

Evan Jager

Novice Olympic Placer



Photo by Spencer Allen

With 1000 meters to go in the 2012 Olympic steeplechase final, Evan Jager was in the lead. The pace had been slow and along with fellow USA teammate Don Cabral they had moved to the front to lead almost four laps. But as in most Olympic races, the real racing is done over the last quarter of the race. Evan knew it was coming; however, the 23-year-old had little response left. The race turned into a physical, tactical battle. Evan was shoved and spiked, ending up in sixth place. He had entered the race with the fourth fastest time in the world in 2012 after setting a United States record (8:06.81). Quite an accomplishment for a young man who had only been running the event for four months. Yes, the Olympic final was only the seventh steeplechase race of his career!

His first steeple was in April of 2012, his second was an Olympic Trials qualifier, and his third qualified him for the Olympic Trials. Evan's fourth steeplechase race ever won the Olympic Trials, his fifth broke the U.S. record, his sixth qualified him for the Olympic final, and his seventh was a top six Olympic finish.

Although the steeplechase may be new to Evan, success is not. A 4:05 miler in high school, Evan has spent the majority of his career running the 1500 meters and 5000 meters. After running at the University of Wisconsin, Evan left Wisconsin early and followed his coach to Oregon where he competed for the Oregon Track Club Elite. He made his first international team in 2009 and then fought through a stress fracture and foot surgery.

In only his first season competing in the steeplechase, Evan Jager refused to place limits on himself. His ability to step out of his comfort zone and try something new combined with his "no limits" philosophy quickly earned him a place among the track and field elite.

Questions for Thought:

1. What limits do you place on yourself?
2. When you take on a new task, do you do it with enthusiasm and an expectation of success?
3. How easy is it to stay in your comfort zone? What does it take to get out of your comfort zone and challenge yourself?