

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 6, 2023**  
**CONTACT: Liana Susott (406) 254-7426**

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

The 2023 Montana Mile, sponsored by Billings West End Walmart, marks the 32nd running for men and the 24th 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 approximately 8:15 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. on Friday, July 14. The Montana Mile is an invited race featuring some of the state's fastest high school, college, and post-collegiate milers. 406 Sports will also be live streaming the event on their Facebook page.

The Women's Montana Mile record is 4:53.90 set in 2011 by Lois Ricardi Keller. Duncan Hamilton set the Men's record in 2022 with a time of 4:04.02.

### **Men's Field**

#### **3- Ase Ackerman**

Ase Ackerman just finished a successful collegiate athletic career at Montana State University-Billings, competing in both track and cross country. The former Dawson County High School runner was named a team captain for the Yellowjackets receiving GNAC All-Conference in 3,000m steeplechase and 1500m and holds the 8k and 1500m school records. Ase will be coming off a third place finish in last year's Montana Mile.



#### **9- Oren Arthun**

Oren Arthun is from Churchill, Montana. He will be a senior at Manhattan Christian High School in the Fall. He holds the school records in the 5k cross country, 1600m, and 3200m. Oren is a two-time state cross country champion and two-time State Champion in the 3200m. This will be his first time running the Montana Mile.



#### **4- Weston Brown**

Weston Brown will be attending Princeton University in the Fall. He holds every Bozeman High School record from 800m to the 5K in cross country. In 2022, Weston was the Gatorade runner of the year for Cross Country and won the State AA Cross Country meet. He is a two-time State AA 3200m champion, 2023 1600m State Champion and holds the 1600m all class record. Weston just



recently won the boys two mile at Nike Outdoor Nationals. This will be his first time participating in the Montana Mile.

#### **5- Ivan Colmenero**

Former Montana State University-Billings runner, Ivan Colmenero is running the Montana Mile for the seventh time. He was an All-State runner for Manhattan High School and part of Manhattan's state championship team. An accomplished 10,000 meter runner, Colmenero's best mile time is 4:22.



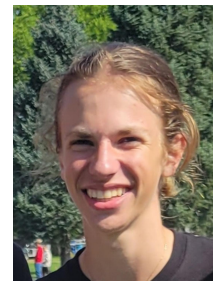
#### **6- Drew Galahan**

Drew Galahan is from Harlowton, Montana. He graduated from Montana State University Billings with a degree in Finance and is the founder and owner of Gally's Brewery in downtown Harlowton. He is a Montana State Class C Champion in the 800m, 1600m, and 4x400 relay. He ran the 400 and 800 meters and was All conference in the Distance Medley Relay for MSU Billings. This will be his second time participating in the Montana Mile.



#### **11- Mason Moler**

Mason Moler is an incoming senior at Billings West High School. He placed 8th at AA State Cross Country. This will be his first time participating in the Montana Mile.



#### **10- Greyson Piseno**

Greyson Piseno attends Billings Central Catholic High School and will be a sophomore this Fall. He holds school records for the 5k, 1600 and 3200. He also took the State A Championship in Cross Country, and the 1600m and 3200m in track. This will be Greyson's first time participating in the Montana Mile.



#### **2- Owen Smith**



Participating in his fifth Montana Mile, Owen Smith is now entering his senior year at Montana State University Bozeman, studying mechanical engineering. Smith earned All-State honors three times at Billings Senior High, and while running for the Bobcats, received a 6th place spot at Big Sky Conference steeplechase and was an NCAA first round qualifier in the 1500 meters. Number 2, Owen Smith.

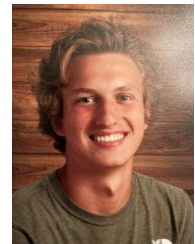
#### **7- Carson Steckelberg**

This fall, Carson Steckelberg will be entering his freshman year at University of Montana. He currently holds the school records at Gallatin High School for the 800m 1600m, 3200m and 5K. Carson was a three-time All State cross country and two All State for track. He will be running in the Montana Mile for the third year in a row. Number 7 Carson Steckelberg.



#### **8- Jaxon Straus**

Jaxon Straus will be an incoming Freshman at Black Hills State University studying business and economics. He has been named All-State three-times in cross country. He has had multiple top five finishes in the Midland Roundtable Top Ten Track Meet. Jaxon is three-time All State in Cross Country. This will be his second time participating in the Montana Mile.



