

By: Fred Baer

CALIFORNIA CONTINGENT GETS SHOT PUT MEDAL AT IAAF WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

The men's shot put finals at the IAAF World Junior Championships featured an all-UCLA American entry duo – and finally produced a medal for the California contingent.

Bruin freshman Braheme Days opened with a throw of 65 feet, 7 3/4 inches to take the early lead. That held up for the bronze medal. He became only the fourth ever USA medalist in the shot put. "To be able to do something like this, I think it's really special," said Days.

Crespi High grad Amir Ali-Patterson also made the finals and finished seventh at 63-0. He is headed to UCLA in the fall.

Ali-Patterson led off the qualifying in the morning session and was a bit harried.

"Going out there and being the No. 1 thrower, the first thrower in either ring, it's nerve-racking," he said. "I know I've got to take a deep breath, center the nerves, use that nervous energy, and turn it into whatever I need to throw the far throw. I was lucky enough to be able to make the finals with not the best and not the worst throw."

WORLD JUNIOR QUALIFYING NOTEBOOK:

Both USA Runners Advance

DUAL CITIZEN PRICE JUST MISSES 400 FINALS AT WORLD JUNIORS; SET FOR RELAY ON SUNDAY

Maddy Price's quest to reach the finals in the women's 400 meters at the IAAF World Junior Track & Field Championships fell a notch short Thursday. But the recent Menlo School (Atherton) graduate will still be in the hunt for a medal as a key member of Canada's 4 x 400 meter relay on Sunday.

Price, a dual (Canadian and American) citizen, finished third in her 400 semifinal race in 54.06 seconds. The race was won by 2014 world junior leader Kendall Baisden of University of Texas in 52.52. The top two finishers qualified automatically for the 8-person final. Price was in line to be one of the two time qualifiers until the last of the three semis was run. The first five finishers in that section all ran under 54 seconds, eliminating Price -- who wound-up tenth overall.

"It was hard to play the waiting game," said Price, who watched the final heat on a monitor in the press mixed zone. "I probably should have kicked a little harder. And I didn't hit the third curve the way I should."

Price said she was pleased with all of the things she has accomplished this year, running a best of 53.20 to rank fifth on the national high school list and finishing second in the California state meet for Menlo. She was the Central Coast Section champion.

Price is now looking forward to the Sunday's relay, the last women's event of the championships. "Canada can definitely medal," she said. "I've been having a great time here."

The USA will be favored in the relay.

Both American runners made the 400 finals. They include

Stanford signee Olivia Baker from Columbia High School (Maplewood, N.J.), who won the first semi in 53.08.

WORLD JUNIOR LEADER VALARIE ALLMAN OF STANFORD ADVANCES EASILY

In the women's discus qualifying round Thursday, 2014 world junior leader Valarie Allman of Stanford advanced easily -- surpassing the automatic standard of 52.00 meters on her first throw, which reached 52.36m (171 feet, nine inches). Finals are Friday evening. Allman's season leading throw is 188-6.

"It was really exciting," said Allman. "Just from the start of the morning, getting dressed and putting on my United States uniform, it absolutely got my adrenaline going and it escalated way more throughout the course of the day. My goal today was to throw 52 meters, so it was really nice to be able to come out and on the first throw, hit all fire. It definitely just set a good tone going into tomorrow, so I'm excited about that."

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