

**Immediate Release: July 16, 2019**

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## **Montana Mile Kicks Off State Games**

The 2019 Montana Mile, sponsored by Sam's Club, marks the 28<sup>th</sup> running for men and the 18<sup>th</sup> for women. The race is one of the most anticipated events of the Big Sky State Games Opening Ceremonies and is scheduled to take place between 8:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. on Friday, July 29. The Montana Mile is an invited race featuring some of the state's fastest high school, college, and post collegiate milers. Defending Champion Isaac Petsch will be back to defend his title, as well as the 2017 men's champion, Dawson LaRance and the 2016 Montana Mile Champions Ty Mogan and Tiahna Vladic.

The Women's Montana Mile record is 4:53.9 set in 2011 by Lois Ricardi Keller. Patrick Casey set the Men's record in 2010 in 4:07.9.

### **Men's Field**

#### **Ase Ackerman**

Ase Ackerman just completed his first year at Montana State University-Billings. While in high school at Dawson County he received All State in the 3200 in 2018. He now competes in steeplechase, 5000m, and 8k for MSUB track & field and cross country team. Ase is majoring in Health and Human Performance.



#### **George Beddow**

George Beddow is a current Rocky Mountain student-athlete majoring in biology/exercise science. Participating in his second Montana Mile, George holds a mile PR of 4:35. He has lived in Montana his entire life and attended Billings Central Catholic High School where he was a two-time team captain and a three-time All-Conference honoree in track. He recently competed at the 2019 NAIA Outdoor National Championship where he became an All-American and took an astonishing 6th place in men's marathon.



## Finn Bentler

After completing his junior year at Billings Senior, Finn Bentler will be competing in his first Montana Mile. This year in athletics he has earned Top Bronc Award, as well as Outstanding Junior in Track; an award he also received his freshman year. His current best mile time is at a 4:33.



## Ivan Colmenero

An upcoming senior at Montana State University- Billings, Ivan Colmenero, is running the Montana Mile for the third time. He is team captain at MSUB and received MSUB cross country runner of the year. He was an All-State runner for Manhattan High School and part of Manhattan's State Champion team under the successful coach John Sillitti. He is majoring in criminal justice and has personal best of 4:27 in the mile.



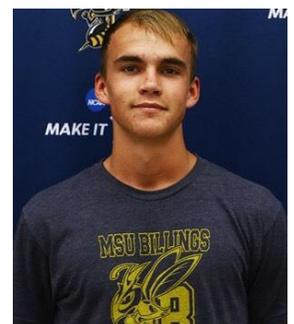
## Jorey Egeland

Jorey Egeland, a 2014 Billings Senior High graduate and 2018 MSU-Billings graduate holds many records throughout his running career. Jorey holds the University's indoor and outdoor 5k records, as well as their 3k steeplechase record. He has earned GNAC All-Conference honors seven times during his college career, winning conference races in the 3k steeplechase and 5k his college senior year. He is also a NCAA Division 2 second team All-American in the steeplechase. This will be his 3rd time competing in the Montana Mile, where last year he took 3rd place with a 4:23. His listed mile PR is 4:20.



## Drake Henson

Drake Henson, a California-native, will be making his 2nd appearance in the Montana Mile. Last year he placed 6th with a time of 4:30. He owns his high school's 800m record at 1:56 and his college's indoor 800m record at 1:55. Completing his freshman year as a Yellow Jacket at MSU-Billings, Drake holds a personal best in the mile of 4:18 and is majoring in criminal justice.



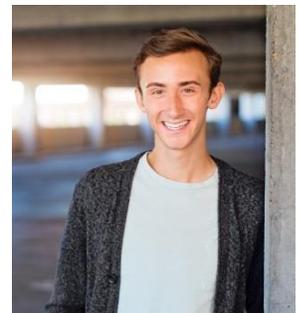
## Chance Hyatt

Carroll Saint and Bainville Bulldog, Chance Hyatt, will be competing in his first Montana Mile. Chance graduated this past spring from Carroll College and will be teaching Elementary/Special Education in his hometown. Chance has had much success throughout his school years in athletics, holding 3 of his high school's track records and Carroll's 1500m record. He has also claimed champion at two Class C Cross Country Championships, as well as in the 1600m and 3200m on the track. Chance knows how to run with being a 4 time All-State Athlete in cross country, 7 time All-State Athlete in track, and a 10 time NAIA All-American. His mile best is a 4:12.