#### **1- Levi Taylor**

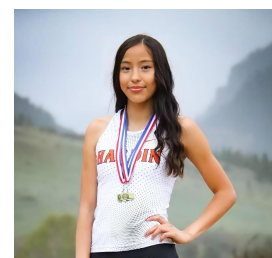
Former Laurel Locomotive standout Levi Taylor will be making his fifth appearance in the Montana Mile. Levi is the Laurel high school record holder in the 1600M and the 3200M. He is also part of the MSU record holding team in the distance medley relay. He is a two-time NCAA All-American and six-time all conference in the Big Sky Conference. This spring he competed in the 3000M Steeplechase Finals at NCAA National Championships and was 7th place in the Steeplechase at the 2022 USATF Championships. And he's just fresh off the 2023 USATF National Championships last week where he competed in the steeplechase.



### **Women's Field**

#### **7- Karis Brightwings-Pease**

Karis Brightwings Pease competed in high school cross country and track as an eighth grader. She will be a freshman this fall at Hardin High School. She has already accomplished many achievements including setting high school records and winning titles in the Montana State A Cross Country



and State A Track championships in the 1600m and 3200m. This will be her first time competing in the Montana Mile.

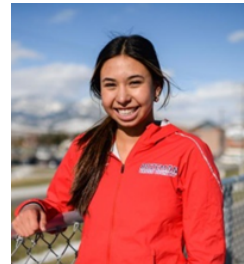
## **2- Sage Brooks**

Running for Syracuse University, our next runner, Sage Brooks, will be competing in her second Montana Mile. Sage was the 2020 Montana Mile Champion. The Missoula native holds the 1600m school record at Hellgate High School. She took home 17th place in the mile this year at the Indoor ACC Championships. She will now be running for Oregon State University.



## **6- Hayley Burns**

Northern Arizona University incoming sophomore, Hayley Burns will be participating in her second Montana Mile. Burns won the 3200M title in the Rated Section of the Arcadia Invitational in high school. She is a nine-time all-state selection in cross country and track at Bozeman High. This last Fall, she won the NJCAA Cross Country Nationals.



## **3- Mary Felig**

Growing up in Broadus and attending Montana State University-Billings, Mary Felig is now a physics teacher and cross country coach at Billings Skyview High School. She is in the top ten 5K runners at MSUB with a 5K personal record of 17:56.06, holding her high school records in the 1600m and 3200m and a marathon pr of 2:43. This is her fourth time participating in the Montana Mile. Felig will be coming off a third place finish in last year's Mile.



## **8- Ali Keith**

Ali Keith currently goes to college at California State University Monterey Bay. She is majoring in Communication Design. She has had multiple achievements throughout her running career including All-State Cross Country, NXR Northwest Open Invitational Champion 2021, and 5k record holder at Billings West. This will be her first time running in the Montana Mile.



### 11- Shelbi LaBrie

Shelbi LaBrie will be a junior at Whitewater High School in the Fall. She was third place in the Montana State C Cross Country Meet in 2022, two time All-State in Cross Country, 2023 State C 1600m champion and 2nd place in the 3200m, holding both school and divisional records. This will be her first time competing in the Montana Mile.



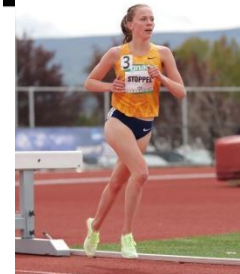
### 1- Sydney Little Light

Rocky Mountain College mile record holder and recent graduate, Little Light is the 2022 Montana Mile Champion and will be running for her third time. The Hardin High graduate is a seven time NAIA All-American and the 2022 NAIA 1500M Outdoor Track and Field National Champion. Sydney was also the 2022 Ultimate Warrior Champion. Little Light was named Frontier Conference Athlete of the Week for 28 times in her running career.



### 5- Kailee Stoppel

Kailee Stoppel recently finished a successful senior track season as a MSU-Billings Yellowjacket. Kailee is the 800m indoor record holder at MSUB and received GNAC All conference in the 800m and steeplechase. She will be competing in the Mile for the third year in a row.



### 9- Elena Vandersloot

Montana State University's Elena Vandersloot will be a Senior this Fall. She was a three time All-State Cross Country runner for Billings Senior High. This is her first time running the Montana Mile.



### 4- Mary Wirtz

Recent Billings resident, Mary Wirtz hails from Anoke, Minnesota. Mary ran for the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and was a 3-time NCAA All-American. She qualified for and competed in the 2020 US Olympic Marathon Trials in Atlanta, Georgia. This will be her first time participating in the Montana Mile.





