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(Neb.)-Eagles headed to last chance meets

By: Andrew Lacy Posted at: 05/09/2013 11:48 AM

About a dozen Chadron State College track and field athletes will be participating in "last chance" meets this weekend. Most of them are hoping to improve their marks so then can qualify for the NCAA Division II National Championships that will be May 23-25 in Pueblo, Colo., while three athletes who have already earned spots at nationals will use that competition to stay sharp.

Head coach Ryan Baily said assistant coach Jessica Horsley will take seven CSC throwers to a meet at Concordia University in Seward on Friday. Most of these athletes as well as five other Eagles also will compete at Colorado School of Mines in Golden on Sunday.

Two Chadron State men, Cody Hunt in the shot put and Karl McFarlane in the 110 high hurdles, have automatically qualified for the national meet. Hunt's best shot put mark of 60 feet, 9.5 inches is third best in Division II and McFarlane's top hurdle time of 13.93 seconds is fourth. Both won those events at the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference Championships this week.

Women's discus thrower Alyssa Norton is on the provisional list, but she ranks ninth in the nation with her mark of 159-8 and is considered a lock for a national berth. She also won the RMAC discus title.

The athletes with the 20 best marks in the nation after all the last chance meets take place this weekend will qualify for nationals.

The remaining CSC athletes have marks that put them within striking distance of qualifying, but need to improve by a few centimeters if they are field events athletes or a second or two if their specialty is a track event.

The throwers going to Concordia besides Hunt and Norton are males Charith Kapukotuwa and Kyle McCarthy and females Mel Herl, Sadie Waugh and Cyndi Thomas.

Baily said Kapakotuwa, in particular, is capable of getting a qualifying mark in the discus.

Kapakotuwa's best throw this season is 161-2. Baily said the junior from Sri Lanka has thrown close to 180 feet several times in practice. A throw of that distance would move him into the top 10 in the nation.

Kapakotuwa also has thrown the shot 54-7 ¼. Entering this weekend, 10 more inches would put him in the top 20 in the event.

Besides the throwers, the other Eagles competing on Sunday at Colorado Mines are pole vaulters Kolten and Kaelie Jelden, Lanar Newman in the long jump, McFarlane in the triple jump and Gavan Archibald in the 400 hurdles.

Archibald currently ranks 24th on the hurdles list with an altitude-adjusted time of 52.98 seconds. If he can run just one second faster, he'll move into the top 10.

Baily said Newman, who went 23-9 ½ in the long jump at the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference Championships on Tuesday, needs to add just three inches to rank among the top 20.

“Only two or three years ago, Lanar would have easily qualified for nationals with his jump,” Baily said. “But Division II has added at least 60 schools in that period and it’s getting tougher and tougher to qualify all the time. Our athletes have worked so hard and done so well this year that they deserve another opportunity to qualify.”