

Hi Team USATF Niagara!

My name is Zach Ferrara and I am one of the team USATF Niagara team captains, for the Empire State Classic (ESC).

First off, congratulations on qualifying to represent our Niagara region. What an opportunity we have to shine at the ESC!

I am fortunate to have competed in the last and final Empire State Games (ESG), as a NYS Western team member in 2010. The Empire State Games were prestigious as they put a spotlight on many different sports, showcasing the elite talent we have in NYS.

Track and field as a sport generally focuses on the individual and event specific achievements. My fondest memories were heading into the games as a cohesive Western team group, ready to perform at our best and win the championship for our region.

The Empire State Classic (ESC) is similar to the Empire State Games (ESG), with one main improvement... Track and Field is the only sport involved! For many of you, this may be your first time competing in this competition.

Here is what you can expect;

- 1) The competition and fields will be high class. You have earned your spot, compete to the best of your ability out there!
- 2) Make sure you have all you need to be prepared (Nutrition, hydration, etc.).
- 3) SUNY Cortland has a fast track and provides a great environment to perform well.
- 4) Bring your family! Plenty of room for spectating.
- 5) We have a great team ready to win this year!

Last year, I competed and won gold in the pole vault at the inaugural ESC. The event was awesome, the best part of the experience was competing for team USATF Niagara. From the administrative team Dr. Russ Ebbets, to team leaders like Izeal Bullock, we have support to help us win.

As you prepare for our big competition in a couple weeks, trust in your process and know that you have the support to aid in your success- when you showcase your talents on July 30th.

Here are my tips for competitiveness. Confidence comes from having mental fortitude, belief in your abilities, and a preparation which aligns with your goals. At the ESC, your preparation will meet opportunity. Whether you are racing on the track, jumping for the win in a field event, or throwing your way to victory, keep focused on what you can control. Control the controllable and try to keep your nerves in check for a great performance. Every attempt is a first attempt out there, give it all you have.

I wish you the best as you go for gold!

See you at the ESC,
Zach Ferrara