

U.S. OLYMPIC TRIALS

'It'll be a tall order'

Former Enterprise High School standout David Ribich making a run for Tokyo

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — David Ribich is set to make a run for the 2021 Olympics.

The former Enterprise High School and Western Oregon University standout will compete at the U.S. Olympic Trials inside Eugene's Hayward Field, vying to earn one of three spots in the men's 1,500-meter run to the Summer Olympic Games, which start next month in Tokyo.

The trials started June 18 and run through June 27. Ribich takes to the track for the first time Thursday, June 24 in the first round of the 1,500.

Competing in the trials has been a lifelong goal for Ribich, and he knows garnering one of those coveted top three spots will be a challenge.

"It's going to be one of the hardest teams to make for Tokyo," he said, speaking of a field that includes Matthew Centrowitz, the reigning Olympic champion in the 1,500. "Going into that race, it'll be a tall order."

Ribich enters the trials as an underdog, and as such, feels no pressure.

"I approach it just like that," he said of the dark horse role. "Try not to make it a bigger deal than it is. ... Taking it one moment at a time and letting myself be present in that race is what it's about."

He is ranked 28th out of 30 competitors in the 1,500 with a qualifying time of 3:37.44. He said, though, that time was from June 2019, and that since, he has been keeping up with some of the top-seeded runners in the race, including his Brooks Beasts Track Club teammate Henry Wynne.

"I've been working closely with him the last four months," Ribich said of Wynne.

Wynne has the third-best qualifying time at 3:34.08, and Ribich said in training, "We're not separated by more than a few decimals."

Centrowitz has the top qualifying time at 3:32.81. His winning time in 2016 was 3:50.00.

Competitors will have to make it through two rounds of the race just to reach the 1,500 final. The semifinal race is June 25, and the final is June 27. Of the 30 initial runners, 24 will reach the semifinals, but the field will be cut in half to 12 for the final race.

"First round is pretty much stay clear of contact (with other runners)," he said, calling the semi-final race much more "cutthroat."

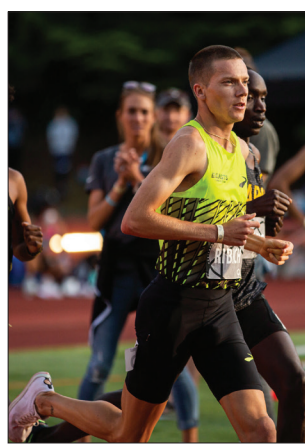
He also plans to adopt a game plan that allowed him to run a personal best in the 5,000 at the Portland Track Festival last month and come within about a second of reaching the trials in that race.

"I've had race plans going into races, and more often than not I've failed them," he said. "My race plan (last month) was to run through the race and respond on instinct."

He said he won't be trailing any specific runners, but instead will be looking for a key moment in the race — maybe "an opening or gap that needs to be filled, or a moment where it's time for me to take the lead."

"If I can be on in that moment, I think I could have a pretty deadly maneuver to put myself in position," he said, saying he needs to be hunting for that opportunity.

Ribich said it is "tough to say" what impact the coronavirus pandemic had on his training. On one hand, he was reaching a spike in his training program where most athletes under his coach take off. On the other hand, the



Jenny Reinhardt/Contributed Photo

David Ribich, shown competing at the Portland Track Festival in May, runs his first race in the Olympic Trials at Eugene's Hayward Field on Thursday, June 24, 2021.

shutdown enabled him to focus on his health. He had a platelet-rich plasma injection done on his Achilles tendon to help heal some damage from wear-and-tear. For a while after he wasn't running, and instead spent more time working on an elliptical or swimming. He added the year was "needed."

Now? "I've never felt more like myself, and never felt more confident," he said.

And while he may be an underdog, he is optimistic of his chances to run for a spot in Tokyo.

"My coaches, myself and my family believe that is a possibility," he said.

EOU grad qualifies for steeplechase finals

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

EUGENE — A trip to Tokyo is one race away for a former Mountaineer track star.

Isaac Updike took first place in the men's 3,000-meter steeplechase in the first round of the U.S. Olympic Trials on Monday, June 21, in Eugene with a time of 8 minutes, 21.01 seconds. Updike needs to finish in the top three of the final round Friday, June 25 in order to secure a spot on the 2021 U.S. Olympic team.

Updike edged out Hillary Bor, one of the favorites in the steeplechase, by just eight hundredths of a second to take the top spot. Although he led every lap from start to finish, Updike narrowly finished ahead of Bor as the two battled for first.

Updike's time topped all 29 runners across two heats in the event. The top five finishers in each heat of the first round advance to the finals, as well as the next four fastest times.

A native of Ketchikan, Alaska, Updike ran cross country and track and field at Eastern Oregon University from 2011 to 2015. He was a walk-on with the Mountaineers, but the 29-year-old finished his career as the fastest steeplechaser in program history.

Updike holds the university outdoor track records in the 3,000 steeplechase (8:47) and 5,000 (14:17.28), as well as the indoor track record in the 3,000 (8:23.70). In cross country, Updike is fourth all-time in the program's record book with a time of 24:10 in the 8K.

Updike competes for Empire Elite Track Club, a professional distance running team located in New York City. Tom Nohill and John Trautmann, two former U.S. distance runners, coach the club and specialize in Updike's events.

