Track and Field

Shepherd Pole Vaults His Way to Des Moines

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Liberty redshirt junior Kolby Shepherd made a bit of program history Friday evening at the NCAA Division I East Preliminary Round meet. He became the Flames' first men's pole vaulter ever to qualify for the NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field Championships.

Kolby Shepherd pole vaulted 17-0.75 Friday evening, qualifying for the NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field Championships.

On a cool, overcast night at the Robert C. Haugh Track & Field Complex, Shepherd made second-attempt clearances at 16-6.75 and 16-10.75. He then punched his ticket to Des Moines, Iowa for the NCAA national meet, thanks to a first-attempt clearance at 17-0.75. It was the fifth time Shepherd has vaulted 17 feet or higher this season.

Shepherd was one of 11 pole vaulters to get over the bar at 17-0.75 but joined only four other competitors who were successful on their first try at the height. The competition did not proceed past 17-0.75, because the 12 Des Moines qualifiers had already been determined at that point.

Shepherd will make his NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field Championships debut June 8, starting at 6:35 p.m. Eastern at Drake Stadium.

Earlier Friday afternoon, Mia Aghaji closed her season by competing in the women's triple jump. The Big South indoor and outdoor champion's best jump was a 40-1.5 leap on her first attempt. That placed her 28th in the 47-member field.

Attempting to qualify for the NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field Championships in the steeplechase for the third time, Evans Kigen raced in Friday night's final event on the track. However, he aggravated a previously existing hip injury about three laps into the race and was unable to complete the event. Kigen wraps up his Liberty career as a two-time All-American.

The NCAA Division I East Preliminary Round meet will wrap up on Saturday. Three Flames will be in action, beginning at 5 p.m. when Elliot Galeone throws the discus.