The concept of a major track and field meet at the University of Kansas was first espoused by legendary Kansas football coach John Outland. Outland grew up in the East and became heavily involved with the Penn Relays. It was Outland’s urging to then athletics director and basketball coach Phog Allen that a major Midwest competition could be successful.

With the construction of Memorial Stadium in 1921, equipped with a quarter-mile track, plans were put in motion for the event. On April 29, 1923, the first Kansas Relays under the direction of Outland, Allen and Kansas track coach Karl Schlade-mean, was conducted. More than 600 athletes from across the nation competed. Outland became known as the father of the Kansas Relays. The first decade of the Kansas Relays saw the participation of such outstanding performers as Tom Poor, Jim Bausch and Glenn Cunningham of Kansas, Ed Weir of Nebraska, Jack Elder of Notre Dame and Tom Churchill of Oklahoma.

Poor won the first Relays high jump at 6-0 1/4, and later placed fourth at the 1924 Olympics in Paris, France. Weir, a Cornhusker football star, set a world record (15.0) in the 120 high hurdles. Churchill and Bausch, also football stars, won consecutive decathlons in 1928-29 and 1931-32, respectively. Cunningham dominated the distance events in the mid-1930s, winning the mile run in 1934-35, and the two-mile in 1932-33-36. Bausch and Cunningham both competed in the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics, with Bausch winning the gold in the decathlon.

In 1936 Glen Morris of the Denver Athletic Club broke the American record in the decathlon with 7,576 points, defeating Kansas Olympian Clyde Coffman and Chicago’s Jay Berwanger, college football’s first Heisman Trophy winner.

The early days of the Relays brought some of the top names in refereeing and officiating. Dr. James Naismith, known as the father of basketball, Kansas basketball All-American Adolph Rupp, Notre Dame football coach Knute Rockne and famed Kansas and Michigan football coach Fielding Yost appeared.

The 1940s ushered in the retirement of Cunningham who ran his last Relays in 1940. World War II made a major impact on the nation and caused the cancellation of the track event from 1943-45. The Relays were rekindled with fire in 1946 as Harrison Dillard of tiny Baldwin-Wallace College (Ohio) won the 120 high hurdles in 1946 and 1948, with the latter being a world record. The Relays were in full stride in the 1950s with the presence of Kansas head coach Bill Easton, who came from Drake in 1948. It was the beginning of the Jayhawks’ dominance in the conference and Midwest relays circuit. Two top Kansas athletes came in the form of weightman Al Oerter and distance ace Wes Santee. Oerter, who went on to win four Olympic golds, won consecutive Relays shot put titles in 1956-57-58. Santee, who followed in Cunningham’s footsteps, became the only athlete to win the most outstanding performer award at the Kansas, Drake and Texas Relays. Santee won the Kansas Relays title in 1952 and 1954, and registered the second fastest American time ever in the mile in 1954.

Also a part of the Relays was the state of Kansas interscholastic meet featuring Sunflower State high school competition. The event began in 1904, and was split between large and small school classes. The division was dropped in 1958 and the competition among schools of all sizes produced some of the best high school marks at that time. While the state of Kansas began competitions among the various classes later on, the Kansas Relays has still retained the high school portion of the meet. High school athletes from Kansas and neighboring states still compete.

The 1960s saw a changing of the guard in Kansas track and field as Easton was replaced by Bob Timmons as head coach in 1965. Kansas continued its dominance of the conference with the appearance of Wichita, Kan., native Jim Ryun. Perhaps the most decorated Jayhawk track athlete ever, Ryun has four Kansas Relays most outstanding performer titles to his credit (1966-67-69-71) for a Relays best. In 1967 Ryun set what is still the Relays record in the mile run at 3:54.94.

The 1970s saw the world’s top sprinters come to the Kansas Relays as Missouri and professional football standout Mel Gray won three university titles in the 100-yard dash (1969-70-71). In the open 100-yard dash, Olympians John Carlos, Herb Washington and Jimmy Crockett each took titles in the early 1970s.

One familiar competitor from tiny Graceland (Iowa) College who later gained fame as a 1976 Olympic gold medalist was decathlete Bruce Jenner. The 1971 titlist as a collegian, he also won the 1974 crown. His 8,240 points stood as a record until 1983.

