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(Left) Kamaria Brown earned this week's SEC runner of the week honors, while (right) Bralon Taplin continues to struggle with an injury.

## No. 1 track poised for strong meet at Penn Relay Carnival this weekend

By Seth Stroupe

The No. 1 Texas A&M men and women's track and field teams are set to spend an extended weekend in the Philadelphia as they compete in the 121st Penn Relay Carnival. The Aggies have enjoyed recent success at the event, claiming six consecutive 4x100 relay victories and taking the top spot in six of the past seven 4x200 relay races. "The Penn is a great rehearsal for big meet competition," said track and field head coach Pat Henry. "There are going to be 60,000 people in the stadium and that makes for an environment that is very conducive for [what we'll see at] the NCAA championships. We're just trying to put ourselves in that sort of situation and that's what [this weekend] is all about."

The Aggies are coming off a rain-shortened Michael Johnson Classic in Waco, Texas, in which several events were canceled due to inclement weather. Still, the Aggies were able to notch more than their share of victories before the cancellation.

Senior sprinter Deon Lendore ran a new season best in taking first place in the men's 400 meter, freshman newcomer Ioannis Kyriazis set a new career best en route to taking the first place and SEC Freshman of the Week honors in the javelin and Kamaria Brown and Shamier Little placed fourth and fifth in a loaded women's 400 meter field that included both the defending Olympic champion, Sanya Richards-Ross, and NCAA title holder, Courtney Okolo. "We accomplished a lot in a short period of time," Henry said. "We had some great efforts. Our javelin throwers looked good, Deon looked good, Kamaria and Shamier looked real good in the 400 meters. We got a lot done."

Brown earned SEC runner of the week honors for setting a new career best outdoor 400 time (51.76) and running the third leg in the women's 4x100 sprint relay. Brown's 400-meter time is the fifth best in the NCAA and the second-fastest SEC time recorded this season.

"[Her season] has been a struggle to get healthy," Henry said. "Now she's finally healthy and she's ready to run. She showed that last weekend. Anytime you run you first 400 in 51-plus seconds, that's a tremendous first effort. I think there are big things to come for Kamaria."

Still, it wasn't all rainbows and weather delays in Waco. Last week's USTFCCA honorable mention national athlete of the week, Bralon Taplin, was injured during the exchange in the 4x100 men's sprint relay and is still struggling to recover. On the women's side, key piece Olivia Ekpono continues to regain her form from an injury that has held her out of outdoor competition all season long.

The Penn Relay Carnival begins at noon Thursday in Philadelphia and continues through Saturday, when the action starts at 12:30 p.m. and will be broadcast on the NBC Sports Network.

### MUSTER CONTINUED

deep into the stories behind campus through this newspaper. I attended Muster my freshman year, and was suitably awed. But the names were still just names. That all changed with this year's Reflections Display. As a Muster Host I had the privilege to watch over the items families chose to display on behalf of their loved ones, and slowly the names and class years came to life. Some led lives startlingly close to mine. They were involved in men's and women's organizations, they studied and worked and had fun with friends. Their parents visited them on weekends. They dated and fell in love. Our only difference was a heartbeat.

More than anything, the Reflections Display motivated me to be the best Muster Host I could be. I agonized for two hours over a letter we would handwrite to our families. I rehearsed the first sentence I would say when we met, the different conversations I might have and what I might do if something went wrong. I envisioned myself as the best comforter, a patient listener and a model Aggie. Reality had other plans. After my introduction, the family largely kept to themselves. I asked a few questions to break the silence; they politely replied. The member most affected by their loss couldn't stop crying. I didn't know what to do. After a few minutes I led them to their seats and pinned a corsage to the crying member, who joked that I probably had plenty of experience from prom to calm my unsteady fingers. I never found out if the one they honored was her husband or brother. They were gone before I could say goodbye after the ceremony.

I was upset — I wanted to make a difference, and I felt like I had not until I realized I had forgotten what the purpose of Muster and being a host was. Muster is about remembrance and finding joy in a life fully lived. Muster Hosts are there to serve the honored families in any way they need. The family I shook hands with didn't need me to talk or to comfort them — they had each other for that. I simply needed to show them their seats, and keep calm and composed until we parted. Never has something so simple been so hard.

I wish I could say I lifted a family's grief or made a difference in their lives, but I didn't. I simply stood by their side for 15 minutes, showed them their seats and whispered 'here' for their loved one. It was the least I had and the most I could do, and I hope to do the same when Muster is once again called April 21, 2016.



(From left) Reid Towart, Grant Hewitt and Peter Luft will compete with Team Maroon for \$180,000 total in scholarships.

### LEAGUE CONTINUED

community has helped foster Team Maroon's success. "The competitive environment at A&M has been around long enough we kind of bred a lot of good talent," Callaghan said. "And now it's becoming bigger and when we take it on a national level, we're top four."

Trent Jones, economics senior and team member, said the team will not get to practice as much as it wants to, but the players still feel confident. "We have finals and tests coming up so its going to be tough to get as much practice in as we can," Jones said. "But as long as our team synergy stays and we are fresh on the champions we play we'll be ready to play."

Hewitt said the team often does better when all the members take a short break from the game to get revitalized and back in the mindset. Hewitt said the most important mechanism for doing well is a positive atmosphere and focusing on one game at a time.

Jones said the team tries to have fun in games, especially when doing well, by yelling war cries, making jokes and "breaking out the radios."

The finals will take place in Barker

Hanger at Santa Monica Regional Airport in front of a live audience. Hewitt said the team knows numerous Aggies will be watching them play both in the audience and online. "I think a cool aspect too is that a bunch of our friends from the university are flying and driving down so they are going to be in the audience cheering for us," Hewitt said. "It's just going to be a really good atmosphere."

Reid Towart, engineering senior and team member, said he is not overly worried about playing in front of the crowd. "Even pros, still, they talk about how they have nerves or jitters before the game but once the game starts you're just going," Towart said. Hewitt said he thinks the team will do fine once they start playing. "I was nervous before the Georgia Tech game, Hewitt said. "But as soon as I got into the game, honestly, I forget everything — all that matters is that one game for me."

Team Maroon will play May 2 and 3 against the University of Connecticut, Robert Morris University and the University of British Columbia.

### VP RESIGNATIONS CONTINUED

typical when leadership roles change. "It is common for new presidents to form an administrative team to lead the university in a manner they feel is best suited to their leadership style and the success of Texas A&M," Hinckley said. "The directive from the Chancellor re-

affirms what is generally understood to be a normal sequence of events when a new president is selected." Student Body President Joseph Benigno said although he has been reassured this is not a concern, there is a chance it could affect SGA as a whole. "We have a working relationship with the vice presidents, so this certainly could effect as SGA and therefore the student body," Benigno said.