



About Ashley: Hello fellow track fans, my name is Ashley Wright and I'm going to BLOG. Please, hold your applause until the end of my bio. It has been my pleasure to support track athletes as they pursue their Olympic dreams by serving on the USATF Foundation Board of Directors. My role in the foundation has afforded me the opportunity to meet athletes and hear their stories. There is something so inspiring by the level of commitment, talent, discipline and hard work that it takes to reach the highest level of sport. Although, results are easy to find and new records are often highlighted in the newspaper, the stories of athletes themselves aren't always available. The purpose of this blog is to share foundation news; highlight youth programs that we support; and introduce readers to the athletes.

And for those of you who care who I am (hello, mom), continue reading. As a young girl, I wanted nothing more than to be an Olympic gymnast... and you're thinking, "wrong blog topic" - just hang with me. It was through gymnastics that I learned about setting goals, discipline, time management... When such commitment is coupled with a level of natural talent - the results are inspiring. When I quit gymnastics as a junior in high school, I wanted to commit myself to another sport. I had no hand eye coordination and I was only 5'2", so by way of elimination, I landed on track and field. To be fair it wasn't really by way of elimination, I watched a movie about Gail Devers and found my new passion - track and field. Unfortunately, I was the slowest person on my track team (and no, I'm not exaggerating). After a season of cross country, my coach decided that given my gymnastics background, I should try the pole vault.

At the time, girls were not pole vaulting in Texas. My high school coach was amazing, however, and let me be a pointless member of the team - literally. I was able to compete with other girls nationally and was invited to join the University of Arkansas Track Team - GO HOGS! Being part of the Arkansas team that had future Olympians Veronica Campbell, Tyson Gay, Wallace Spearmon, Christin Wurth-Thomas, April Steiner Bennett, Amy Yoder Begley... was AMAZING and a great sense of pride. Beyond that, I'm quite boring.

I met my husband when he jumped out at me in the woods in a gorilla suit to scare me on Halloween (I was set up to be scared by a "friend"). We graduated college, moved to NYC where I was an event planner, and got married. After a year planning events, I took the natural next step into financial services. I found that I quite loved finance - go figure. Event planning didn't quite provide the background needed to go far in finance, so I went back to school to get a MBA from NYU. I recently moved back to my hometown - Austin. Here I sit in the office I share with my dad looking at Lake Austin, thinking how in the world am I going to add value to the foundation and support the sport I love and the athletes that inspire me.

All the best,

Ashley