Barnes Crowned National Champion In The Pole Vault

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WAVERLY, IA - UW-Eau Claire pole vaulter **Stephanie Barnes** *(So. -Sauk City/Sauk Prairie)* became the first outdoor pole vault national champion in school history when she won in a three-person jump off today at the NCAA Division III Outdoor Track and Field Championships hosted by Wartburg College at Walston-Hoover Stadium.

Six different qualifiers cleared 12-2.5 but were unable to clear the bar when it was raised to 12-6. Barnes along with Jen Vandermeer of Hope (MI) College and Chelsea Sherier of the University of La Verne (CA) each cleared 12-2.5 on their first attempt while the other qualifiers needed multiple attempts to clear the height.

Each finalist was unable to clear the opening height of the jump-off at 12-6. The bar was lowered to 12-4 where each finalist was again unable to clear the mark. The third attempt in the jump-off set at 12-2.5 saw Barnes clear the height as the other two finalists failed to make their attempt.

Barnes becomes the sixth outdoor national champion in school history and the first since Arlene Meinholz won the high jump and Lisa Marshall won the discus in 1995.

"I am very, very excited," said Barnes. "It's overwhelming to be a National Champion. At first I thought that it was over and I was really upset and just bawling. Then I heard about the jump off and just thought that I had a second chance to go get it. It was my first attempt in the jump off and I knew that it would be close with the other two girls, but I was very excited about the win."