Female athletes made their first appearance in 1962 in a limited number of events. By 1976 a full array of women’s events were sponsored. Perhaps the most dominant performer ever on the women’s side was former Nebraska standout and Olympian Melinee Ottey. She won most outstanding performer titles in 1981-82-83, and still owns the 100 and 200-meter dash records. Former Iowa State standout and Olympic gold medalist Naval El Moutawakel of Morocco set a collegiate record in the 400-meter hurdles in 1984.

The 1980s continued the stream of top athletes to Mount Oread, including a contingent from the Soviet Union in 1983. Many of the top Olympians made the historic journey to Lawrence and smashed several records. Pole vaulter Joe Dial set the university and invitational vault records en route to being named the men’s outstanding performer in 1985 and 1987. Dial also was the first high school athlete to be named as the Relays’ outstanding performer when he competed for Marlow (Okla.) High in 1980. 1996 KU Olympian Scott Huffman etched his name in the Relays history book by being named the outstanding performer in 1988.

A combination of speed and distance marked the Kansas Relays in the 1990s. After Drake sprinter Kevin Little and Kansas State All-America thrower Angie Miller were recognized as the top performers in 1990, Barton County Community College won four of the next six outstanding performer awards during the 1991-93 meets. Barton County’s Inez Turner took the honor twice, winning back-to-back in 1992 and 1993.

Kansas looked strong in both team and individual accomplishments during the Relays of the late 90’s. Former Jayhawk All-American Michael Cox was named the men’s outstanding performer three times in that span. He earned his first two awards in 1992 and 1995 as a member of the KU track team, and in 1996, Cox returned to win his third award after finishing with a time of 3:59.20 and becoming the first Kansas runner to run the mile in under four minutes at the Kansas Relays since Jim Ryun did so in 1972. In 1994, KU swept the men’s and women’s collegiate team titles. Also, Natasha Sphaer became the first Kansas woman to be named outstanding performer. Jayhawk hurdler Dawn Steele-Clavens duplicated Sphaer’s effort by winning the award in 1995. The 1996 meet added a new chapter to the Relays’ history as Columbia Healthcare signed on to become the Kansas Relays title sponsor. The 1996 Relays also featured a new event as the women’s pole vault was held for the first time. Stacy Dragila, the top-ranked vaulter in America, won the event and set the American record by clearing 13-6 1/2. Her effort enabled her to be named the 1996 women’s outstanding performer.
The 1997 event was a very successful one for KU. Not only did the team earn several individual titles, but the men were named university relays champion. 1997 marked the inaugural running of the women's 3,000-meter steeplechase, and the event also saw Kevin Toth (unattached), who was named the men's most outstanding performer, shatter the Relays' 24-year old shot put record. Toth's throw of 71-2 1/2 made him the 1997 world leader.

The 2000 track and field season marked the 73rd running of the relays and a field of world class athletes would join the relays to bring in the new millennium. After a break in competition due to construction on Memorial Stadium, the Kansas Relays returned in 2000 with the excitement and energy that Kansas Relays fans had enjoyed from years past. The eventual 2000 Olympic gold-medal winner in the 100 meters, Maurice Greene, set a new stadium and meet record in the sprint relay with a blazing time of 38.45 seconds.

Kansas' Andrea Branson, Scott Russell and Andy Morris highlighted the Kansas track and field team in 2000. Branson took home the gold with her personal best and record-breaking 13-10 in the pole vault, while teammate Morris won the decathlon tallying 7,101 points over the two-day event. Junior Scott Russell also scored for Kansas at the Relays, as he won the hammer throw and javelin.

The 2001 Relays, 'An Olympic Return,' saw some big names make their way back to their old stomping grounds. Former Kansas greats Jim Ryun and Wes Santee excited the crowd with a traditional lap around Memorial Stadium, as several Kansas legends and Olympians including Billy Mills and Jim Hershberger gathered to sign autographs for fans and present awards to the winning teams.

