entering the meet and the Mableton, Ga., native will be looking to improve on her eighth place finish at the outdoor meet from two years ago.

Ayesha Boyd caps impressive sophomore season by earning a spot in the 200-meter field: Possibly the most improved athlete on the team this season, sophomore Ayesha Boyd will make her first appearance at an NCAA championship meet this weekend, competing in the 200 meters and the 4x400 relay.

Boyd has been one of the most consistent contributors on the Irish team this season, owning the team's best times in the 60 and 200 meters. Her 23.80, 200-meter time from the BIG EAST Indoor Championship put her as the final qualifier in the field this week, but the second-year sprinter's steady improvement this season might lead to a great run this weekend that could advance her into the finals.

Lauren King settles on the mile run for the NCAA meet: Freshman cross country All-American Lauren King flirted with qualifying for the NCAA indoor meet in four different events (800 meters, 1,000

meters, distance medley relay and the mile), but will end up in the mile run race this weekend.

She worked her way into the mile run field at last weekend's Alex Wilson Invitational, setting a school record in 4:44.60. That time puts her 10th in the field this weekend, six seconds behind the leader but just two seconds out of fifth place.

The women's mile run will have a preliminary and final race this weekend.

4x400 relay team breaks through to earn a spot in the NCAA field: After posting NCAA consideration times in the 4x100 and 4x400 relay during the 2001 outdoor season, the Notre Dame women's relay team posted a tremendous effort at the Alex Wilson Invitational last weekend to put itself in the NCAA Championship this weekend as one of the teams to beat.

Kymia Love, Kristen Dodd, Ayesha Boyd and Liz Grow completed the 4x400 relay in 3:35.59 last weekend, putting them third in the field this weekend. The 3:35.59 time shattered the school record by five seconds, run by the same team a year ago.

Notre Dame in the NCAA Indoor Championships: The Notre Dame men's team has sent 24 individual competitors and seven relays to the NCAA indoor meet over the program's history. Rick Wohlhuter (600 yards, 1970) and Tom McMannon (55-meter hurdles, 1972) represent the two titles the team has earned at the indoor meet.

The women's team has sent eight competitors to the NCAA indoor meet since 1996, with JoAnna Deeter's sixth-place effort in the 5,000 meters from 1999 marking the highest women's team finish at the meet.