

TEXAS TECH AND

TECH OLYMPIAN JONATHAN JOHNSON

By: Kristin Thomas

Christopher Spear, a Senior Exercise Sports Science major from Colorado City, Texas, was just a high school freshman when he attended a state track meet that would stimulate his interest in track and field.

Spear watched as Jonathan Johnson, an anchor for the 4x4 mile relay, came from behind to win.

"It was the most incredible race I've ever seen. Johnson was the anchor leg for his mile relay team at the state track meet and came from behind to win after being behind by at least 50 meters," Spear said. "Before that race I never really had much interest in track, but that race really inspired me to pursue track in high school."

Little did Spear know that after this state track meet, Johnson would go on to compete for the Texas Tech track team, where he set school records and eventually competed in the 2004 Olympics.

Johnson, an Abilene native, ran track for Tech from 2002 to 2005. During his freshman year, he became the first Tech male to earn four All-American honors as a freshman. His time in the finals of the 800-meter

was the fastest time ever at Nationals for an American freshman, and the second fastest time by an American freshman ever. His time of 1:45.81 set the school record that stood since 1981, according to the Tech athletic Web site.

In 2004, Johnson was the National Champion in the 800-meter, Tech's first ever male National Champion. That year he also won the U.S. Olympic trials in Sacramento, guaranteeing him a spot on the Olympics track team for the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece. He was the only American athlete to compete in the semifinal round of the 800-meter, according to the Tech athletic Web site.

Johnson finished his career at Tech as an eight-time All-American and three-time Big XII Champion. He received 14 All-Conference honors on the way to be the only Tech Olympian and male National Champion.



PROFILE

Name: Jonathan Johnson
Hometown: Abilene
High School: Abilene High School
Career Highlights: Competed in the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens Greece. Won National Championship in the 800-meter in 2004.

THE OLYMPICS

STUDENTS WEIGH IN ON 2008 OLYMPICS

By: Ben Jarrell

With the Summer Olympics in Beijing approaching, some Tech students are getting excited about the getting to watch the games.

The Summer Olympics feature a wide range of sporting events from track and field to cycling and fencing to weightlifting.

It is also the only event that features dozens of different countries competing against one another.

Ryan Duplechin, a senior zoology major from Carrollton, Texas, said the thing he most enjoys about the Olympics is the fact that people don't often watch their countries compete against other countries.

"From the standpoint of being a fan of the United States, you don't often get a chance to see the United States compete against a lot of these nations, so it's a unique contest," said Duplechin.

Duplechin said his favorite events in the Summer Olympics are soccer and some of the track and field events, such as the sprinting races, the high jump, and the triple jump. In the winter, Duplechin said he is a huge fan of the short and long

track speed skating, as well as the luge and the bobsled races.

While Russia has the two most successful Olympians from a medals standpoint, the U.S. has 5 of the top twelve.

That list includes Mark Spitz (swimming) in 4th place with eleven medals, including 9 gold medals, which is tied for the most all-time. Carl Lewis (track and field) is in 5th place with ten medals, including 9 gold medals.

Also, on the list are Jenny Thompson (swimming), Matt Biondi (swimming), and Ray Ewry (track and field).

Susie Moore, a Tech alumna from Dallas, said the best thing about the Olympics is the fact there are so many sports that you usually wouldn't see on any given day that are brought together to form one incredible event.

"You get to see everything and a lot of people are interested in these sports, you just don't get to see it a lot on ESPN,"

said Moore. "They're always infatuated with football and basketball and you can't watch all these other sports."

Moore said she enjoys watching the swimming and diving events, as well as the track and field and the basketball, but only because Coach Krzyzewski is coaching the U.S.A. basketball team this year. During the winter games, she likes to watch the alpine skiing, figure skating, and hockey.

According to the official Olympics Web site, the U.S. has hosted the Olympics 8 times, 4 summer games and 4 winter games, which is more than any other country in the world. However, the U.S. will need to wait until the 2016 Summer Olympics to bring the games back onto American soil.

