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FIVE LINDENWOOD ATHLETES TO COMPETE IN 2016 OLYMPIC GAMES

July 8, 2016

Five athletes with Lindenwood University ties will be competing in the upcoming Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The 2016 Olympics will mark the third straight Summer Olympics in which Lindenwood has had an athlete or former athlete competing. Lindenwood had three athletes in the 2008 games and five at the 2012 Olympics.

Craft was a member of Lindenwood's fabled shooting program, which has won 13 straight national championships, from 2011 to 2014 and contributed to three of those national titles. Craft graduated from Lindenwood with a degree in exercise science.

One of Lindenwood's greatest all-time athletes, Donald Thomas, will be making his third Olympics appearance this year representing the Bahamas in the high jump competition. Last month, Thomas clinched his spot on the Olympic team after winning the Bahamas National Championships, clearing 2.27 meters to win that event.

Thomas is a former world champion, winning the 2007 title in Japan. He finished 21st at the 2008 Olympics and 27th at the 2012 Olympics. In recent world competitions, Thomas was 10th at the 2016 World Indoor Championships and 6th at the 2015 World Outdoor Championships.

Thomas is a 2006 graduate from Lindenwood and had an unusual entry to his sport when, as a JV basketball player, he tried the high jump on a dare and immediately had success. He finished second at the NAIA National Indoor Championships just months after trying the high jump for the first time and helped the Lions win the national team title that year.

Another former Lindenwood track and field athlete at this year's Olympics will be triple jumper Fabian Florant, who will represent the Netherlands. He earned his first Olympic bid in April with a mark of 16.92 meters during a competition in Florida.

Florant competed for Lindenwood from 2002 to 2004. He was a four-time All-American and two-time national champion. In 2003, he swept the NAIA National Championships in the triple jump by winning both the indoor and outdoor titles. He finished second in the 2004 NAIA indoor triple jump competition and earned outdoor All-American honors that year in the long jump. He won four conference triple jump championships.

One current and one former member of Lindenwood's Olympic Weightlifting team will be competing in Rio de Janeiro. Muhammad Begaliev, a sophomore on last



Lindenwood's Olympians

Reem Abdalazem (2008, 2012)
Synchronized SwimmingMuhammad Begaliev (2016)
Olympic WeightliftingMorgan Craft (2016)
International Skeet ShootingFabian Florant (2016)
Triple JumpMary Killman (2012)
Synchronized SwimmingSean McLelland (2008)
International Skeet ShootingIrene Montruchhio (2012)
Synchronized SwimmingFernando Reis (2012, 2016)
Olympic WeightliftingDonald Thomas (2008, 2012, 2016)
High Jump

year's Lindenwood squad, will represent Uzbekistan in the 85kg division. Fernando Reis will represent the host country, Brazil, in the 105+kg division.


Begaliev will be making his first Olympic appearance. He finished fifth at the Asian Championships in April to earn his spot in the games. He lifted 160 kg in the snatch and 190 kg in the clean and jerk for a total of 350 kg.

Reis will be competing in the Olympics for the second straight time. He finished 12th in London with a total of 400 kg. At Lindenwood, Reis was the 2010 and 2011 National Collegiate champion and was a key building block for the program, which started in 2009.

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