



**March 26, 2007**

## **FIVE NEW ATHLETES AND TWO NEW COACHES JOIN THE VS TEAM**

LOS ANGELES, CA—The VS Athletics Track Club has had a banner month of March in strengthening both its athlete roster and coaching staff with the addition of seven (7) outstanding new team members. New athletes joining the Club are shot/discus throwers **Tomas Fajardo**, **Sam Lightbody** and **Katelyn Ciarelli**, pole vaulter **Erin Wessely**, and distance runner **Ozzie Pina**.

**Tomas Fajardo** received his B.S. degree in Recreation Management from Cal State Northridge in 2005 and is now working on a M.A. degree in Public Administration. He was the Big West Conference Champion in the discus in 2004 and earned "Athlete of the Week" recognition for a PR throw of **183'7"** (55.95m) at the 2005 NCAA West Regional Championships, en route to placing 12<sup>th</sup> at NCAA Outdoor Championships in Sacramento. In 2007, Tomas completed his indoor eligibility at CSUN this winter with a PR **58'11"** in the shot put. He is coached by VS Athletics Assistant Coach Nick Garcia, who is also a graduate of CSUN.

**Sam Lightbody** is 6'9" tall and weights 320 lbs. Family lore has it that his Scottish last name "Lightbody" comes from some distant relative who was a light bearer. Sam graduated from Huntington Beach High School in 2000, where he was a star athlete in football and track with personal bests of 60' 8" in the shot and 195' 11" in the discus. Sam went to Washington State on a football scholarship and started 27 games at offensive tackle. As a freshman, he had bests of **58'4"** (17.78m) and **180'0"** (54.86m) and placed in the top-10 in both the shot and discus at the 2001 PAC-10 Championships. However, he later dropped track to concentrate on football, where he was an 8<sup>th</sup> round draft pick of the Houston Texans, then later signed with Tampa as a free agent. Of his recent return to track & field competition, his former high school and current VS coach, Tony Ciarelli says, "Sam is a world-class athlete. Track & Field loses so many great young athletes to Pro Football, the sport is lucky to get him back.

**Katelyn Ciarelli** is competing for the club while red-shirting her senior track season at Long Beach State, where she is majoring in sociology. She was the 2006 West Conference Champion in the discus and scored a total of 19-pts in the discus, hammer, and javelin to help the 49'ers to a 3<sup>rd</sup> place team finish. Katelyn is a graduate of Huntington Beach High School where she placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the discus at the 2003 California State Meet. She has PR's of **167'3"** in the discus and **171'4"** in the hammer and is coached and mentored by her father, Tony Ciarelli—one of the preeminent throws coaches in America.

**Erin Wessely** is an assistant track coach at Santa Barbara City College. She graduated with honors from the University of Kansas in 2005 with a B.S. degree in Biology where she won All-Conference honors and was a 3-time NCAA Regional Qualifier in the pole vault with a PR of **12'6"** (3.81m). In 2006, she placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Jim Bush USATF West Regional Championships and represented the U.S. in an international competition in Taiwan, where she placed third.

**Ozzie Pina** first gained attention when he ran 9:05.74 for 2-miles—the 2nd fastest time in the nation—as a sophomore at Lakewood High School. He transferred to Long Beach Poly and, after being injured his junior year, ran a stellar 4:14/ 9:11 mile/2-mile double at the 2001 Arcadia Invitational in his senior year. In cross-country, he was a 2-time CIF champion and helped lead Poly to the 2000 California State Championship title. As a freshman at Mt. SAC, he was State Junior College Champion at 1500 meters and ran a promising 4:06 mile and 14:25 5000m, but was injured his last track season there. In cross country, he won the State JC title as a sophomore. After transferring to the University of California, Ozzie continued to be plagued with injuries but ran 14:22 for 5000m during his junior year. During his senior year at Cal, he ran for the local Adidas Transports club and recorded PRs of **1:54.20**, **3:47.22** and **14:12.30** for 800, 1500, and 5000 meters. Ozzie graduated from Cal with a B.A. degree in Developmental Studies and is now pursuing a M.A. degree in Latin Studies at Cal State Los Angeles.

"These are outstanding young athletes with great futures in track & field, says Club Director, Skip Stolley. We are very excited about the contributions they will make to the VS Athletics Track Club and our training groups."

Joining the coaching staff of the Club are two of America's preeminent coaches—**Tony Ciarelli** and **Jan Johnson**.

**Tony Ciarelli** was a 59-foot shot putter at Huntington Beach High School. As a collegian, he became a javelin thrower, first at Orange Coast College, then at the University of Hawaii where he recorded a best of 244' 0". As a submaster, Tony was the 1989 National Champion in the Shot Put and continues to throw the javelin in Masters competition and has a best of 214' 4". As a high school coach, Tony has produced 34 State Meet finalists, 3 State Champions, 5 National Scholastic Meet Champions, 2 Golden West Meet Champions, and 5 High School All America performers. He has also been coaching post-collegians for more than 15-years, including 1992 Olympian Brian Blutrieck (discus), U.S. Olympic Trials finalists Erik Johnson (1996/discus), Malissa Weis (1996 & 04/discus), and Carl Brown (2000 & 04/discus). Since 2006, he has been coaching 3-time Olympian Jason Tunks (discus), 2-time Olympian Lieja Tunks (discus & shot), 2003 U.S. World Championship Team member Nick Petrucci (discus), and Sam Lightbody (discus).

