

TWO DAYS IN THE LIFE OF ANDY LAMMERS

► 2009 NCAA Division III Track & Field Championships Participant

Andy Lammers, *Ohio Northern '07*, walks us through two days leading up to his participation in the pole vault during the 2009 NCAA Division III Outdoor Track & Field meet.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

6:45 am It's the third day of finals week and I am exhausted from my three exams yesterday and two the day before. I had to get all of my exams moved around because I am leaving this morning for Marietta College to compete at the NCAA Track and Field Championships. I'm both excited and nervous for the next three days. I am ranked 14th coming into this competition and determined to finish in the top 10. I wake up and get my things together to get on the van for Marietta College and as I'm walking out of the house, many of my brothers are already up and wishing me luck. That eased the nerves for the time being.



Andy Lammers clears the bar during the competition at the 2009 NCAA Division III Outdoor Track & Field meet.

11:30 am After a nearly four hour drive, we finally arrive at Marietta's track for our practice session. We all get out of the van to stretch our legs and get our workout clothes on so that we can practice on the track we're going to be competing on in less than 24 hours. I've dreamed about this day since I was a freshman and it was surreal to me that I had already achieved part of my goal as quickly as sophomore year. I took down one of my warm-up poles from the van and made my way to the pole vault pit where I already saw some athletes warming up. On my way to the pit, a few coaches from my conference stopped me and talked to me for a little while, wishing me luck and saying that they were rooting for me. It was such a great feeling to know that the people who have been my rivals all year long were now cheering for me. That seemed to ease my nerves.

3:00 pm We head to our hotel, which is across the Ohio River in West Virginia, and we get settled into our rooms and head to dinner. Since it was our pre-race dinner, we went out to a nice restaurant and had a good meal. After dinner, we all went back to our hotel and did a fantasy draft of the athletes who were going to be competing throughout the weekend. Everyone on our team took part in this annual competition. We all had a list of the athletes competing and we took turns drafting them onto our teams just like fantasy football. Points are distributed based on how our draft picks finish in the competition and at the end of the weekend, the team with the most points wins. As we were picking teams, we were talking about some athletes we thought were going to cause an upset in the listings. As we were talking about that, Travis Althouse, one of my fraternity brothers who was also competing, picked me with his second pick in the draft. It was a great feeling to know that everyone felt as though I had a great chance to do really well.

11:00 pm I finally get to lie down in bed after a long day. So many emotions are running through my head, but the most dominant one is excitement. All of my hard work

had paid off and I had my chance to be an All-American pole vaulter, something I had dreamed about since I began vaulting in the 7th grade. I talk to my roommates for a little while about what tomorrow holds and fade off to sleep ready to wake up and go to work.

THURSDAY, MAY 21

9:00 am I wake up and can't wait to get to the track and be around all of the excitement. We go out to eat as a team and then head over to Marietta. On our way to the track facility, everyone was very talkative because we were all so excited to be there.

11:00 am We get to the stadium and I go up to the bleachers to watch the other competitions of the day, hoping to take my mind off of my nervousness. There were thousands of people in the stands already and it wasn't even Noon. As the day dragged on, it got hotter and hotter. I had to go inside to wait for my warm up time because it was over 90 degrees outside, and coach wanted me to stay cool.

3:15 pm I go to the warm up staging area, check in and begin my warm up routine. As I run through my drills, I see vaulters from around the country doing the same. I recognize some, but I am seeing many of them for the first time. My nervousness turns to excitement and readiness as we load the bus to head to the stadium.

3:45 pm We arrive at the stadium 15 minutes before we're supposed to start warming up on the runway to find out that high jump has run over and is still going. We are advised that we have to now wait for them to finish so that they can move the mats off of the pole vault area. Little did we know, we had to wait another 45 minutes before we could finally start warming up again. The heat is starting to get to everyone, including me, so I pop my umbrella and get some cold water.

4:30 pm The runway is finally cleared and we are given time to warm up on the mats. The pole vault competition was supposed to start at 5 but now we are scheduled to start around 6:15. I notice that my legs are beginning to tire so I sit down for a while in the shade, drink some cold water and start up conversations with some of the other athletes. Sharing stories with them was so much fun and it helped keep my nerves from setting in.

6:15 pm The competition finally starts and I can't wait to start jumping. My warm ups were feeling good so I was ready to go. As I stood on the runway, my nervousness



Lammers talks with his head coach Ryan New.

faded and I knew what I had to do. It was like I was moving in slow motion the first time I jumped off the ground and cleared my first height. Everything was perfect! I felt great, I looked great and most importantly, I was jumping great.

7:45 pm As the contest dragged on, I could feel the heat taking a toll on my body. I had warmed up too much and my legs were beginning to tire. I went and talked to my coach and he told me to do my best. He told me how proud he was of me and how much of an achievement it was to even be standing where I was. As I set up for my final jump, all I could do was pray that I cleared the bar. I was sitting at 9th place currently and I needed to clear this to be in the top 8 and make All-American. I jumped off the ground and at that moment I knew I wasn't going to make the height. On the long fall to the mat, I thanked God for the opportunity he had given me and prayed that he would give me another chance in the future.

Although I didn't make All-American, my family, friends, and coaches were very proud of me as I was proud of myself. I told myself that if given the chance again, I won't miss it by one place. I have been training hard this off season and I hope that I get to go back to Nationals so that I can better my 9th place finish.

Andy Lammers finished 9th in the 2009 NCAA Division III Outdoor Track & Field Meet in the pole vault, clearing a height of 15 feet 7.25 inches. In addition to his track and field participation, Lammers serves the Alpha Eta Chapter as Recruitment Chairman.