Day three of the Relays was a day of record breaking performances. Eight Kansas Relays records were broken along with a Memorial Stadium record in the vault. The day was highlighted by Kansas State's Rebekah Green. Other notable records included the men's 4x110 shuttle relay (Nebraska, 59.10), the women's 4x100 shuttle relay (Nebraska, 54.02), the girls' javelin throw (Kendra Wecker, 166-7), the girls' 300 meter hurdles (Julie Curtis, 43.26), women's sprint medley (SMS, 3:50.74), girls' DMR (Jenks, Okla., 12:29.29) and the girls' pole vault (Lindsey Bourouis, 11-11 3/4).

The Jayhawks field events were led by junior Andrea Bulat who won the javelin with a toss of 154-1. On the track, junior Brian Blachly took first place honors in the 1,500 meter run with a time of 3:50.42. The 2002 Kansas Relays marked the 75th anniversary of the event. After a lightning strike and a 90 minute delay due to inclement weather, the 2002 Kansas Relays officials were forced to cancel the final day of action midway through competition after an exciting three and a half days of action. In total, over 40 events were cancelled because of the rain, including all of the invitation- al running events.

Despite being cut short, the Kansas athletics got off to a good start when senior Scott Russell won his second Kansas Relays hammer title with a heave of 206-5. Lake Steinbrink finished fourth in the unseeded 800 meter run with a season-best time of 1:55.90. Sophomore John DiCalogero took sixth in the unseeded 1,500 meter run, clocking a time of 4:06.26. Freshman Chris Jones, the Big 12 leader in the 3,000 meter run, ran the 5,000 meter run for the first time this season, finishing seventh with a time of 15:10.54.

The Jayhawks picked up two first-place finishes on the third day, winning both the men's and women's distance medley races. The team of Brian Blachly, Jabari Wamble, Brandon Hodges and Charlie Gruber teamed for the victory on the men's side with a time of 9:54.88. The women’s foursome of Laura Lavoie, Jabari Wamble, Brandon Hodges and Charlie Gruber teamed for the victory on the women’s side with a time of 11:42.21. KU also picked up a provisional qualifier as Renaud Shirley leaped 51-9 in the triple jump.

On the final day, Anson Jackson competed in the prelims of the 110 meter hurdles and picked up the fastest qualifying time, 14.37. Brooklyn Hann qualified for finals in the 100 meter hurdles posting a time of 14.45. Despite the untimely weather, five high school girls’ Kansas Relays records were broken, including the 3200m run, the distance medley, the discus, the 800m relay and the 1600m sprint medley relay. The Kansas Relays high school boys’ 800m relay record and the women's triple jump record were also broken. In addition, eleven NCAA provisional and three automatic marks were recorded in the three-day event.

The 2003 Kansas Relays were highlighted with record-breaking performances and exciting competition. Kevin Toth threw a massive 74-4.50, which was the best throw in the world since 1988 and a new Relays record. Andrea Dutoit also broke a Kansas Relays record with a vault of 13-10 1/2. There were three high school girls records broken and two in boys competition. For the Kansas men, sophomore Jeremy Mims took first in the 800m run with a regional-qualifying time of 1:50.51, junior T.J. Hacker won the high jump (6-9 1/2), senior Jeremy Hull took second in the pole vault (16-4 3/4) and senior Anson Jackson came in third in the 110m hurdles (14.02). The Kansas women were led by sophomore Brooklyn Hall's first-place finish in the 100m hurdles (14.21), freshmen Yvonne Calmert's third-place finish in the pole vault (12.0) and sophomore Kim Clark's fifth-place finish in the 800m run (2:14.79). Toth and Dutoit were announced as the Most Outstanding Performers at the conclusion of the 2003 meet.

A total of 16 records were broken or tied over three days of outstanding competition at the 77th annual Kansas Relays. The amazing weather and record-breaking performances made way for one of the most exciting weekends the Relays have ever seen.

Nathan Leeper and Austa Sukiyte were named most outstanding performers of the meet. Leeper recorded a first place finish in the men's high jump with a mark of 7-05.75, which stands as the second best in the world this year. Sukiyte won the women’s long jump with a mark of 20-04.25 and took home the shot put title with a throw of 25-02.25.

