

Track Athletes Announce Their Decisions To Continue Athletic Careers, Education

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LEVELLAND – Gladys Chumba, Edina Brooks, Melinda Bendik, Latoy Williams, and Bryce Brown all announced their decisions to attend four-year universities for the 2009-2010 school years. Brown, who was unable to attend due to a final exam, and Williams will be moving 30 minutes west on Highway 114 as they each chose Texas Tech University. Chumba will also stay in the state of Texas as she will attend the University of Texas at El Paso. The final two athletes will be packing U-Hauls as Brooks will further her career at the University of Arkansas and Bendik will attend Liberty University in Virginia.

Chumba will be joining Coach Paul Ereng's squad of distance runners who have won back-to-back Conference USA cross country titles and have had a hand in four conference track and field titles during his tenure in El Paso.

The Miners are getting an athlete who was instrumental in the Lady Texans winning the 2009 NJCAA Indoor Track and Field Championship as she won the 3,000 meter run, was second in the 5,000 meter run and scored in the mile.

Head Coach Chris Beene said, "UTEP has a great tradition of athletes doing well nationally, especially in the distance events."

Bendik, a native of Odessa, will attend Liberty University and work under the guidance of former SPC thrower Clendon Henderson. Bendik currently holds the school record in the discus throw and ranks third nationally in the hammer throw and seventh in the discus.

Bendik said she chose Liberty because she felt it was the best fit for her to continue her education and to become a better thrower.

Edina Brooks will be reuniting with former SPC 400 meter runner Karen Thomas when she arrives at the University of Arkansas in the fall and Lady Razorback head coach Lance Harter couldn't be more fired up.

"I am very excited that Edina chose Arkansas. We really enjoyed her visit, and know that like Karen we are getting not only a great athlete but a tremendous person as well," Harter said.

Brooks, who has a season best of 55.07 seconds in the 400 meter dash and ranks third in the NJCAA, will be joining a program that has won a combined six Southeastern Conference championships since 2000.

Williams, who currently ranks second in the world in the 400 meter dash with a time of 45.01 seconds, will be heading to Texas Tech University along with teammate Bryce Brown.

Williams finished third at the NJCAA Indoor championships in the 400 meter dash and also ran a leg on the 4x400 meter relay that finished second. Brown won the 55 meter hurdles and currently leads the NJCAA in the 400 meter hurdles by over a second with a time of 50.31 seconds.

Williams said, "I'm really excited. My teammate will be coming too and we should be able to have a good 4x4 (relay) and do some big things."

Williams said his goals as a Red Raider are, “To get my degree, number one, and to run fast every time I step on the track.”

Associate Head Coach Blaine Wiley said, “These athletes have done a tremendous job for us and I hate having to see them leave the program.”

The Texans and Lady Texans return to action this evening as they compete in the Texas Tech Invitational in their final tune up before the NJCAA Outdoor championships in Hutchinson, Kansas May 21-23.