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by Ethan Joyce, *Winston-Salem Journal* – March 1, 2019



Noel Ruebel, the track coach at Forsyth Country Day, practices discus throwing in 2014 at the school's track.

Ruebel is among 130 people from North Carolina competing this weekend at the USA Track & Field Masters Indoor Championships at JDL Fast Track.

(Photo by *Winston-Salem Journal*)



David Shannon, 61, will compete this weekend at the USA Track & Field Masters Indoor Championships at JDL Fast Track.

(Photo by David Shannon)

Area track and field figures will get a chance to compete around home this weekend.

The USA Track & Field Masters Indoor Championships return to Winston-Salem for the second time this decade, starting Friday and running through Sunday. The meet will take place at JDL Fast Track, which first held the event in 2015.

The Masters encompasses athletes from ages 30 to 95. The three-day event will feature 1,026 athletes, a total that includes 22 USATF Hall of Famers, 24 world-record holders and 130 North Carolinians.

Among those people will be Noel Ruebel and David Shannon. Ruebel is the track and field coach at Forsyth Country Day School, and Shannon is the owner of JDL Fast Track. Ruebel, 62, is signed up for five events, including the indoor pentathlon. And Shannon, 61, will make an appearance in the 200- and 400-meter dashes.

“Run may be too strong a term for what I’ll be doing,” Shannon joked. “I’m going to be out there, but I’m really not any good at all.”

JDL Fast Track opened in 2012. Three years later, the indoor facility was the site for the USA Masters Indoor Track & Field Championships.

This came on the heels of the 2014 installment of the Masters Outdoor Championships, which was held at Wake Forest. It was the first time indoor and outdoor championships were held back-to-back in the same city.

Ruebel, a former head track coach at Wake Forest, was the meet director for the outdoor event in 2014. While running that event, he put his training on hold. That led to a not-so-great showing for him in 2015. Now, Ruebel said he competes in at least four multi-discipline events per year.

These events, Ruebel said, are great at putting a city like Winston-Salem in a spotlight. It also exposes competitors and spectators to impressive athletes.

“I’m constantly impressed by my elders,” Ruebel said. “Every one of these competitions, somebody just blows me away.”

“It’s inevitable because I’m just so impressed with what I see people doing. And it’s like, OK, I’ve seen the 85-year-old guy that can just still bust the 100 meters. I want to be that guy. I want to continue training.”

Since JDL Fast Track hosted its first indoor championship, it’s become regular site for many levels of track and field. In the past month, it’s played host to events like the Camel City Invitational, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association state championships and the CIAA Conference Championships, among other things.

Shannon said he’s expecting more runners this weekend than he saw in 2015. That came from an extra push to make running communities around the country aware of the event.

The indoor track season creates a hectic three-month span for JDL Fast Track, which is currently in the thick of it. But having the USATF event in town for the weekend, as well as all the people it brings into the city, makes the intense planning worth it.

“We’ve really been fortunate to have been able to attract the national caliber of track meets and athletes that we’ve been able to. It’s kind of remarkable, and I don’t think we probably really thought that that would occur when we first started,” Shannon said. “But this year, we had two indoor flat-track world records set at the Camel City race.”

“We’ve had a lot of Olympians here, a lot of gold medalists. It’s been pretty good.”