



MAKING TRACKS: With school records under their belts, steeplechaser Lang (this page) and hammer thrower Fonge (opposite) will represent Rochester at the NCAA track and field championships in May.

TRACK & FIELD

Seniors Set Sights on National Meet

Brian Lang '11 and Yaneve Fonge '11 cap record-setting careers with NCAA bids.

By Ryan Whirty

IT'S THE NATURE OF TRACK AND FIELD COMPETITION: You always want to run a little faster or throw a little farther.

Yellowjacket seniors Brian Lang '11 and Yaneve Fonge '11 are turning that drive into a trip to this spring's NCAA Division III outdoor track and field championships—Lang in the men's steeplechase and Fonge in the women's hammer throw.

In 2010, Lang, a statistics major from Baldwinsville, N.Y., placed third at the national meet, becoming the fourth Yellowjacket to earn All-America honors in the event. With the two runners who finished ahead of him now graduated, Lang comes into the 2011 outdoor campaign as one of the favorites to claim a national title.

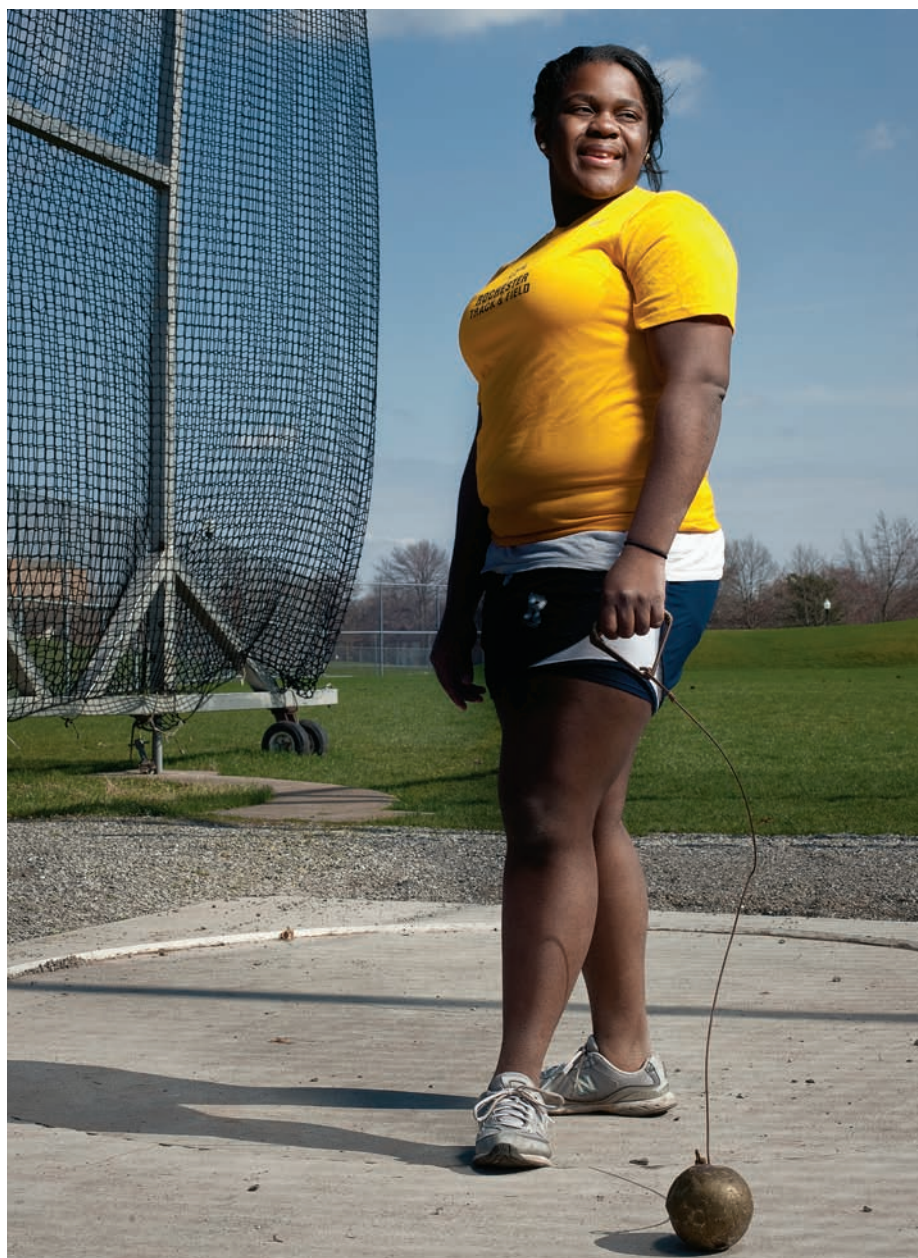
"It definitely means I'm right there," he says. "I'm a competitor for it."

Fonge, a microbiology and immunology major from Cheshire, Conn., hopes to improve on her 15th place finish last year. The holder of the Yellowjacket record for shot put, Fonge, who was a New York state finalist for a Rhodes Scholarship last fall, didn't begin competing until her sophomore year.

"Hopefully I'm on to bigger and better things," she says. "Consistency is the big thing, being focused from the start and knowing that (All-America status) is a possibility."

Sam Albert '01, '02W (MS), director of track and field, says Lang's stellar performance at last year's national championships should set the senior up for an even better 2011. "It's given him a lot of confidence going into his senior year," Albert says. "He's set some pretty high goals for himself this spring. His performance (at NCAAs last year) confirmed to him that he could compete at that level."

If the start of the 2011 season was any indication, Lang could be well on his way to achieving that goal. At the University's Alumni Track & Field Invitational in April, he smashed the school record in the steeplechase with a time of 8:56.76, a mark that automatically qualified him for the NCAAs.



That effort spurred Lang to modify his objectives for the season. "I would like to show up at nationals knowing that I've run faster than any other competitors in the field," Lang says. "That would give me a nice confidence to really go after my 'pie in the sky' goal of 8:45."

Like Lang, Fonge jumped out to a quick start in the 2011 outdoor season. At April's Alumni Invite, she won the hammer throw with a mark of 52.47 meters, which provisionally qualified her for NCAAs and fell just shy of hitting the automatic standard.

That followed a stellar performance at

the 2011 NCAA indoor championships in March, when she placed second in the nation in the 20-pound weight throw.

Albert says that Fonge will use the lessons from last season to find even more success. "Coming into her senior year, she really understands what to expect at the NCAA championships," Albert says. "She's entrenched herself as one of the best, if not the best, thrower in the region. She's getting better and better every week." **R**

Ryan Whirty writes about sports for Rochester Review.