

Local runner heads for Olympic trials

By **ALEX PELLEGRINO**
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Georgia Southern University head cross country coach Turena Johnson-Lane is headed to the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials after qualifying by posting a 2:40:12 running time in the Twin Cities Marathon held Oct. 5 in Minnesota.

Lane's next challenge will be at the trials, held April 3 in St. Louis, where she will compete with roughly 100 other women for the opportunity to go to the Olympics.

The top three finishers at the trials will be eligible for the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece.

Qualifying for the trials was a goal Lane spent years preparing for.

"Each season builds on the one prior. It took three years in the making to get myself to this point," said Lane. "For me to qualify for the Olympic Trials has been a long-time goal of mine realized."

Finishing in the top three at the trials and making it to the Olympics would be a tremendous feat and Lane knows the competition will be tough.

"I'm hoping for a top 20 finish — that would be a realistic goal for me. Running at the Olympics is every runner's dream, but you have to be real-

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SPECIAL PHOTO

GSU head cross county coach Turena Johnson Lane runs in the Garry Bjorklund Half Marathon in Duluth, Minn. earlier this year in preparation for the Twin Cities marathon, where she posted a time good enough to land a spot in the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials.

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istic given the caliber of athlete you are racing with," said Lane.

Runners can qualify for the marathon trials if they post a time below 2:48:00 at certain races around the country held within a specific time period.

Lane, a Minnesota native, was drawn to the Twin Cities marathon because it is held in her home state.

"I thought it would be a good chance to race with family and friends there," said Lane.

Her mom, friends from college and her husband Todd, who serves as the head women's track and field coach at GSU, cheered Lane on.

She says she felt the people

from Statesboro were cheering for her too, even though they weren't there to witness her performance.

"I am thankful for the support I get from the Statesboro Pacers (a local running group), the local running community and the Georgia Southern track and field and cross country," said Lane.

Lane has little time to celebrate her accomplishments before she has to begin training for the trials.

"I took some time off, a week to rest and relax," said Lane.

She will use the rest of October and November to build her mileage back up to 80


miles per week and get mentally focused.

In December, Lane will be in full training mode again and running about 70 to 90 miles per week.


"There's not a more compet-

itive race in the United States," said Lane, referring to the trials. "I'll be ready to compete in the trials and see how I stack up with the best in the U.S."

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