

Track & Field

Two-time Olympic champion Ashton Eaton retiring

By PAT GRAHAM
Associated Press

Two Olympic decathlon gold medals. Rewriting the world record not once but twice. Ashton Eaton really can't envision accomplishing much more in an event that comes with the label of world's greatest athlete.

So, he's stepping away less than three weeks shy of his 29th birthday.

Eaton and heptathlete Brienne Theisen-Eaton announced their retirements Wednesday in side-by-side essays on their website.

Considered the first family of multi-events, Ashton and Brienne met at the University of Oregon as teenagers and married in July 2013. Their coach, Harry Marra, officiated the wedding.

Ashton hinted he might be moving on to other things soon after defending his title at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics in August. He leaves with his world record standing at 9,045 points, which he achieved at the 2015 world championships in Beijing. It

was six points better than his previous record set during dreary weather in front of a hometown crowd in Eugene, Oregon, at the 2012 U.S. Olympic trials.

"Frankly there isn't much more I want to do in (the) sport," Ashton wrote. "I gave the most physically robust years of my life to the discovery and pursuit of my limits in this domain. Did I reach them? Truthfully I'm not sure anyone really does."

"It seems like we tend to run out of time or will before we run out of potential. That makes humanity limitless then, as far as I'm concerned. And I think that's inspiring."

Some of Ashton's top rivals were already weighing in on Twitter. Fellow American Trey Hardee, who finished with silver at the 2012 London Games, posted a tribute to Ashton that ended with: "He carried the legacy flag of American decathlon champions and stuck it in the ground atop Everest."

Hardee also referred to Ashton as "GOAT"—Greatest Of All Time. That's high praise



In this March 7, 2014, file photo, United States' Ashton Eaton, left, talks to his wife Canada's Brienne Theisen Eaton as they compete in the heptathlon and pentathlon during the Athletics Indoor World Championships in Sopot, Poland.

in a long line of distinguished American decathletes, which includes Jim Thorpe, Bob Mathias, Bill Toomey, Rafer Johnson, Bruce Jenner, Dan O'Brien and Bryan Clay, to name just a few.

Ashton's biggest influence may have actually been Roman Sebrle of the Czech Republic — the decathlete who inadvertently inspired him and whose colossal world record Ashton would

eventually break.

Here's how the story goes, as recounted by Ashton: As a kid, he happened upon a newspaper with a headline along the lines of "Galactic Olympics" or "Interstellar Olympics," with the article wondering who would represent Earth should one take place. The opinion was Sebrle.

"I considered myself knowledgeable about sports. But out of all the athletes in the

world we were choosing this man I had never seen doing something I'd never heard of; the decathlon," Ashton wrote. "I left to go about my day and forgot about that experience until five years later when I heard that word again; 'decathlon.' This time, I was being asked if I'd consider trying it. I said 'sure.'"

Since then, he's ruled the sport.

His departure comes before the expected retirement of another big name from the world of track and field. Nine-time Olympic gold medalist Usain Bolt of Jamaica indicated that 2017 would be his final season of sprinting.

"I don't know if we'll ever have another Usain Bolt or another Ashton Eaton," Hardee said in a phone interview. "But there are kids coming up ... and it's going to be great to watch who fills those gaps."

Through the years, Ashton's constant training partner has been Brienne. They're highly supportive each other, with Ashton sitting in the Rio stands while

wearing a Canadian cap to root for his wife.

The 28-year-old Brienne, who represents Canada, won the bronze medal in Rio. She wrote in her essay how she usually got nervous before her final event.

But rather than her usual thrill of finishing, Brienne was mentally exhausted.

"I have never been so thankful to be finished something in my life. I felt like I never wanted to do another heptathlon again. This feeling confused me," she wrote. "I took 3 months to completely get away. I didn't think about those feelings. I didn't want to make any decisions based on my mental exhaustion. But as the start of the 2017 season drew nearer, I felt more and more resistant to begin training."

In his essay, Ashton closed with this line: "To Brienne; I've never seen such a high level of strength sustained for so long. I love you. What now?"

Online: <http://www.weareeaton.com>

T-WOLVES: Haringa paces Blue Mountain women in loss

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Blue Mountain was able to hang around despite giving up 21 offensive rebounds and 21 second chance points to the Chukars in the first half.

"If we cut those down I think it's a different game, but we just didn't respond very well to the physicality at the very beginning," Blue Mountain assistant coach Doug Baxter said after the game. "Bottom line is we need to play our game and we kind of fell into their run game. (Treasure Valley) got into a flow at the end of the half and we got a couple bigs in foul trouble and that certainly didn't help us."