Fort Collins high school senior Sarah Stevens and KC Central high school senior Julius Illes were named most outstanding high school performers of the meet. Stevens set two Kansas Relays records in the shot put and discus with marks of 48-08.25 and 156-06, respectively. Illes tied the Kansas Relays record in the pole vault with a time of 37.42 and won the 110-meter hurdles title with a time of 14.23.

This year marks the 78th anniversary of the Kansas Relays and promises to be an unforgettable event.
### 100-Meters
- **(M) Leo Bookman, Kansas, 2004**
- **(W) Marlene Ottey, Nebraska, 1982**

### 200-Meters
- **(M) James Mallard, Alabama, 1980**
- **(W) Marlene Ottey, Nebraska, 1981**

### 400-Meters
- **(M) Devon Morris, Wayland Baptist, 1986**
- **(W) Lisa Knowles, Oklahoma State, 1986**

### 800-Meters
- **(M) Victor Lacis, unattached, 2000**
- **(W) Leann Warren, Oregon, 1981**

### 1,500-Meters
- **(M) Rick Wohlhuter, Chicago Track Club, 1976**
- **(W) Nadesha Baldugnia, USSR, 1983**

### 3,000-Meters
- **(W) Svetlana Ulmasova, USSR, 1983**

### 3,000-Meter Steeplechase
- **(M) Randy Smith, Unattached, 1976**
- **(W) Korene Hinds, Unattached, 2004**

### 5,000-Meters
- **(M) Kipsubai Koskei, Unattached, 1980**
- **(W) Patty Murray, Western Illinois, 1986**

### 10,000-Meters
- **(M) Simon Kili, Unattached, 1978**
- **(W) Amber Anderson, Unattached, 1995**

### 100-Meter Hurdles
- **(W) Chitua Oheari, 2004**

### 110-Meter Hurdles
- **(M) Anwar Moore, Unattached, 2004**

### 400-Meter Hurdles
- **(M) Octavius Terry, unattached, 1981**
- **(W) Naval El Mourawakel, Iowa State, 1984**

### 400-Meter Relay
- **(M) HSI, 2000**
- **(W) Nebraska, 1983**

### 800-Meter Relay
- **(W) Barton County CC, 2000**

### 1600-Meter Relay
- **(M) Philadelphia Pioneers, 1980**
- **(W) San Diego Track Club, 1987**

### 4x100-Meter Shuttle Relay
- **(W) Nebraska, 2001**

### 4x110-Meter Shuttle Relay
- **(M) Nebraska, 2001**

### 2-Mile Relay
- **(M) Oklahoma State, 1965**
- **(W) Villanova, 1984**

### 4-Mile Relay
- **(M) Arkansas, 1977**

### Sprint Medley Relay
- **(M) Eastern New Mexico, 1973**
- **(W) Southwest Missouri State, 2001 (1600 m)**

### Distance Medley Relay
- **(M) Kansas, 1969**
- **(W) Michigan, 1993**

**High Jump**
- **(M) Hollis Conway, Unattached, 1987**
- **(W) Julieanne Broughton, Arizona, 1990**

**Long Jump**
- **(M) Kenny Harrison, Kansas State, 1987**
- **(W) Halyon McKnight, Kansas, 1982**

**Triple Jump**
- **(M) Kenny Harrison, Kansas State, 1988**
- **(W) Trecia Smith, Jamaica, 2002**

**Pole Vault**
- **(M) Joe Dial, Athletics West, 1987**
- **(W) Penny Dutoit, Unattached, 2004**

**Discus**
- **(M) Jim McElrath, Texas, 1976**
- **(W) Penny Dutoit, Coast Athletics, 1991**

**Javelin**
- **(M) Ted Kaminski, Nike, 1996**
- **(W) Dana Olson, Houston, 1982**

**Shot Put**
- **(M) Kevin Toth, unattached, 2003**
- **(W) Rebekah Green, Kansas State, 2001**

**Hammer**
- **(W) Yuri Tamm, USSR, 1983**
- **(W) Benetta Seiler, Kansas State, 1997**

**Decathlon**
- **(M) Steve Fritz, Accusplit Sports, 1997**

**Heptathlon**