## 10- Natalie Wood

A graduate of Sweet Grass High School, Natalie Wood will attend Montana State University Bozeman in the Fall. She holds the school record for the 1600m and 3200m and was the 2023 State B Champion in the 1600m and 3200m. This will be her first time running in the Montana Mile.



**The gates to Daylis Stadium open at 5:30 p.m. Admission is free. For more information call 406-254-7426 or go to [bigskygames.org](https://bigskygames.org).**

**The 2023 Montana Mile is sponsored by Billings West End Walmart. 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.**

Ase Ackerman just finished at Montana State University-Billings, competing in both track and cross country. The former Dawson County High School runner was named a team captain for the Yellowjackets receiving GNAC All-Conference in 3,000m steeplechase and 1500m and holds the 8k and 1500m school records. Ackerman will be coming off a third place finish in last year's Montana Mile.

## Oren Arthun

Oren Arthun is from Churchill, Montana. He will be a senior at Manhattan Christian High School in the Fall. He holds the school record in the 5k, 1600m, and 3200m. Oren is a two-time state cross country champion and two-time State Champion in the 3200m. This will be his first time running the Montana Mile.



## Weston Brown

Weston Brown will be attending Princeton University in the Fall. He holds every Bozeman High School record from 800m to the 5K. In 2022, Weston was the Gatorade runner of the year for Cross Country and won the State AA Cross Country meet. He is a two-time State AA 3200m champion, 2023 1600m State Champion and holds the 1600m all class record. Weston just recently won the



boys two mile at Nike Outdoor Nationals. This will be his first time participating in the Montana Mile.

### **Ivan Colmenero**

Former Montana State University-Billings runner, Ivan Colmenero is running the Montana Mile for the seventh time. He was an All-State runner for Manhattan High School and part of Manhattan's state championship team. Colmenero's best mile time is 4:22.



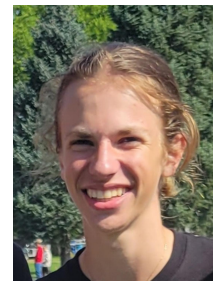
### **Drew Galahan**

Drew Galahan is from Harlowton, Montana. He graduated from Montana State University Billings with a degree in Finance. He is a Montana State Class C Champion in the 800m, 1600m, and 4x400 relay. This will be his second time participating in the Montana Mile.



### **Mason Moler**

Mason Moler is an incoming senior at Billings West High School. He received 8th place at AA State Cross Country. This will be his first time participating in the Montana Mile.



### **Greyson Pisen**

Greyson Pisen attends Billings Central Catholic High School and will be a sophomore in the Fall. He holds the school record for the 5k, 1600 and 3200. He also took the State A Championship in Cross Country, 1600m and 3200m. This will be his first time participating in the Montana Mile.



### **Owen Smith**

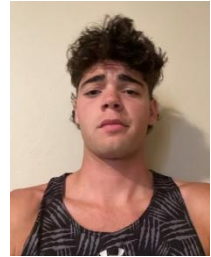
Participating in his fifth Montana Mile, Owen Smith is now entering his senior year at Montana State University Bozeman, studying mechanical engineering. Smith earned All-State honors three times at Billings Senior



High, received a 6th place spot at Big Sky Conference steeplechase and was an NCAA first round qualifier in the 150

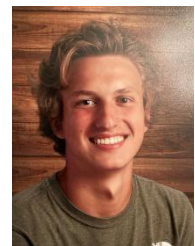
### **Carson Steckelberg**

This fall, Carson Steckelberg will be entering his freshman year at University of Montana. He currently holds the school records at Gallatin High School for the 800m 1600m, 3200m and 5K. Carson was a three-time All State cross country and two All State for track. He will be running in the Montana Mile for the third year in a row.



### **Jaxon Straus**

Jaxon Straus is an incoming Freshman at Black Hills State University studying business and economics. He has been named All-State three-times in cross country. He has had multiple top five finishes in the Midland Roundtable Top Ten Track Meet. Jaxon is three-time All State in Cross Country. This will be his second time participating in the Montana Mile.



### **Levi Taylor**

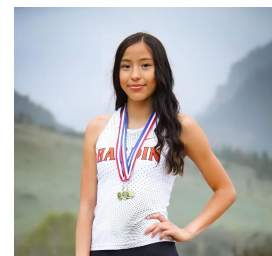
Former Laurel Locomotive standout Levi Taylor will be making his fifth appearance in the Mile. Levi is the school record holder at Laurel High School in the 1600M and the 3200M. He is also part of the record holding team in the distance medley relay at MSU. He is a two-time NCAA All-American and six-time all conference in the Big Sky. He recently competed in the 3000M Steeplechase Finals at NCAA Nationals and was 7th place in the Steeplechase at the 2022 USATF Championships .