But the Chukars (8-4, 1-0) went on a 16-6 run over the final 3:15 of the half to take a 44-34 advantage, plus the momentum into the locker room. When the second half began, the Chukars picked up right where they left off with a 13-0 run through the first three-plus minutes of the game to jump to a 57-35 lead.

Blue Mountain did not score its first point of the

second half until the 16:24 mark when Jared Mathews made one of two free throw attempts. The T-Wolves first field goal of the half came just after the 15 minute mark of the half on a floater from inside the paint by Darien Davis.

Davis was one of the bright spots for Blue Mountain, scoring 19 points on the game on 6-11 shooting and 3-5 from the 3-point line.

"He's (Darien) been a little up-and-down but he's a pretty good shooter," Baxter said. "At a point in the second half there you kind of saw a switch go on with him where he wanted to take control. He was sharing the ball and I thought he did some good things defensively."

Now BMCC turns its focus to Big Bend, when they travel to Moses Lake for a 4 p.m. tip-off on Saturday. Baxter said the Timberwolves need to learn to play to their strengths more in order to be more successful down the stretch of league play.

"We need to make sure we're playing our game and

not falling into what the other team wants to do," he said. "For us we feel we need to be the grind-it-out team, take time off the clock and run possessions down."

On the women's side Wednesday, Blue Mountain (2-6, 0-1) shot just 31 percent from the floor and 1-14 from 3-point range in the loss to Treasure Valley, while the Chukars (9-2, 1-0) hit 43 percent of their shots and 39 percent (7-18) from 3-point range.

Brook Haringa led the Timberwolves with 11 points and five rebounds on 5-10 shooting, and Miah Slater added 10 points on 4-9 shooting and sank Blue Mountain's lone 3-pointer of the game. Blue Mountain struggled on the boards as well, as Treasure Valley won the battle 55-34 and grabbed 23 offensive rebounds.

Just like the men's game, Blue Mountain was able to hang around for a good portion of the first quarter, feeding off of success in their half court offense, before Treasure Valley found its groove near the end of the

quarter and led 26-12. From there on, the Chukars kept their foot on the gas and led by as much as 42 late in the fourth quarter.

Blue Mountain next heads to Big Bend on Saturday for a 2 p.m. tip as they look to snap a three game losing streak and earn its first league win of the season.

Men	TVCC	44	61	—	105
	BMCC	34	40	—	74
TREASURE VALLEY — H. Bailey 22, K. Williams 20, T. Jefferson 16, T. Williams 12, J. Vaughn 10, E. Okafor 7, L. Jones 6, B. Gonser 5, B. Buni 5, T. Penrod 2.					
BLUE MOUNTAIN — D. Davis 19, L. Hawkins 14, J. Cook 12, I. Harris 12, D. Bravo 6, J. Mathews 5, L. Wyant 3, J. Logan 1, R. Brown 1, L. McAllister 1.					
3-pointers — TVCC 9, BMCC 6. Free throws — TVCC 26-32, BMCC 32-46. Fouls — TVCC 29, BMCC 27. Fouled out — E. Okafor, B. Bruni (TVCC); J. Mathews, L. Wyant (BMCC).					

Women	TVCC	26	15	19	20	—	80
	BMCC	12	7	11	12	—	42
TREASURE VALLEY — R. Helmick 20, G. Oldham 13, S. Kincaid 10, S. Gilchrist 9, A. Wheatley 8, C. Baker 6, M. Kimball 5, S. Davis 4, L. Vargas 3, T. Whitney 2.							
BLUE MOUNTAIN — B. Haringa 11, M. Slater 10, A. McGee 9, E. Ramsey 4, S. Schmeckpeper 4, S. Wammock 2, M. Boyer 2.							
3-pointers — TVCC 7, BMCC 1. Free throws — TVCC 15-26, BMCC 3-7. Fouls — TVCC 10, BMCC 20.							

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Staff photos by Kathy Aney
BMCC's Brooke Haringa (21) goes in for a layup on Wednesday night at the McCrae Activity Center against Treasure Valley Community College.

OREGON:

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should let anybody come in and hit eight 3s on us," Crisp said.

Oregon's only other true road game this season came in its second game, a 66-49 loss to undefeated Baylor. The Ducks dropped their opener at the Maui Invitational but have now won 12 straight after taking care of their northern neighbors.

The Ducks took control with a 12-0 run late in the first half, only to see Washington surge to start the second half, pulling to 42-39. That was answered by a seven-point run by the Ducks — with five of the points coming from Dorsey — as the lead remained near double figures.

Even Brooks picking up his fourth foul with 10 minutes remaining didn't matter. Washington got as close as 55-47 with 11:55 to go, but a pair of 3-pointers by Dorsey and his pass to Casey Benson open for a corner 3 quickly pushed the lead back to 18.

