

## Geena Gall – Grand Blanc 2005



Geena Gall was a national champion and state record holder while at Grand Blanc High School. As a Michigan Wolverine under the coaching of Mike McGuire, she became one of the nation's finest, setting collegiate records and winning NCAA titles. She later made the 2012 Olympic team. Not a bad set of accomplishments for a longtime basketball player who had her eyes set on being a sprinter.

### *Career Highlights:*

2003: After a torn ACL in basketball kept her from competing in track as a 9th-grader, she focused on the 400 as a sophomore and placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the D1 Finals (58.31). Her best 800 time was 2:15.6.

2004: Won the MITS Indoor 800 (2:13.64) and then captured the Nike Indoor 800 (2:12.20). Outdoors, she won the D1 800 (2:10.45) and placed 2<sup>nd</sup> at adidas Nationals (2:08.59). That fall, in her first year of running cross country, she faded from 20<sup>th</sup> on the final stretch at MIS to finish 42<sup>nd</sup> in D1.

2005: Won the MITS Indoor in 2:08.77 and also the Nike Indoor Nationals (2:10.62). Outdoors, she won the D1 Finals (2:09.60), the Midwest Meet (2:07.45), and the Nike Outdoor Nationals (2:05.05 state record). At 1600, she won her regional in 4:45.7 and then placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in D1 at 4:51.44.

2006: As a Wolverine frosh, she took 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Big 10 Indoor (2:09.76) then won the Big 10 outdoors in a PR 2:02.73. Placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the NCAA (2:04.35).

2007: Big 10 Indoor champion (2:06.22). Helped Michigan set Collegiate Records in the 4 x 800 (8:18.78) and 4 x 1500 (17:52.62) at the Penn Relays. Placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in Big 10 outdoor (2:06.89), 5<sup>th</sup> in NCAA (2:02.24 PR) and 6<sup>th</sup> at the USATF (2:02.31). At 1500, ran PR 4:19.45 for 6<sup>th</sup> at the Big 10.

2008: Big 10 Indoor champ (2:05.99), 4<sup>th</sup> at NCAA Indoor (2:05.79). Second in Big 10 outdoor (2:06.87). Won NCAA 800 (2:03.91), 7<sup>th</sup> in the Olympic Trials (2:02.35). Placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in Big 10 1500 (4:23.77).

2009: Won Big 10 Indoor (2:04.76) and placed 6<sup>th</sup> at NCAA Indoor (2:05.39). Outdoors, won Big 10 (2:04.06), Won NCAA 800 (2:00.80 PR). Placed 2<sup>nd</sup> at USATF (2:01.01) to make the national team. Ran PR 2:00.44 in Italy. At the World Champs in Berlin, finishing 6<sup>th</sup> in her semifinal (2:01.30).

2010: Injured in her first season as a pro, she ran a best of 2:02.16 and didn't make the USATF final.

2011: She broke 2:00 for the first time, running 1:59.76 at the Prefontaine Classic. She matched that time in placing 5<sup>th</sup> at USATF. She improved to 1:59.62 in Italy. At 1500, improved to 4:12.23.

2012: Ran PR 1:59.28 at Pre Classic. Second at the Olympic Trials in a PR 1:59.24. At the Olympic Games, she finished 7<sup>th</sup> in her semi (2:05.76), running with an injured calf muscle.

Talking to a local reporter in 2012, Gall said, "It's been a dream of mine to go to the Olympics since I saw the Olympics on TV. It's an amazing opportunity to represent your country and it was a huge, huge relief to make the team. I'm very happy all my hard work paid off. It's been an up and down path for me the past three years."

2013: Had a best of 2:00.53 and placed 8<sup>th</sup> at USATF. Improved her 1500 to 4:09.95.

2014: Helped the U.S. win gold at the World Relays Championships in the 4 x 800 (8:01.58 American Record). Season best of 2:01.10.

2015: Season best of 2:01.87.

2016: In her final season of competition at age 29, she ran 2:03.34 and competed in the heats of the Olympic Trials, a twisted ankle keeping her from more.

Gall's legacy is substantial. A state record that lasted 19 years. Two NCAA titles. All-America honors 10 times. The Olympics. She tells the story of her first-ever race at age 6, when she was so scared by the noise of the starting gun that she finished in tears. "It was frightening to me." Luckily, it only got better from there.