

# Augusta’s Julia Clukey named to USA Luge ‘C’ team

BY ERNIE CLARK  
BDN STAFF

BANGOR — Julia Clukey was in the Queen City on Monday morning, bringing her “Julia Inspires” speaking tour to more than 400 students at John Bapst Memorial High School.

The Augusta resident and member of the 2010 U.S. Olympic luge team not only delivered a motivational message encouraging the students to pursue their dreams, she got some news related to her own career pursuits.

Clukey was named to

USA Luge’s national “C” luge team, helping keep in place her hopes to qualify for the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

Selection to the national “C” team means USA Luge believes Clukey has potential to earn a World Cup or Olympic berth, but after not competing on the World Cup circuit last winter, she needs to achieve cer-



Clukey

tain standards in the sport in order to advance up the U.S. team ladder.

Clukey will receive partial funding to support her efforts as part of the “C” national team from USA Luge and will be required to participate in all of the organization’s upcoming senior camps.

Clukey, who finished 17th in women’s singles at the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver, British Columbia, has a World Cup silver medal to her credit in February 2013 and missed making the U.S. team for the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, Russia, by

13 thousandths of a second at the final qualifying event.

More recently, Clukey earned her degree in engineering technology and electronics from DeVry University earlier this year.

The 30-year-old Clukey is set to begin training for her 19th season of luge.

USA Luge announced its national team that will participate in the 2016-17 World Cup and World Championship season, a squad that captured a USA Luge-record 18 World Cup medals last winter and is led by members of the national “A” team.

The “A” group is led by Erin Hamlin, 2014 Olympic bronze medalist and 2009 world champion; Chris Mazdzer, the third-ranked man in the final 2015-16 World Cup standings; Summer Britcher, who tied for the most tour victories last season with three; the rising Tucker West, who collected two World Cup medals and was the U23 World Champion; and Emily Sweeney, a World Cup silver medalist.

Although USA Luge’s 2016-17 schedule has not been formalized, the season will be highlighted by the World Championships

in Igls, Austria. Also, sleds are anticipated to hit the ice on the new 2018 Olympic track in South Korea.

While in Bangor, Clukey also honored John Bapst student Abigail Bowman with the Julia Clukey Courage Award.

Clukey presents the award to a student at each stop on her speaking tour of high schools and middle schools around the state. Bowman was recognized for persevering through difficult times in her personal life while maintaining a high grade-point average and positive attitude.

## Ortiz

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2004. It was something that was impossible, impossible because the game before they scored (19) runs,” Ortiz said. “I am not going to lie to you: I wasn’t expecting to come back because of what happened the game before.

But as a professional, you have to come in and do what you’ve got to do. But if I tell you now that I thought we’d beat them after we were down 3-0, I’m lying to you.

“When you look at it, even to think about it, it’s impossible. With a team like they had that year? I’m serious — impossible. But it’s not because it happened.”

It’s not like Ortiz did it himself, but he was the fulcrum for the momentum swing with his game-winning homer in the 12th inning of Game 4 and his walk-off single in the 14th inning of Game 5.

That Ortiz would be part of such a comeback could be forecast by his career path. He was actually cut by the Twins after the 2002 season. “I was a guy who was an underdog, released by an organization. I was a guy with tons of people doubting me,” Ortiz said.

“I am not a five-tool guy, you know what I am saying? I play OK defense and I can throw a little bit. I am not fast. I am probably not in the top 10 hitters in the game. But I showed up when it matters, you know? That’s my tool. That’s my tool. I take it personal. I mentally feel like I’m better when I am at the plate than anyone else. That’s my mentality — I am not saying that I am — but when I am at the plate I’ll take my chances against

anybody. To me, I want people to look at me and think ‘yes I can.’”

“When he’s done, he will be on the Mount Rushmore of Red Sox,” longtime Sox broadcaster Joe Castiglione said. “It’s not just performance, though that is deserving enough. His personality and passion have made him special here.

As for ‘yes I can?’ It’s more like ‘yes we can’ when it comes to the Boston fan base. For decades each Red Sox season came with a great hope and the loathing of the stretch where it would ultimately fall apart. Today — after World Series title in 2004, 2007 and 2013 — the fans in New England can see every season ending in a Champagne celebration in the clubhouse.

“Maybe they didn’t before but they believe now,” Ortiz said. “It happened and not once, not two, but three times.”

