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Abbotsford athlete throws for Canada in Mexico Surprise proposal at track meet thrills crowd in Oregon

BY JEAN KONDA-WITTE, ABBOTSFORD TIMES MAY 23, 2012



Tiffany Perkins of Abbotsford has her sights set on a medal for Team Canada at the NACAC championships in Mexico.

Photograph by: Jean Konda-Witte , Times file photo

From her first throw, Tiffany Perkins just knew that day would be different.

A personal best of 51 metres in her initial javelin throw at the Kamloops Centennial Track and Field Meet last Sunday led to a second throw of 52.80m, another 'best' and good enough to land the Abbotsford athlete on Team Canada and a trip to Mexico in July.

"It was looking good right from the start," said Perkins, a 2009 W.J. Mouat grad.

Perkins will now compete for Canada at the NACAC (North American, Central American and Caribbean) championships in Guanajuato, Mexico, July 6-8.

The 20-year-old has devoted a good part of her life to the javelin and it's paid off. In 2010 she competed in the World Junior Track and Field Championships in Moncton, N.B. where she placed 11th with her longest throw being 48.48m.

"It was a success for me," she said, satisfied with her personal best.

Now 2012 is turning out to be a banner year for Perkins. With a spot on the national roster, and an eye on the 2016 Olympics, Perkins is also getting married in August.

A surprise proposal from her fiancé Michele Matteazzi at a track meet in Oregon three weeks ago sealed the deal.

"I thought he was in Canada. He totally had me fooled," she said.

Right after she competed in the javelin, Matteazzi appeared, wearing a suit, and in front of 10,000 people packed into the stadium, surprised her with a proposal.

"I could barely move, think, speak or even breathe," said Perkins, recalling the moment.

"The crowd around us, as well as people in the stadium, were all watching. He got down on one knee and asked me if I would marry him. I had a huge smile on my face. I put my hands on his to brace myself because I could not even stand."

After she said 'yes', the entire crowd started cheering, she said.

The two had been friends since childhood and dated for three years but the engagement was a complete surprise, said Perkins. She cried when she called her family with the special news.

Now with a wedding to plan and training to pursue, Perkins' plate is pretty full.

"I have five weeks 'till [NACAC] to perfect as much as I can and be as consistent as I can," she said.

Coming up, she'll compete in the Harry Jerome meet at Swangard Stadium June 2-3 and the Canadian nationals in Calgary June 30, before going to Mexico the following week.

But when asked what she was most excited about, she paused and said, “the wedding.”

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