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Triton College's Ava Connerty Captures National Title, Makes School History

RIVER GROVE, Ill. –Triton College's Ava Connerty made history on May 10 at the NJCAA Division III Outdoor Track & Field Championships, when she became the first women's track athlete representing Triton to win an individual national title.

The 19-year-old sophomore from North Riverside was crowned champion in Utica, NY, after an exhilarating finish in the women's 100-meter hurdle race, winning by just two-tenths of a second. After graduating this year, she will leave Triton as a two-time NJCAA All-American.

"I honestly never thought that I would be a national champion," said Connerty, who finished in 15.24 seconds. "It's so amazing seeing all of my training pay off in the best way possible. Knowing that I'm the first female track national champion in Triton history is unbelievable."

Connerty's first place finish comes a year after just coming up short in last year's national championship. Headed into last weekend's big win, she knew she had unfinished business left on the track.

"It definitely made me more motivated to do my best and to work harder and put in a lot of hard training sessions to get myself where I needed to be," she said. "It ended up all paying off."

Track & Field Head Coach Jason Guevarra said he was very proud of Connerty and added that her two seasons as a competitor for Triton College have been fantastic. According to Guevarra, Connerty is a model athlete for the program going forward.

"Ava was ranked first (nationally) coming into nationals but placed fourth after preliminary rounds," Guevarra added. "I knew she was ready the next day for the finals and ran an awesome race. She is the kind of athlete that sets the standard for the future of the Triton women's track and field team."

Connerty admitted she was anxious before her race, but by the time she launched off of the starting block, she knew the title was hers.

"I just knew I had it," she said. "I just felt so much better. Mentally I was in such a good place, that I just knew I would do good."

Connerty also ran in the women's 4x400-meter relay, placing third at nationals alongside fellow Trojans Sandra Saldierna, Kinga Antolak and Joaliz Rodriguez.

Off the track, Connerty studies psychology at Triton College. She originally enrolled at a four-year institution in North Dakota after high school but realized after a semester it wasn't the right fit.

Connerty shared that she was drawn to Triton for its proximity to her home and affordability.

“I just needed to be somewhere where I would thrive.”

After graduating, Connerty said she plans to take what she’s learned at Triton and transfer to a four-year school to continue her education.

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ABOUT TRITON COLLEGE

Triton College is an institution of higher education dedicated to student success. Triton offers more than 120 degree and certificate programs designed for students to realize their career aspirations and effectively compete in a global economy. The college campus spans 110 acres in River Grove, Illinois, holds classes at satellite locations and offers online learning opportunities. Triton’s exemplary faculty and staff work to provide high-quality, convenient and affordable educational opportunities to more than 10,000 students each year. Triton College is a member of The Community Colleges of Illinois and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Learn more at triton.edu/.