### **Women's Field**

#### **Karis Brightwings-Pease**

Karis Brightwings Pease competed in high school cross country and track as an eighth grader. She will be a freshman this fall at Hardin High School. She has already accomplished many achievements including setting high school records and a champion in the Montana State A Cross Country Championships and State A Track Championships in the 1600m and 3200m. This will be her first time competing in the Montana Mile.





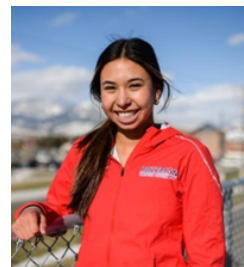
### **Sage Brooks**

Syracuse runner, Sage Brooks, will be competing in her second Montana Mile. Brooks was the 2020 Montana Mile Champion. The Missoula native holds the 1600m school record at Hellgate High School. Brooks took home 17th place in the mile this year at the Indoor ACC Championships.



### **Hayley Burns**

Northern Arizona University incoming sophomore, Hayley Burns will be participating in her second Montana Mile. Burns won the 3200M title in the Rated Section of the Arcadia Invitational in high school. She is a nine-time all-state selection in cross country and track at Bozeman High. This last Fall, she won the NJCAA Cross Country Nationals.



### **Mary Felig**

Growing up in Broadus and attending Montana State University-Billings, Mary Felig is now a physics teacher and cross country coach at Billings Skyview High School. She is in the top ten 5K runners at MSUB with a 5K personal record of 17:56.06, holding her high school records in the 1600m and 3200m. This is her fourth time participating in the Montana Mile. Felig will be coming off a third place finish in last year's Mile.



### **Ali Keith**

Ali Keith currently goes to college in Seaside, California. She is majoring in Communication Design. She has had multiple achievements throughout her running career including All-State Cross Country, NXR Northwest Open Invitational Champion 2021, and 5k record holder at Billings West. This will be her first time running in the Montana Mile.



### **Shelbi LaBrie**



Shelbi LaBrie will be a junior at Whitewater High School in the Fall. She was third place in the Montana State C Cross Country Meet in 2022, two time All-State in Cross Country, 2023 State C 1600m champion and 2nd place in the 3200m, holding both school and divisional records. This will be her first time competing in the Montana Mile.

### **Sydney Little Light**

Rocky Mountain College mile record holder and recent graduate, Little Light is the 2022 Montana Mile Champion and will be running for her third time. The Hardin High graduate is a seven time NAIA All-American and the 2022 NAIA 1500M Outdoor Track and Field National Champion. Sydney was also the 2022 Ultimate Warrior Champion. Little Light was named Frontier Conference Athlete of the Week for 28 times in her running career.



### **Kaitlyn Skinner**

Missoula Hellgate's Kaitlyn Skinner will be a senior this Fall. She was the 2023 State AA Champion in the 1600m and earned All-State Cross Country honors. This will be her first time running in the Montana Mile.



### **Kailee Stoppel**

Kailee Stoppel recently finished a successful senior track season as a MSU-Billings Yellowjacket. Kailee is the 800m indoor record holder at MSUB and received GNAC All conference in the 800m and steeplechase. She will be competing in the Mile for the third year in a row.



### **Elena Vandersloot**

Montana State University's Elena Vandersloot will be a Senior this Fall. She was a three time All-State Cross Country runner for Billings Senior High. This is her first time running the Montana Mile.



### **Mary Wirtz**

Recent Billings resident, Mary Wirtz hails from Anoke, Minnesota. Mary ran for the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and was a 3-time NCAA All-American. She qualified for and competed in the 2020 US Olympic Marathon Trials in Atlanta, Georgia. This will be her first time participating in the Montana Mile.



### **Natalie Wood**

A graduate of Sweet Grass High School, Natalie Wood will attend Montana State University Bozeman in the Fall. She holds the school record for the 1600m and 3200m and was the 2023 State B Champion in the 1600m and 3200m. This will be her first time running in the Montana Mile.



**The gates to Daylis Stadium open at 5:30 p.m. Admission is free. For more information call 406-254-7426 or go to [bigskygames.org](https://bigskygames.org).**

**The 2023 Montana Mile is sponsored by Billings West End Walmart. 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.**