**Jan Johnson** may be America's preeminent Pole Vault Coach. He was the first Illinois prep pole vaulter to scale 15-feet while attending Bloom High School in Chicago Heights and is a member of the Illinois High School, University of Kansas, University of Alabama, and National Pole Vault Halls-of-Fame. While at Kansas, he set a pole vault world indoor record of 17'7" and was the 1971 Pan American Games Champion. While attending Alabama, he won 3 NCAA Championships, 2 U.S. titles, and was a bronze medalist at the 1972 Olympic Games. After retiring as an athlete, Jan coached at LSU, Southern Illinois, and Cal Poly SLO before founding the Sky Jumpers Vertical Sports Club based in Atascadero. As a pole vault coach and producer of pole vault camps, coaching clinics, and instructional videos, Jan has no peer. More than 30,000 coaches and vaulters have attended his Sky Jumpers camps since 1973, and he has produced and sold more than 50,000 pole vault instructional videos. Perhaps even more important, no one has done more to enhance the safety of the pole vault. Jan was the first person to develop product performance standards for manufacturing pole vault equipment, and he created, and continues to chair, the USATF Pole Vault Safety Task Force. In 2002, he developed a national on-line curriculum for the education, testing, and certification of pole vault coaches. In 2005, he received the *Southern California Track & Field Lifetime Achievement Award*. Jan's daughter, Chelsea, is a 2-time PAC-10 Conference and NCAA Champion and record-holder at 15' 1".

"Finding a coach and other athletes to train with are the two biggest challenges our athletes face once they leave our college programs. Providing outstanding coaching and a group of other athletes to train with is critical for the VS Athletics Track Club to achieve its mission to develop Southern California's Olympic hopefuls, says Skip Stolley. There is not another club in America that has a better coaching staff."

### **March 24, 2007**

## **VS ATHLETICS DOMINATES AT THE CALIFORNIA RELAYS**

CERRITOS, CA—The new California Relays was a coming-out party for the VS Athletics Track Club. Held at the newly renovated \$3M Cerritos College track & field complex, VS athletes won 7 events, placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in 9 events, and had 3 other top-4 place winners. The meet started off with **Tomas Fajardo** winning the Men's shot put on Friday with **Chris Richardson** taking 4<sup>th</sup>, after winning his qualifying heat of the 110m hurdles, then winning the Javelin with a throw of **201'8"**. On Saturday, **Casey & Katie Kraychir** got the day started by placing 1-2 in the Women's hammer throw, followed by brothers **Trevor & Trent Kraychir** duplicating their 1-2 finish in the Men's hammer. Later, new team members **Sam Lightbody** and **Katelyn Ciarelli** won the Men's and Women's discus, with Sam throwing **174'2"** in his first competition in 4-years and Katelyn recording a new PR of **163'7"**. Adding to the impressive showing by VS in the field events were 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes by **Melissa Sakowski** in the Women's Pole Vault and **John Temidara** in the Men's triple jump.

On the track, **Roseline Agboke** and **Genevieve Graff-Ermeling** were 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Women's 1500 meters, then added 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes in the Women's 400 (Roz) and 800 (Genn). In the Men's 800, **Rafer Weaver's** **1:56.47** clocking in 5<sup>th</sup> place was a new Club record and the Men's 4x 400m relay quartet placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in a season best **3:20.94**. For complete results visit [http://www.directathletics.com/results/track/5361\\_380089.html](http://www.directathletics.com/results/track/5361_380089.html).

### **Other VS ATHLETICS Results:**

3/23/07 Easter Relays at Santa Barbara City College  
Men's Shot Put: **1<sup>ST</sup> Nick Garcia 56'9"** (17.29m)

3/17/07 Long Beach Relays at Long Beach State  
Women's Discus: **2<sup>ND</sup> Katelyn Ciarelli 152'11"** (46.62m)  
Women's Hammer: **1<sup>ST</sup> Katelyn Ciarelli 169'3"** (51.58m)  
Men's 110m Hurdles: **6<sup>TH</sup> Chris Richardson 15.40** (wind +1.4)  
Men's Long Jump: **2<sup>ND</sup> Chris Richardson 24'10 ½"** (7.58m) (wind +0.0)

Men's Discus: **6<sup>TH</sup> Chris Richardson 155'5"** (47.38m)  
Men's Javelin: **1<sup>ST</sup> Chris Richardson 198'11"** (60.64m)

3/17/07 Cal Poly SLO Invitational  
Women's Pole Vault: **3<sup>RD</sup> Melissa Sakowski 12'1 ½"** (3.70m)

### WHAT'S NEXT

- Fri-Sat, March 30-31, **Stanford Invitational**
- Saturday, April 7 **Pomona-Pitzer Invitational**

**For a complete list of 2007 Southern California competitions open to USATF athletes see:**  
<http://scausatf.org/open/schedule.htm>

Athletes interested in joining  
the VS Athletics Track Club  
are invited to contact:

**Skip Stolley**  
**Director**  
**VS ATHLETICS Track Club**  
**825 16th Street /suite B, Santa Monica, CA 90403**  
**Tel (310) 453-7655 Cell (310) 200-5527 [sstolley@aol.com](mailto:sstolley@aol.com)**