Updike's personal best time in the steeplechase came earlier in the year at the USATF Grand Prix at Oregon Relays on Saturday, April 24. He won the steeplechase that day with a time of 8:17.74.

Since the last Olympic Trials in 2016, Updike has cut his steeplechase time down significantly. He ran a time of 8:42.92 to place 12th out of 15 runners at the 2016 trials and came up well short of making the Olympics. Fast forward to 2021 and Updike has the current leading time heading into one of the biggest races of his career.

The final round of the men's steeplechase is slated to start at 4:42 p.m. on Friday, June 25. The trials are being televised and streamed nationally on NBC Sports.

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Risk factors for bladder cancer

Cancer can affect any part of the body. As a result, it pays to be attentive to changes in the body that could alert to the presence of cancer.

Bladder cancer is a condition that older populations need to be mindful of. The American Cancer Society says nine out of 10 people with bladder cancer are over the age of 55. The average age for diagnosis is 73. Bladder cancer is the fourth most common cancer in men, but less common in women. However, the likelihood of getting bladder cancer is affected by various risk factors.

Understanding bladder cancer

Bladder cancer most often originates in the urothelial cells that line the inside of the bladder. These cells also can be found in the kidneys and ureters, which are the tubes that connect the kidneys to the bladder. Bladder cancer can occur in the kidneys and ureters, too. However, it is much more common in the bladder. Cancer that happens in the lining of the bladder is called superficial bladder cancer. Invasive bladder cancer occurs when it has spread through the lining of the bladder and invades the muscle wall or has spread to nearby lymph nodes and organs, states the National Cancer Institute.

Diagnosing bladder cancer

The ACS says about half of all bladder cancers are found while the cancer is in its earliest stage or only in the inner layer of the bladder wall. Patients may visit their doctors due to signs and symptoms such as:

- blood in urine
 - frequent urination
 - painful urination
 - back pain
- Any urine discoloration, however minor, should be

discussed with a physician.

Risk factors

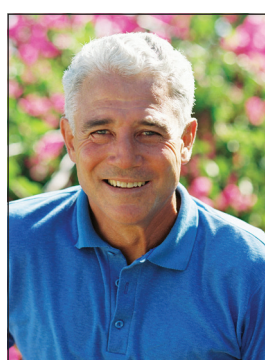
Though age is a concern with bladder cancer, other factors also increase risk. Smoking cigarettes, pipes or cigars is a major contributor to bladder cancer. The Mayo Clinic says the chemicals from cigarettes are processed and excreted through the urine. These chemicals may damage the lining of the urinary tract and bladder.

Exposure to other chemicals also can lead to bladder cancer for the same reasons; the kidneys and bladder filter them out of the bloodstream. Arsenic, dyes and products used in the manufacture of rubber, leather, textiles, and pain products also are linked to bladder cancer.

Treatment of other cancers with cyclophosphamide also increases a person's risk for bladder cancer. Individuals who have had radiation treatments aimed at the pelvis for a previous cancer also could develop bladder cancer.

Family history and chronic bladder inflammation with repeated urinary infections may increase the risk of bladder cancer as well.

Bladder cancer may not be on everyone's radar, but it is worthy of a conversation with a doctor, especially for older men who smoke or people who have family histories of the disease.



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How to garden from a wheelchair

Gardening is a wonderful activity that people from all walks of life enjoy. A garden full of fresh fruits and vegetables and/or beautiful blooms can instill a sense of pride in gardeners and turn their backyards into colorful, peaceful respites.

Anyone with the will to do so can plant their own garden, and that includes people who are confined to wheelchairs. Gardening from a wheelchair may present some unique challenges, but such obstacles are no reason for wheelchair-bound gardening enthusiasts to steer clear of this rewarding activity.

In recognition of the challenges of gardening from a wheelchair, the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation offers the following tips to wheelchair-bound gardening enthusiasts.

- Match the garden to your abilities. The Reeve Foundation notes that trying to push beyond your limits can affect how much you enjoy gardening. Address issues that may impair how you can function in the garden, such as accessibility. For example, if the garden is far away from the physical structure of your home, you may feel exhausted by the time you get to the garden, which can affect your productivity and progress. Prior to starting a garden, consider the potential that such issues may arise and then try to build a garden that makes it easy to overcome them.
- Consider raised beds. The Reeve Foundation highly recommends raised beds for anyone gardening from a wheelchair. When designing such beds, make sure they're narrow so they can be conveniently accessed from your wheelchair.
- Consider hanging baskets. Hanging baskets also can be a great option for anyone gardening from a wheelchair. Hanging baskets can provide aesthetic appeal inside and outside of a home, and such baskets can be accessed with a pulley system that makes it easy for gardeners to prune and water plants.
- Use specialized tools. The online medical resource Verywell Health notes that various manufacturers have recognized there's a market for adaptive gardening tools. Such tools make it easier for people in wheelchairs to indulge their passion for planting. Adaptive tools like trowels, cultivators and hoses can make it easier for gardeners to perform all the standard gardening tasks. Ergonomic adaptive gardening tools can help gardeners avoid the joint pain that can arise from using more traditional, non-ergonomic tools.
- Make it a team effort. Gardening with a loved one can make the hobby even more enjoyable for anyone, including people gardening from their wheelchairs. Seniors can garden alongside their grandchildren and/or friends who also have mobility issues, ensuring no one gets too tired or falls behind. Anyone can enjoy gardening, and that includes people in wheelchairs.

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