And over that time Ortiz, the ultimate postseason prime-time player, earned a spot in the New England consciousness as more than a player. He felt it, too. That’s why when the Red Sox returned to Fenway after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, Ortiz couldn’t help but pick up the microphone during the per-game ceremony and, unrehearsed, address the crowd.

His memorable words: “This is our [expletive deleted] city. And nobody’s going to dictate our freedom. Stay strong.”

“There are a lot of people who come up to me and thank me for the World Series, say their grandpa or mother or wife or father or grandma loved the Red Sox and went in peace because we finally won,” Ortiz said. “Just as many thank

me for what I said that day.

“It wasn’t David Ortiz speaking out there,” he added. “It was a citizen that was feeling the pain and suffering just like everyone else. And I guarantee, if you’d pulled anyone from the stands and put the microphone to them, they would have said almost exactly the same as I did.”

“It’s hard to imagine another athlete, especially in these days, doing something like that,” Castiglione said. “Some of the guys who were very brave in the late 1960s and spoke out for civil rights were amazing. But doing that right there? That’s part of what makes David so special.”

When Ortiz is ultimately assessed in the pantheon of Red Sox players by traditional measures, he may be the great but not the greatest. He doesn’t have the .344 lifetime average of Williams or the 3,419 hits and seven Gold Gloves of Yastrzemski. He doesn’t have the three Cy Youngs that Clemens earned of the two that Martinez chalked up in an exceptional seven seasons.

He will always be shadowed unfairly for playing the designated hitter position. And there is the allegation that he tested positive for a still-unnamed performance-enhancing drug in 2003 survey testing before the substances were illegal in baseball, though that almost never seems to bear mentioned.

Outside Fenway Park there are statues of Williams and Yastrzemski. It’s because they made singular contributions unlike any other. Ortiz did that too, made the impossible in New England possible. One day he should stand forever with them as well.



BOB DECHIARA | USA TODAY SPORTS

Boston Red Sox first baseman Hanley Ramirez (left) reacts with catcher Christian Vazquez after Vazquez hit a two-run home run during the seventh inning against the New York Yankees at Fenway Park on Sunday.

## Red Sox

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Vazquez’s career homers have been two-run, tiebreaking shots.

— Second baseman Dustin Pedroia, 0-for-8 in the series coming in, singled his first three times up Sunday before right fielder

Aaron Hicks robbed him of a fourth hit with a sliding catch. He has 11 multi-hit games and leads the team with 35 hits.

— Righty Carson Smith, yet to pitch this season but counted on to be a key cog in the Red Sox bullpen, will be activated for Tuesday’s night’s game against the White Sox in Chicago. The club will go with 13 pitchers as Smith eases back

into the picture. He had been sidelined due to a right forearm strain.

— Infielder Marco Hernandez, just recalled from Triple-A on Saturday, was returned to Pawtucket after Sunday night’s game. He appeared as a defensive replacement Saturday, and he went 1-for-2 with a walk on April 17 in his only other major league action of the season.

## Koch

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race wouldn’t be easy, but it was definitely possible to finish well in my heat.”

Koch finished fourth in the second of six heats of the 800 and had the eighth-fastest time. Chrishuna Williams, running unattached in the first heat, led the field in 2:00.58.

The best 32 qualifiers will be invited to compete at the Olympic Trials set July 1-10 at Eugene, Oregon. The qualifying mark is 2:03.0.

“It was a little windy, but otherwise perfect conditions,” Koch said. “I went out with the mindset of doing my best and racing smart splits. I was proud of all the hard workout days and discipline with my training paying off.”

Two weeks earlier, Koch had run the third-fastest 800 in Division II history (2:03.58) at the Mt. SAC Relays in California.

Koch won the NCAA Division II indoor 800 title earlier this year after taking runner-up honors in the event at the outdoor championships in 2015.



CONTRIBUTED BY KYLE TERWILLEGAR

Carsyn Koch’s 800-meter time of 2:03.58 ran at the Mt. SAC Relays on April 16 is the third-fastest in NCAA Div. II women’s outdoor track and field history.

Koch continues to build on an exceptional career at Washburn, where she competed in five different sports including basketball, soccer, cross-country and outdoor track.

“I am excited for Carsyn.

She is a tremendous young lady. She has a special God-given talent and the work ethic and focus to compete at a very high level,” said Cedarville coach Jeff Boler.

“She is humble, but at the

same time is confident. This is so important as she has been thrown into such competitive races this early in her running experiences,” he added.

Brown returns to podium

Bethanie Brown of Waterville has spent the last two years battling illness and injuries.

However, the redshirt sophomore at Iowa State demonstrated that she still has plenty of good runs left in her.

Appearing in only her second outdoor meet since 2014, Brown used a strong final mile to win the 5,000 meters at the Drake Relays in Des Moines, Iowa. Brown posted a time of 16:25.19 to win by 3.19 seconds.

The performance qualified her for the Big 12 Championships on May 12 and appears to have a shot at qualifying for the NCAA West Preliminary meet on May 26.

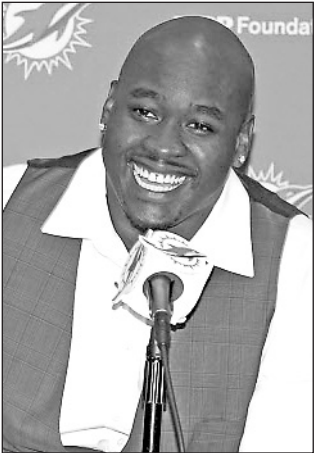
Brown was a 17-time state champion in cross country and track at Waterville High. Upon arriving at Iowa State, she earned Division I All-America status in cross-country in 2013, when she was the Big 12 Newcomer of the Year.

## Tunsil not expected to enter NFL’s drug program

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Miami Dolphins offensive tackle Laremy Tunsil, who slipped to No. 13 after a video surfaced on social media right before the NFL Draft got underway, is not expected to begin his pro career under the league’s substance-abuse program.

A source told ESPN that the rookie is expected to get a clean slate from the NFL but the league will closely monitor and support Tunsil in the event intervention is needed.



Laremy Tunsil

The Ole Miss offensive tackle’s draft stock plummeted — including being passed over by the Baltimore Ravens with the No. 6 overall pick — amid a series of social media posts on allegedly hacked accounts belonging to him just minutes before the start of the draft.

A video posted on Twitter showed him smoking marijuana through a bong while wearing a gas mask.

The Dolphins and Tunsil confirmed the video was from two years ago.

“I do not have a drug problem,” Tunsil told the Miami media on Friday. “You can check all my college tests. I never failed one.”

There is a “behavior” clause in the NFL’s collective bargaining agreement that made it possible for Tunsil to enter Stage 1 of the program but the league will give Tunsil a fresh start, according to ESPN.

The 21-year-old Tunsil admits he is coming to Miami with a lot to prove.

“Don’t question my character,” Tunsil said. “You can’t judge a book by its cover. I’m a good person. I’m a laid-back guy. I don’t do much.”

Dolphins owner Steve Ross said he wasn’t discouraged from drafting Tunsil.

“I think a lot of work was done for months and months,” Ross said. “Two hours before the draft [the video is released], it’s totally someone out to get the guy. It’s not a question of this guy changed overnight. And the work we’ve done on him, the people we talked to, and even subsequently we continued that, and meeting the kid you know this a good kid. It’s going to be a great choice.”

In addition to the video posted, screenshots surfaced on Tunsil’s Instagram account Thursday night of a text conversation he allegedly had with Ole Miss director of football operations John Miller in which Tunsil asked for money to help his mother pay recent electric bills.

## Shoppe

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So he has been taking a pill and a liquid three times per day in addition to his various heart medications.

So far, so good.

“I feel good. I work out all the time. I enjoy doing two ballgames in a day,” he said. “I’ll keep umpiring as long as the coaches and athletic

directors will have me.”

For 25 years, Shoppe used to umpire both baseball and softball games.

“But I was working every day so I decided to get out of it,” said Shoppe, who also refereed soccer games and has been a volleyball official for the past 12 years.

The softball assigner, Sheridan Davis, contacted him four years ago and told him they had an umpire shortage in softball. So

Shoppe returned to do just softball in the spring.

He began refereeing basketball games when he was a freshman in high school.

“We would referee the girls games. Girls basketball was a club sport back then,” said Shoppe, who has refereed state championship games in five sports.

He still referees summer league soccer games, too.

He will take a week off to

visit his 4½-year-old granddaughter, Kylie Rae Pickard, in Florida beginning Friday.

“She will tell me what to do for a week,” joked Shoppe.

When he returns, he’ll be right back on the softball field.

“I’ll be back a week from Friday, and I’ll probably have games on Saturday,” said Shoppe, who wouldn’t have it any other way.