

RRW: Confidence Growing, Rowbury Ready for Rigors of 1500m Rounds

CONFIDENCE GROWING, ROWBURY READY FOR RIGORS OF 1500M ROUNDS

By David Monti

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TEDDINGTON, ENGLAND (24-Jul) -- The three rounds of the 1500m at the Olympic Games makes that event a particularly grueling mix of endurance, strength, speed, and tactics. For Shannon Rowbury, who finished seventh at the Beijing Olympics and won the bronze medal at the IAAF World Championships in 2009, that's a selling point.

"I actually really look forward to the championships scenario with the rounds because of the type of person that I am where I'm very detail-oriented and very much a planner," Rowbury said here today in an interview with Race Results Weekly at a local coffee shop. "I feel like I can get better as the rounds progress because because I'm able to recover quickly and bounce back. Also, I'm kind of a strength-oriented 1500m runner; I have that endurance."

Rowbury, 27, who lives in San Francisco and is coached by John Cook, finished second at the USA Olympic Trials, and is part of a potent American 1500m Olympic team which includes reigning world champion Jenny Simpson and the Track & Field News #1-ranked miler in the world last year, Morgan Uceny. Rowbury, with one Olympic Games and two world championships appearances under her belt, feels the best-prepared she has ever been for a major championships. She said she's fully in synch with the rhythms of an Olympic Year, with three rounds at the Trials and three more at the Games.

"I don't want to take anything for granted because I know how tough the rounds can be, especially that semi-final when everyone is giving it their all," she said. "But, I feel very confident about my preparation and the work that I've done, and about, just, my mental state going into it. Now that I am one full cycle back to the beginning, back to where I started, this whole year has felt very familiar, and very comfortable in that I've almost known what would happen before it would happen."

Rowbury said that the rounds also allow her to scout the competition and look for potential weaknesses.

"I'm looking forward to the rounds," she continued. "It's kind of a nice way to get your feet under you and understand what each person is bringing to the table over that course of five days. You'll see people in competitions leading up to the Games, but you can learn some stuff once the competition gets going."

Coach Cook has waited until the final weeks before the Games open to allow Rowbury to sharpen her speed; he's had her focus on strength and endurance training up until now. In her most recent outing at the Herculis meeting in Monaco she kicked from sixth place to fourth in the 3000m, clocking 8:39.38, and showed that her strength is definitely there. In her final push to the Games, she'll be trying just to get a little faster.

"Since the Trials we've been working on strength stuff," Rowbury revealed. "We've spent the last three weeks kind of doing base work, tempos and VO2-max stuff. Now, we're getting back into speed. We had a speed session yesterday. Monday, Wednesday Friday are the last real sessions we're going to get before the taper. So, we're just really working on that sharpening and trying to get prepared."

Another source of confidence for Rowbury is knowing that her biggest fans, parents Paula and Gary, will be in the crowd. Her mother purchased her tickets so far in advance that she not only bought tickets for all three rounds of the 1500m, but some other tickets as well, just in case.

"She's super-excited," Rowbury said of her mother, bursting into a girlish giggle. "USATF or USOC sent out an e-mail about two years back about tickets, so my Mom jumped right on that and secured some tickets for herself. Because way back then there was some chance I might do the 5-K, she got some of those as well."

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