

Winnipeg Free Press

Breaking records just a bonus

LOCAL RUNNER HEADED TO TOLEDO ON TRACK SCHOLARSHIP, HOPES TO COMPETE IN KENYA

By: Taylor Allen

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Breaking a record is cool and all, but Margrett Watt is aiming even higher.

Watt, a Grade 12 student at Garden City Collegiate, broke the women's under-20 800-metre record Saturday at the Boeing Indoor Classic at the James Daly Fieldhouse.



The previous best was 2:17.92. Watt shattered it, crossing the line at 2:12.91.

"It's definitely always exciting when something like that happens," said Watt, 18, who also won gold in the 1,500.

"It was really cool that I was able to get a record in my last year at the Boeing. But, that's never my main focus heading into races. I'm always just going into a race

ready to work hard and improve my personal best. But if a record gets broken along the way, that's just a super awesome bonus."

Watt's been running with the Winnipeg Optimist Athletics club since she was in Grade 5. A typical week for her features four days at the track, two weightlifting sessions and two long runs on her own time. Her work ethic has taken her game to the next level, leading to her being named the Athletics Manitoba Most Improved Female Athlete the past two years.

"It's not a great secret, it's a matter of getting out there and doing the work. In track and field, there's no faking it. If you put the work in and you have some talent, you're going

to do well," said Scott Radley, Watt's Optimist Athletics coach.

"Margrett never misses a workout. I can't remember the last time she missed a workout aside from illness or something. She works hard and she's conscientious about it. She's conscientious about her school work and she's well-liked. Everybody loves Margrett."

The University of Toledo especially loves her. Next fall, Watt will be taking her talents to Toledo on a full-ride track scholarship. She visited Syracuse University, University of Minnesota and South Dakota State University, but in the end, she felt Toledo was the perfect fit.

"I talked with the coach early in the fall. Right away I fell in love with her values for the team and I ended up going on a visit there. I loved the school," said Watt, who became interested in track while watching her older siblings Nick and Gina compete at the high school level.

"I'm super excited about the academics program there and I loved the team. They're all so awesome. But yeah, I think the biggest thing is they're a really competitive team. The coach and the team are ready to work hard to win titles, be competitive, but with the right values and the right reasons."

Watt is one of five runners from the Optimist Athletics program that will be heading to an NCAA Div. 1 program next fall. The others are Ceci Howes (Minnesota), William Boyle (South Dakota State), Erin Owens (North Dakota) and Alyssa Moon (North Dakota).

"I think it's really special," Watt said.

"It says a lot about the club that we're very competitive and they prepare us for the future, too. I think it's really special when you have competitive athletes together. We really benefit off of each other because we're able to push each other and fight at the end of races so we both push each other to be faster."

But before Watt, who also competes in the steeplechase, heads down to Toledo, she has some business to take care of. She's aiming to post a time in the steeplechase that will earn her a spot on the Canadian national team that will compete at the World Athletics U20 Championships in Kenya in July. To do so, Watt must be in the top two in the country. Last year, she barely missed the cut.

"I was like less than two seconds away from making the team. But at the same time, it was my teammate (Howes) that got that second spot," Watt said.

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"I was happy she was the one to get it, but definitely has made me more motivated. I'm thinking about it almost daily, the things that I'm so excited to do. I'm not afraid to say that I want to shoot for that team again. I'm going to work very hard every day. I can't control anyone else, but I'm going to do everything I can to make sure I don't miss it just by that much this time."

Whether it's Watt, Howes, or somebody else that makes the team, the Garden City product believes track and field is alive and well in Manitoba.

"I think it's a really, really healthy sport. Even though it's an individual sport, it really becomes a team sport. There are your teammates and then you get to know the girls you race so often," Watt said.

"It's really healthy and everyone supports each other. So, I think that's why a lot of athletes are able to have so much success even if it's not a super widely known sport."

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Reporter

Eighteen years old and still in high school, Taylor got his start with the Free Press on June 1, 2011. Well, sort of.

[Read full biography](#)

Meet record breakers

U12 Men 1000-metre run: Rory Hayes - 3:35.33

U14 Women 1200-metre run: Emilee Rieger - 3:56.18

U16 Men 2000-metre run: Killian Naughton - 6:21.43

U18 Women 200-metre dash: Savannah Sutherland - 24:50

Women 60-metre hurdles: Savannah Sutherland - 8.42

U18 Women Long Jump: Christiana Collins - 5.65m

U20 Women 800-metre run: Margrett Watt - 2:12.91

U20 Men's Triple Jump: Daxx Turner - 14.79m

Women 60-metre dash open: Tegan Turner - 7.53

U16 Women 4x100-metre relay: Saskatoon Track & Field Club - 51.20

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