

**Subject:** McPherson And Kynard Take High Jump At Hy-Vee Titles  
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## **DRAKE ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS | MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **McPherson And Kynard Take High Jump At Hy-Vee Titles**

**WAUKEE, Iowa** - Drake Relay's Director Brian Brown's goal for the 2014 Drake Relays presented by Hy-Vee was to raise the bar, and on Monday night at the Hy-Vee in Waukee, Iowa, the Relays did just that. The first ever High Jump at Hy-Vee drew a crowd of approximately 1,000 people to watch 10 of the world's best high jumpers compete in an exhibition event.

"The fans were so awesome," said Brigetta Barrett, one of the night's many premier athletes. "To see how many fans who had never seen a high jump competition before be so engaged for more than an hour shows that people love events like this,"

Inika McPherson and Erik Kynard came away as the evening's winners, soaring through the air in the middle of the Hy-Vee produce section. McPherson, the two-time women's USA Indoor Champion, cleared the bar at 6-2 while Kynard cleared at 7-6. While both could now technically be considered world record holders for a high jump in a grocery store, their wins were not easy to come by. The competition was fierce on both the men's and women's sides, with Olympic medalists, world champions and Drake Relays champions all in attendance.

McPherson made an anticipated entrance after passing on the first two heights and waiting until the bar was raised to 5-11 to compete. Warming up with her sunglasses on inside, McPherson's presence alone was a force to be reckoned with. World Championship silver medalist and 2012 Olympic silver medalist Brigetta Barrett started off hot, clearing the bar at 5-7, 5-9 and 5-11 in her first tries, but after just barely clearing her first jump, McPherson was in the hunt for the win.

Sharon Day-Monroe, Levern Spencer and Chaunte Lowe each performed well until the bar was raised to 6-0.5, a height at which they all missed and were eliminated from the competition. McPherson and Barrett each knocked the

bar down on their first tries at 6-2, but on her second try, McPherson cleared the bar. Barrett missed on her final two attempts to give McPherson the title. Despite being the shortest female athlete in the field, McPherson came away with the highest jump for the women. She was not, however, able to tie or surpass her own personal best height of 6-4.5.

“It was an amazing atmosphere. They [the crowd] were very supportive and energetic,” McPherson said. “It got me hyped and ready to jump. I loved it.”

On the men’s side, the competition was tight with the final results coming down to a tiebreaker on misses. Trevor Barry, Donald Thomas and Dusty Jonas ran in from the right side, while Derek Drouin and Erik Kynard ran in from the left. At Monday’s event, the left side proved dominant.

Drouin went three-for-three on jumps at heights of 6-9, 6-11 and 7-1. Kynard followed closely behind, clearing the first two and eventually clearing the 7-1 bar on his second attempt.

From there, the two went back and forth. Both cleared 7-2.5 – Kynard on his first attempt, Drouin on his second; 7-4.25 – Kynard on his second attempt, Drouin on his third; and 7-5 – Kynard on his first attempt, Drouin on his second. But at a height of 7-6, just one inch under the current Drake Relays stadium record of 7-7 held by Brian Brown, both Kynard and Drouin were flawless. Each cleared the height without any indication of touching the bar.

The competition came down to a final height of 7-7.5 – an attempt to better Brown’s record. Kynard and Drouin decided to each make one final jump at the bar, but each came up short with Kynard edging Drouin on misses.

“I didn’t plan on jumping that high, but Derek wouldn’t quit,” Kynard said. “We’re both too competitive to bow out so that’s why we agreed to take one last attempt.”

Overall the event was a tremendous success for both the athletes and for those in attendance.

“This is exactly what the sport of track and field needs,” Barrett said. “We need to be more spectator friendly and find ways to draw people in. This is a good step.”

Drake Relays festivities will continue on Tuesday at the Grand Blue Mile in downtown Des Moines beginning at 6 p.m. The event will also be the USA 1-Mile Road Championship for the second straight year with the women’s title race starting at 7:15 p.m. and the men’s following. For more information on the Grand Blue Mile, visit [www.GrandBlueMile.com](http://www.GrandBlueMile.com).

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