



Shepherd Equals Pole Vault Record on Birthday

April 9, 2011
Austin, Texas

Liberty redshirt junior [Kolby Shepherd](#) celebrated his 22nd birthday in style, Saturday afternoon at the Texas Relays. He pole vaulted 17-6.5 to equal a long-standing school record and place third in a talented field of entrants.

Shepherd opened his day with first-attempt clearances at both 16-6.75 and 17-0.75, before also sailing over 17-6.5 on his first try. That successful clearance tied the mark of Todd Pettyjohn from the 1993 IC4A meet, which was held when Shepherd was just four years old. It was Liberty's oldest men's outdoor track & field school record on the books, before Shepherd tied it on Saturday.

The only two athletes to defeat Shepherd on Saturday were the NCAA's top-ranked pole vaulter for the 2011 season (Jack Whitt of Oral Roberts) and the men's pole vault national champion at the 2010 NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field Championships (Jordan Scott of Kansas). Whitt won Saturday's event at 18-4.5, while Scott took second place with an 18-0.5 clearance.

The two-time defending Big South Men's Field Athlete of the Week, Shepherd is now tied for No. 3 on the 2011 NCAA Division I national performance list for the men's pole vault.

Also competing on Saturday for the Flames was redshirt sophomore Ryan Smith. He placed eighth in Section A of the men's shot put, after his sixth attempt stretched the measuring tape to 56-10.75.

Liberty will now have a weekend off from competition, in preparation for the Big South Outdoor Track & Field Championships, slated for April 21-23 in Lexington, Va. Both the Flames and Lady Flames will enter the meet as defending champions.

Liberty will be attempting to wrap up its second straight Big South Conference "Double Triple," consisting of conference titles in men's cross country, indoor track & field and outdoor track & field, as well as women's cross country, indoor track & field and outdoor track & field.



Kolby Shepherd not only turned 22 years old on Saturday, but also pole vaulted 17-6.5 to tie the school record.