## Dawson LaRance

Dawson LaRance is a Senior High graduate and current student-athlete at the University of Minnesota. During his stellar high school career, he earned All-State Cross Country honors twice and All-State Track ten times. In 2017 LaRance was the State Champion in the 800m, 1600m, and the 4x400m Relay. He also set the All-Class record in the 800m and as a member of their 4x400m Relay team. One of Dawson's top running accomplishments is winning the prestigious Brooks PR 800m run; his record currently is at a fast 1:48.87. Taking 2nd last year, and winning in 2017, Dawson returns this year to reclaim his Montana mile. His mile best is 4:09.



## Noah Majerus

Carroll College Student-Athlete Noah Majerus will be participating in his second Montana Mile. Noah holds his hometown, Fergus High School's record in the 1600-meter at 4:28.25, which is a time he ran after placing 2<sup>nd</sup> at the 2018 Class "A" State Track Meet. He is a three-time state placer in cross country and track. This past year, as a freshman studying civil engineering at Carroll, he became an NAIA All American in the 800m for indoor track & field with a swift time of 1:51. His current best mile is a 4:28.



## Tyus Mendoza

Tyus Mendoza graduated from Montana State University- Billings in 2015 and this will be his 2nd time competing in the Montana Mile. He has been named Champion in 2013 for State B Cross Country and has also claimed the title of the State B 3200m in 2014. While being team captain in both high school and college, he also earned 3x All-State status in cross country and 5x All-State status in track. His personal best mile time is 4:30.



## Ty Mogan

The 2016 Montana Mile Champion and MSU-Bozeman team captain, Ty Mogan, will be entering his 5th year at Montana State University-Bozeman and running his 5th Montana Mile. His mile PR is an impressive 4:08. He was a highly decorated Class "A" runner at Laurel High School where he was a three-time state champion and was two-time 2<sup>nd</sup> place finisher and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finisher at the State A Cross Country Championships. Mogan received awards for Cross Country All-Mountain Region and was a NCAA Cross Country Championship qualifier in 2018. After getting his degree in sociology and elementary education he plans to qualify for the Paris 2024 Olympic Trials for the marathon.



## Isaac Petsch

Rocky Mountain College Senior, Isaac Petsch is slated to race his 6<sup>th</sup> Montana Mile. Last year he claimed his first Montana Mile victory with a time of 4:19, placing 3<sup>rd</sup> in previous years. The former West High Bear was a three-time All-State runner in track, placing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the boys 1600m at the 2015 class "AA" State Meet. He holds the West High record in the 1600m and four Rocky Mountain College records including the 1500m, indoor 4x400m and 4x800m, and outdoor 4x800m. The NAIA five-time All American raced to a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish in the 1500m at the 2017 Outdoor NAIA Track Nationals and earned 4<sup>th</sup> place at the NAIA Indoor Track Nationals in the 4x800m relay. Isaac's mile best sits at a quick 4:08.



## Owen Smith

Owen Smith will be competing in his first Montana Mile. Going into his senior year at Senior High School, Owen has received Captain's Award and has also placed 2<sup>nd</sup> at the 2019 Top Ten Meet in the 1600m. He also was in the Top 20 placers at the 2018 Cross Country Class AA State meet. This past spring he placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 1600m at State track & field, with his mile PR of 4:24.



## Logan Straus

Logan Straus recently completed his freshman year running for Montana State University-Billings and majoring in Physical therapy. Logan is 3-time All State athlete in cross country and has also received most valuable player in high school at Billings West. This will be his first time competing in the Montana Mile and his best converted mile time is currently at a 4:32.



## Levi Taylor

Montana State University Bobcat commit, Levi Taylor, holds an impressive resume for just graduating from Laurel High School. Not only is he a 3 time All-State Athlete in cross country and 4 time All-State Athlete in track, but he also went undefeated this year for the state of Montana in the 800m, 1600m, and 3200m for high school track. Levi owns titles to 62 first place finishes, 7 state championships, and 10 state medals throughout his high school track and field career. Levi will be majoring in Civil Engineering, while running cross country and track for Montana State University-Bozeman. This will be his second Montana mile and his current PR for the mile is 4:17.



## Women's Field

### Nikki Aiken

Nikki Aiken will be going into her senior year at Montana State University-Billings, where she majors in Physical Education. This summer she works at the YMCA summer camps as a camp counselor, hoping to gain experience working with children. Nikki is a Manhattan Christian High School record holder in the 1600m and the 3200m. She has also earned All-State in Cross Country and the 3200m every year of high school and is a 3x All State athlete in the 1600m. In college she has earned Academic All-State and has been team captain for 2 years. Nikki has been running competitively for 11 years and currently has a converted mile time best of 5:20.



