

SPORTS

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Page 3 5

Spirit drives Bryant toward ultimate leap

The long jumper will compete in next week's Olympic Trials

By Colby Gaines
THE BATTALION

When former A&M track standout Tim Bryant competes in the long jump at the Olympic Trials next week in Atlanta, he'll have a little something extra helping him rocket down the runway.

Something spiritual, that is. Throughout the past track season, a season in which the Dallas native shattered personal record after personal record, Bryant maintained a routine of listening to gospel music before and during meets.

For Bryant, the soothing sounds give him an edge over the competition.

"Whereas some people listen to rap and other things, I listen to gospel because it relaxes me," Bryant said. "It loosens me up, gets me away from the crowd and helps me concentrate and keep my mind on the event before I hit the track."

Bryant's routine produced serious dividends this spring for the Aggies. After taking home second place in his freshman and sophomore years, Bryant finally broke through his frustrations at the



"He's a tremendous long jumper, but he will have to have a great leap to make the team. I think he has that in him."

— TED NELSON
Head Track Coach

Southwest Conference Championships May 16-18 and captured first place in the long jump.

He followed up that triumph by earning All-American distinction with a seventh place finish at the NCAA Championships held in Eugene, Ore. in late May.

Bryant considers his leap of 26.7 feet at the conference finals a personal milestone.

"I think placing first at the SWC was the highlight of my track career at



A&M," Bryant said. "Being that it was the last meet of the conference, it was very exciting."

As exciting as winning the conference title was for Bryant, he knows it is going to take an even greater effort at the Olympic Trials to fulfill his dreams. The field is open, but there is little room for error.

Out of 24 long jump participants, only three will have the honor of competing in the summer games.

Though the competition will be the stiffest he has ever faced, Bryant is optimistic about his chances of making the USA team.

"Anything can happen," Bryant said. "The last few years, no one has been really dominant (in the long jump). Mike Powell and Carl Lewis have been strong, but I think that the field is open."

A&M Head Track Coach Ted Nelson believes Bryant has a legitimate shot at qualifying to wear red, white and blue.

"Tim will definitely be competitive," Nelson said. "He's a tremendous long jumper, but he will have to have a great leap to make the team. I think he has that in him."

To prepare for his date with destiny in Atlanta, Bryant has been working out every evening with Nelson and Aggie jumps and hurdlers coach Abe Brown.

In addition to his usual technique work around the long jump pit, Bryant has been doing sprint work and lifting weights to add to his explosiveness off the board.

Like any track athlete, making the Olympic team would be a dream come true for Bryant; but whatever the results of the trials, he'll use the experience as a stepping-stone for the future.

"This (the Olympic trials) is a way of getting my foot in the door," Bryant said. "I want to take my track career as far as I possibly can. I believe I have a few more years to go."

March to Atlanta



The number of days remaining until the Opening Ceremonies of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta

38

JOLIVET: Olympic Trials next hurdle for senior

Continued from Page 1

A junior transfer student out of Odessa Junior College and a Houston native, Jolivet will compete in the 100- and 400-meter hurdles at the trials.

Since qualifying, Jolivet's routine has changed very little.

She still practices every day as though she were in the regular season, keeping a strong mental attitude as well as a strong physical regimen.

"I try to not be too relaxed, but not too tense," Jolivet said. "Otherwise, I do not perform up to my best. I just take a deep breath. Whatever happens happens."

Jolivet said she could not attribute her success to just one person.

"It would be unfair to name just one," Jolivet said. "But I can say that the coaches at A&M have brought me up to another level."

Jolivet set school records in the 400-meter hurdles with an amazing time of 56.82 seconds, enough to earn her a trip to the trials in Atlanta.

But her success does not stop there. She went on to clock a 13.15-second finish in the 100-meter hurdles, 0.04 seconds above her personal best of 13.11 seconds, giving her a second qualifying time for the trials.

As if this were not enough, her accomplishments as a member of the relay teams have given her even

more to brag about this season.

Jolivet anchors both the 400- and 1600-meter relay teams, carrying the 400-meter relay team to a school record of 44.49 seconds.

It is interesting to note that the decision to let Jolivet run in the relay team was an experimental choice made by the A&M Track coaches.

She never had the opportunity to run the event before coming to A&M.

The indoor season was just as rewarding to Jolivet this past year. The junior anchored the 1600-meter relay to a third place finish at the Southwest Conference Indoor Meet and a sixth place finish at the NCAA Indoor Meet.



JOLIVET

The resulting school record time of three minutes, 37.61 seconds earned her All-American honors.

The only SWC track athlete to place in the top four in both the 100- and 400-meter hurdles and the only conference female track athlete to win both of these events, Jolivet has far exceeded the expectations of her coaches.

Story by Ray Hernandez

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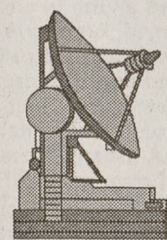
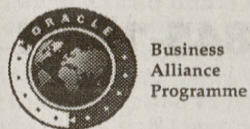
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