

Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Halvorson dominates women's Scottish athletics at 63rd Grandfather Games

GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN, N.C.—Aslynn Halvorson has a patient landlord.

It's not that she doesn't pay her rent on time, but rather that certain items of Scottish origin find themselves stuck on the roof.

"I've gotten the sheaf stuck on my apartment roof," said Halvorson, 27, of Anderson, S.C., referring to a 16-pound sack of hay one must loft over a 20-foot bar in Scottish heavy athletic competition. "My landlord laughed. She thinks it's the coolest thing ever and was just like, 'Really?' So, I don't practice sheaf toss at my apartment complex anymore."

When it comes to practicing for Scottish heavy athletics, like the caber toss, hammer throw and weight toss, Halvorson said one practices wherever they can.

"Basically, give me a flat space and some time," she said. "There is a middle school across the street from my apartment, and they chase me off occasionally because I put holes in the field. But literally, you find a patch of grass and hope nobody kicks you off for destroying it."

The caber toss, where athletes flip a telephone pole-sized log end over end, is a little more difficult to facilitate.

"You almost can never practice caber, because where are you going to hold a tree?" Halvorson asked.

Yet practice — even lack thereof — paid off at the 63rd Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, where Halvorson finished first overall in women's Scottish heavy athletics, placing first in four of six events on Friday, July 13.

Halvorson won the clachneart (16-pound stone thrown for distance), the 28- and 14-pound weights (also thrown for distance) and the 28-pound weight for height at 14'. She placed second in the 14-pound hammer throw and third in the caber toss.

Halvorson finished first overall in 2017's Grandfather Games, as well. However, the 2018 outing is only her second time competing at Grandfather.

“This was my second win and my second time coming here,” she said. “I’m still very new to this, but I’ve had some awesome people around me who have really helped me grow very quickly, and there’s just some God-given talent. Part of it is that, and then just people willing to help me out.”

Originally from Charlotte, N.C., Halvorson attended undergraduate and graduate school at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, where she competed in track and field, focusing on the shot put, discus and hammer throw. In high school, she’d set a state high record for a discus throw by a female.

“I was a former track athlete at UT, and one of my friends, Jeremy Wallace, really got me interested after I finished my track career, so that was kind of how I got into this as something to do, and I fell in love with it,” she said.

Halvorson’s career teaching kinesiology — the study of the mechanics of body movements — at Anderson University also gives her unique insight into Scottish athletics.

“That’s the other fun thing about this, the biomechanics,” she said. “It’s just so different, and it really is fascinating. The training’s very different, because not only do you have to be explosive like in the (caber toss), but you need to have endurance for things like hammer throw, and you can’t just be strong or explosive or fast; you have to be all of them, so it’s absolutely fascinating.”

What Halvorson loves most about the sport, however, is the camaraderie.

“First and foremost, I absolutely love the people,” she said. “The camaraderie’s amazing, especially coming from a track-and-field background, where it was kind of like looking out for yourselves all the time. In (Scottish athletics), it’s much more relaxed and supportive.”

Halvorson particularly enjoys competing and spending time with her fellow top-finishers, Amanda Ford and Gwen Campbell.

Ford, 35, of Wilmington, N.C., finished second overall, while Campbell, 24, of Raleigh, N.C., came in third overall.

“I joke that my friend, Gwen, is my unicorn, because I see her at almost every games,” Halvorson said. “We talk almost every day about training and about life. And it’s a privilege when Amanda’s around, because always push each other.”

And it was no different at this outing, where Ford set a new field record in the 14-pound hammer throw with a distance of 98’5.5”, while also scoring perfectly in the caber toss.

“It was pretty amazing, because I love the hammer,” Ford said. “But this year was really tough. I knew Asylnn was going to come with a big game, and she sure did. We were tied all

the way up to that last event (28-pound weight for height). She killed it, like always. It was good.”

Final Results

Clachneart

1. Aslynn Halvorson – 38’4”
2. Amanda Ford – 32’5.5”
3. Gwen Campbell – 28’6”

28-pound Weight Throw (distance)

1. Aslynn Halvorson – 43’6”
2. Amanda Ford – 34’8.5”
3. Gwen Campbell – 30’8.5”

28-pound Weight Throw (height)

1. Aslynn Halvorson – 14’ (second attempt)
2. Amanda Ford – 13’ (first attempt)
3. (tie) Gwen Campbell – 13’ (second attempt)
3. (tie) Heather McKenzie – 13’ (second attempt)

14-pound Weight Throw (distance)

1. Aslynn Halvorson – 81’8”
2. Amanda Ford – 66’2”
3. Gwen Campbell – 54’10.5”

14-pound Hammer

1. Amanda Ford – 98’5.5” (field record)
2. Aslynn Halvorson – 81’6”
3. Gwen Campbell – 71’6”

Caber Toss

1. Amanda Ford – 12:00
2. Gwen Campbell – 12:15, 12:30
3. Aslynn Halvorson – 12:15, 40°

The 63rd Grandfather Mountain Highland Games took place July 12-15 at Grandfather Mountain in Linville, N.C. To learn more about the Highland Games, visit www.gmhg.org.

The not-for-profit Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation strives to inspire conservation of the natural world by helping guests explore, understand and value the wonders of Grandfather Mountain. For more information, call (800) 468-7325, or visit www.grandfather.com to plan a trip.

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CUTLINES:

071418_GFM_GMHG_womens_Halvorson_1_SS: Aslynn Halvorson, 27, of Anderson, S.C., finished first overall in the women's Scottish heavy athletics competition Friday, July 13, at the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. The Games took place July 12-15 at Grandfather Mountain in Linville, N.C. Photo by Skip Sickler | Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation

071418_GFM_GMHG_womens_Halvorson_2_SS: Aslynn Halvorson turns the caber at the 63rd Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, which took place July 12-15 at Grandfather Mountain in Linville, N.C. Photo by Skip Sickler | Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation

071418_GFM_GMHG_womens_Halvorson_3_SS: Aslynn Halvorson spins to throw the hammer weight at the 63rd Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. Photo by Skip Sickler | Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation

071418_GFM_GMHG_womens_Ford_1_SS: Amanda Ford, 35, of Wilmington, N.C., prepares to turn the caber Friday, July 14, at the 63rd Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in Linville, N.C. Her turn resulted in a perfect score, and Ford placed second overall in the women's competition. Photo by Skip Sickler | Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation

071418_GFM_GMHG_womens_Ford_2_SS: Amanda Ford winds to throw the hammer at the 63rd Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. Ford scored a new field record with a distance of 98'5.5". Photo by Skip Sickler | Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation

071418_GFM_GMHG_womens_Ford_3_SS: Amanda Ford placed second overall in July 13's women's Scottish heavy athletics competition at the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. Photo by Skip Sickler | Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation

071418_GFM_GMHG_womens_Campbell_1_SS: Gwen Campbell, 24, of Raleigh, N.C., throws the hammer at the 63rd Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. Photo by Skip Sickler | Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation

071418_GFM_GMHG_womens_Campbell_2_SS: Gwen Campbell placed third overall in the women's Scottish heavy athletics competition at the 63rd Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, held July 12-15 at Grandfather Mountain in Linville, N.C. Photo by Skip Sickler | Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation

071418_GFM_GMHG_womens_Campbell_2_SS: Gwen Campbell prepares to turn the caber at the 63rd Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. Photo by Skip Sickler | Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation