

Sophomore runner Paige Callahan goes the distance

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Sophomore [Paige Callahan](#) had no idea what pace she was running during the 5,000-meter race at the University of Washington Invitational on Jan. 25. She didn't know if she was anywhere close to breaking the Tulane record. She didn't even know what the record was. All she knew was that, with 800 meters left, she was starting to feel the burn.



Sophomore Paige Callahan, who in January set the second-fastest time in school history for the 5,000 meters, will compete on Saturday (March 2) at the Tulane Team Challenge. (Photo from Tulane Athletics)

Clutching the walls of the UW Dempsey Center after the race, she was shocked to see the numbers 16:59.70 next to her name. Her previous best was an 18:39.46, set last year at the Frank Sevigne Husker Invitational while battling two stress fractures.

The time bested Aubrey Phillips' previous Tulane indoor record of 17:05.31, and stands as the second-fastest in Tulane history. Only All-American Hanne Lyngstad has run faster, with a 1998 outdoor mark of 16:30.47.

"I pushed my limits in that," says Callahan, a 5-foot-2-inch distance star from Annapolis, Md. "I've wanted to break that wall before, but it's so hard because you always keep something in reserve. I'm not a number cruncher so when they were calling out numbers, I had no idea what pace we were going."

Named Cross Country Runner of the Year by the Louisiana Sports Writers Association as a freshman last year, Callahan was sidelined with stress fractures for the track seasons. This season she is eager to finally prove herself on the track, injury-free.

With the outdoor track season now under way, she will race the 1500 meters at this weekend's home meet, the Tulane Team Challenge at Tad Gormley Stadium on Saturday (March 3), and looks forward to the 10,000 meters at spring break's Stanford Invitational.

The Palo Alto, Calif., meet is famed for producing fast distance times, and Callahan has her eye on another record ? Phillips' 2008 school record mark in the 10K, 34:53.01.

Johanna Gretschel received a bachelor's degree with an English major from Tulane in 2012, and she is in the master's degree program.