### Emberlyn Gaschk

Emberlyn Gaschk of the Skyview Falcons will be competing in her first Big Sky State Games Montana Mile. She holds the Falcons' record for the 5k in cross country with a 18:29. This upcoming junior was All-State in cross country in 2018 and a two year varsity letter winner in both cross country and track. She has lived in Montana her entire life and has a PR mile time of 5:19.



### Kylie Hartnett

Kylie Hartnett, a Helena High School freshman, will be competing in her first Montana Mile. She has lived in Montana her entire life and is the Junior Olympic Female Athlete of the Year. Kylie holds the Helena High School 1600m and 3200m school records and is an All-State athlete in both cross country and track. This year she received Helena High Top Gun Award and also placed 2nd and 3rd at the State AA Track and Field Meet. Kylie's mile PR as a freshman is a 5:02.



### **Hallie Hemenway**

Hallie Hemenway of Manhattan High School recently completed her sophomore year as a tiger. She is an All-State Athlete in the 1600m and 3200m for Class B track. Hallie also was a part of her high school's team in their winning of the Class B cross country Championship in 2018. This is will be her first time competing in the Montana Mile and her mile PR is a 5:19.



### **Mindy Kaufman**

A Wyoming-native, and University of Montana – Western Bulldog, Mindy Kaufman is participating in her first Montana Mile. She participated at NAIA Nationals earning 3rd place in the 1500m, becoming All-American. She also owns the Montana-Western's school records in the 1500m, 3k, and 5k at 4:44, 10:52, and 17:32, respectively. Mindy has earned multiple leadership and character awards in high school and college and claimed the 2018 NAIA Frontier Conference Champion title in cross country. Mindy's mile PR is 5:05.



### **Mackenzie O'Dore**

Mackenzie O'Dore will be running her fourth Montana Mile. Last year she placed third with a time of 5:10. O'Dore was an All-State and Individual State Cross Country Champion in 2008, 2009, and 2010 for Joliet High School. She was equally successful in track winning the 1600m for three years in a row, and the 3200m and 800m once each. She has run the 1500m at Rocky Mountain College in a 4:39 which was fast enough to hit the "B" qualifying mark for NAIA Nationals and her PR for the mile is 5:02.



### **Brynnili Poulsen**

After finishing her sophomore year in Hamilton, Brynnili Poulsen will be competing in her first Big Sky State Games Montana Mile. Brynnili had an impressive State Track and Field meet this past spring, where she took the title of Class B state champion in the 800m with a time of 2:17, and also placed 2nd in both the 1600m and the 3200m. Her best mile time stands at a 5:09.



## **Tiahna Vladic**

A standout runner for Billings Senior High, Tiahna Vladic won the Montana Mile in 2016, her debut at the race. She is no amateur to the Montana Mile, as she has participated 3 times, taking spots in the top 2 each time. Vladic was the AA State Cross Country Champion and was awarded the Montana Gatorade Cross Country Runner twice in her high school career. She has been the State Champion in the 3200m in track and also earned the honor of Midland Roundtable Athlete of the Year. In 2016 she qualified for the Nike Cross Nationals in Portland, OR where she placed 23<sup>rd</sup> among the top runners in the nation. Vladic plans to attend Boise State and her PR for the mile is a speedy 4:56.



## **Odessa Zentz**

Odessa Zentz attends Helena High School and just finished her freshman year. Odessa's dad, Jesse Zentz, ran the Montana Mile 5 times, winning it in 1998. Following in her father's footsteps, this will be Odessa's first time competing in the Montana Mile and she already has an impressive running resume. She won the State Class AA Track and Field champion title in the 400m and 800m this past spring, with times of 57.75 and 2:14 respectively. Her best mile time is a 5:18.



The 2019 Montana Mile is sponsored by Sam's Club. Opening Ceremonies is sponsored by Wendy's. Major Sponsors of the State Games are Kampgrounds of America (KOA), First Interstate Bank, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana. The gates to Daylis Stadium open at 5:30 p.m. Admission is free to State Games athletes with their Open Ceremonies ticket. Student and adult admission is \$5 and free to children under the age of six (6). For more information call 406-254-7426 or go to [bigskygames.org](http://bigskygames.org).