BIG PICTURE

Oregon: The Ducks showed an ability to handle frontcourt issues, especially in the first half. Bell was helped off with 9:38 left in the half, Boucher picked up his second foul with 8:39 to go and Brooks got his third foul with 4:53 remaining. Yet the Ducks outscored Washington 25-15 during that stretch.

Washington: Fultz played after a whirlwind trip to the East Coast to attend the funeral of his great-grandmother. Fultz left the team following last Sunday's loss to Washington State and arrived back in Seattle around 2 a.m. on Wednesday morning.

FUN WITH NUMBERS

Washington's football team outscored its basketball team when facing Oregon in the regular season. The Huskies beat the Ducks 70-21 on the football field in October.

ONLY MEETING

Due to the Pac-12's rotating schedules, this was the only meeting between the Ducks and Huskies in the regular season. Last season the teams met only once — at Oregon. It was the first time in 100 years the Ducks and Huskies did not play in Seattle.

UP NEXT

Oregon: The Ducks travel to Pullman to face Washington State on Saturday.

BLAZERS: McCollum shoots 3 for 12 after halftime

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his career high with three blocks in the Warriors' ninth straight home win.

C.J. McCollum scored 35 points to lead a Portland team still without Damian Lillard, and the Trail Blazers certainly had to feel better about hanging tough in this one after their forgettable 45-point defeat here 2 1/2 weeks earlier.

Curry shot 12 for 25 on a night Splash Brother Klay Thompson struggled to find his stroke from long range, going 1 of 7 and scoring 14 points. Curry added seven rebounds and five assists.

Coming off a triple-double, Draymond Green had 11 assists, nine points and seven rebounds.

Durant was dominant on both

ends, especially during one spectacular sequence late in the first.

He made a pretty driving lay-in and converted a three-point play at the 2:50 mark, blocked two shots in succession moments later — one against McCollum then on Noah Vonleh's putback try. KD drained a 3-pointer the next time down, and he also had a four-point play in the final minute of the first half.

McCollum made three of his first six 3s then missed four of five in the second half, when he shot 3 for 12.

Lillard, averaging 31.8 points in his past eight games against the Warriors with four 30-point performances, was out for a fifth straight game because of a left ankle injury and missed a chance

to play in his hometown.

Four Golden State starters hit 3-pointers among the Warriors' first four baskets before the game was even three minutes old.

The Warriors' five straight wins against the Trail Blazers mark their first five-game winning streak versus Portland since winning seven in a row from Feb. 20, 2005 to Nov. 3, 2006.

Golden State also has won six straight in the series at home. That includes the blowout victory Dec. 17 — 135-90 — for the biggest margin by Golden State in the series and matching the largest point disparity in any game played between the rivals with Portland's 136-91 win on Dec. 22, 1987.

KERR'S MESSAGE

COUGARS: Tinkle says Beavers lost track of game plan

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Hawkinson, who scored 20 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for his 49th career double-double, said this year's team is different.

"There's a lot more optimism," Hawkinson said, after Washington State beat Oregon State 75-62 in the Spokane Arena. "We don't want to go 2-and-whatever," added Ike Iroegbu. "It's uplifting for sure when we do better than last year."

This is WSU's first 2-0 start in league since the 2007-08 season.

Iroegbu added 15 points for Washington State (9-5, 2-0 Pacific 12), which won its fourth straight game. Malachi Flynn added 13 big points, 11 in the closing minutes when the game was decided.

"He can handle pressure," Hawkinson said of the freshman.

Kendal Manuel had a career-high 20 points for Oregon State (4-12, 0-3), which had won six straight games over Washington State. Manuel hit six 3-pointers.

Trailing by five at halftime,

Oregon State opened the second half with a 10-4 run — including 3-pointers by JaQuori McLaughlin and Manuel — to take a 43-42 lead.

Manuel added consecutive 3-pointers shortly after for a 52-49 Oregon State lead.

A jumper by Robert Franks put the Cougars up 55-54, but the Beavers took the lead right back with a 3-pointer by Stephen Thompson.

Oregon State was leading by one point when the Cougars took control.

Flynn hit a 3-pointer and a runner during a 12-0 run that put Washington State up 70-59 with just over two minutes left.

"We stopped executing on offense," Oregon State coach Wayne Tinkle said. "We went away from what was working."

"We executed our game plan for a while," Tinkle said.

The teams traded baskets in the first half until an 11-0 run, triggered by Hawkinson's 3, put Washington State ahead 25-16 with 7:40 left.



Washington State guard Charles Callison, left, and Oregon State forward Matt Dahlen (14) go after the ball during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game in Spokane, Wash., Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2017.

AP Photo/Young Kwak