



Sports

TRACK AND FIELD: HUSKIES LOOK TO BUILD MOMENTUM IN LAST REGULAR SEASON MEET



UConn track & field at the Dog Fight Challenge at George J. Sherman Family Sports Complex in Storrs, Conn., on Saturday, April 4, 2026. The Huskies secured the victory, scoring 260.5 points. PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

by Ryan Lombardi
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
HE/HIM/HIS
ryan.lombardi@uconn.edu

The UConn track and field team will be traveling to Boston this weekend to close out the outdoor regular season in the Jay Carisella and Joe Donahue Coaches Invitational, hosted by Northeastern.

The Huskies are coming off a stretch of impressive outings, including new program records and several personal bests coming in recent weeks.

Graduate student Sarah Trainor received the Big East Women's Track Athlete of the Week honor after a dominant performance at the Penn Relays. She finished second in the steeplechase in a personal best of 9:56.25, the best mark in the Northeast region.

She was also the first leg of the record-breaking DMR squad along with Brooke Strauss, Anna Connors and Sascha Leticia. Their 11:08.87 finish shattered the previous program record to win the event.

Freshman Marshall Potter was also recognized as a notable Big East performance after another impressive showing last week. He has looked utterly dominant in the field all season and has quickly established himself as a leader in the throwing events. He swept the hammer throw and shot put at the Penn Relays, prov-

ing he is also in top form down the stretch.

Another recent standout has been junior Medwin Odamtten. After transferring from Tennessee, he has been an integral part of the Huskies' sprinters. He has broken the school record in the 60m twice, putting up a blazing 6.61 mark in February. Odamtten recently won the 100m at the Northeast challenge in 10.37 seconds, a top three finish in UConn history. He will look to carry that momentum into this weekend and the postseason afterwards.

This week will also mark the last regular-season meet for UConn's 23 seniors who were honored a few weeks ago. Their leadership has been invaluable to the Huskies' success, and they will look to finish their collegiate careers strong as the stakes only get higher from here.

Building momentum this week will be crucial before the Huskies return home to host the Big East Outdoor Championships, as both the men and women are in pursuit of their fifth straight titles.

The events will all be held on Saturday, May 2, beginning at 10 a.m. with the men's and women's throwing events. The Huskies will then get the following week off to prepare for the conference championships.

Press Box Profiles: Inside the industry with Nick Zaccardi

by Kaden Knapp
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
HE/HIM/HIS
lwr25002@uconn.edu

When one thinks of coverage around the Olympics, Nick Zaccardi is probably one of the first names that comes to mind.

The University of Florida graduate has built a career telling athlete stories and bringing events to life through writing.

"I really came to love telling people's stories," Zaccardi said. "Learning something new about somebody, something that makes them unique is what I love the most."

In 13 years at NBC Sports, Zaccardi has published hundreds of pieces of written content surrounding the Summer, Winter and Paralympic Olympic Games. Since joining the company, he has won two Emmys and helped raise Olympic readership by 600%.

He first started writing when he joined his high school newspaper. He decided to go to school in Florida and major in journalism.

Zaccardi was "really into sports" growing up, so he chose to "give it a try" in college. As a freshman, he became a sports reporter for the Gainesville Sun, covering high school events.

He also interned and worked for various other publications before landing a position as a lead writer for Florida's football team. He also assisted with men's basketball coverage for the student paper.

"It was actually a pretty crazy time because while I was there, the football team won a national title," Zaccardi said. "And then the following year, Tim Tebow won the Heisman Trophy and the men's basketball team won back-to-back national titles."

After graduating in 2008, the reporter secured a post-grad internship with the Chicago Cubs. During the internship, he got to go into the clubhouse and talk to players, which helped him gain

more "courage to go up and ask people questions."

While he was interning with the MLB squad, the Cubs boasted their best record in nearly 100 years. Following the season, Zaccardi was one of three interns, out of a class of 30, that MLB.com asked to stay through free agency.

Due to jobs in journalism being difficult to find and the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games a year away, Zaccardi shifted his attention to the Olympics. He was hired by the US Olympic Committee to be a public relations intern.

He grew up watching the Olympics with his family every two years.

"[The Olympics] are a really big deal. I love all the athlete stories. I love the fact that it includes athletes from all over the world," Zaccardi said. "It's not just the NFL, MLB or NBA in the USA, so I always found that really interesting."

Although he quickly discovered he didn't like PR, he learned something that fast-tracked his career.

"I figured out how the credentialing process worked for the Olympics and that all I needed was to get like a decent-sized newspaper to let me use their name," Zaccardi said.

Following the internship, he sent a flurry of emails to various newsrooms around the country. Eventually, a newspaper in Albany, N.Y., gave him a credential to the Vancouver Olympics.

He moved back home and got a "glorified internship" with the PGA Tour while waiting for February to arrive.

"I went and freelanced the Olympics for a few different newspapers," Zaccardi said. "I remember sitting in the airport after it was all over and thinking that this is what I want to do. I want to go to every Olympics from now on."

He then started his first full-time job with Sports Illustrated



Nick Zaccardi (left) with others reporting on the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Zaccardi has covered the Olympics for 16 years. PHOTO COURTESY OF NICK ZACCARDI ON LINKEDIN

(SI) in May of 2010.

"I told them as soon as they offered the job that I will take this, but I'm going to the Olympics in 2012," Zaccardi said. "You guys can send me, but if you don't, I'm going to freelance my way."

When 2012 arrived, he went to his boss at SI and informed them he had gotten a credential for the London Olympic Games. They wanted him to stay with the company, so they decided to send him.

While Zaccardi was in London, he met a researcher at NBC Sports.

"I learned all about this NBC Olympic research stuff that they do. And I was like, wow, that's really cool. I would be really interested in doing that."

"About a year later, the researcher reached out and said a writer job is going to open

up and if I was interested, I should apply. So, I did that, got the job in 2013 and I've been doing that ever since," Zaccardi said.

Throughout his time at NBC, Zaccardi has honed in on humanizing the athletes and tackling as many different opportunities as possible.

"I don't need to watch the game, the games or anything like that that really doesn't interest me that much at all," Zaccardi said.

"I would just like to talk to the athletes and coaches and just do it [a recap] based off that rather than like saying what happened in a game."

By constantly challenging himself, Zaccardi avoids complacency and keeps growing.

"I tell my superiors I want to be challenged, and that means being uncomfortable," Zaccardi

said. "A few years ago, I went to the World Swimming Championships to write about it, and they asked me: Can you do the interviews for TV too while you're there? I said 'okay, I've never done live interviews on TV, with the microphone, but if you are asking me to do it, then I will do it.'"

In 2014 and 2016, Zaccardi earned Emmys in the Sports Event Coverage category.

Zaccardi's persistency and dedication to covering the Olympics have guided him through a career that has had a huge impact on people all over the world.

"So many people will say right now 'don't go into this business' and for some obvious reasons. If you have the passion for it, the interest and you're curious about people, you can make it happen."