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**[00:01:01]** <intro music>

**Intro:** Hey friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. We have got a great show in store. As you know, in like one week we're getting on the bus and heading out for the That Sounds Fun tour coast to coast, Gulf Coast, East Coast, West Coast. You guys, it is going to be so fun.

As you've already seen on my social media, on our AFD Week In Review emails, all the guests are announced, you know who's going to be where and we want you there too. Grab your tickets at [Anniefdowns.com/events](#). You do not want to miss this, you guys.

Today on the show we have my friend Garrett Scantling. Now listen, with the Olympics in Tokyo just ending, I really wanted to talk to an Olympian. I thought it'd be so fun. And one of you connected me with Garrett and I'm so grateful.

He is a track and field Olympian, yes, in the Olympics in Tokyo this year, a former Georgia Bulldog. And I'm so excited for y'all to get to know him and hear his story

of not only what happened in Tokyo, but how he got there. It's incredible. It is an awesome story.

So here's my conversation with Olympic decathlete Garrett Scantling.

[00:02:26] <music>

**Annie:** Garrett, do you know why you're on my podcast?

**Garrett:** No, I do not.

**Annie:** Okay. My truest answer is I don't either, except that one of my friends who follows me on Instagram said, "Do you know this Olympian is a Georgia Bulldog?" And I was like, "Done. Done and done."

**Garrett:** There we go. That's what I'm talking about.

**Annie:** That's all I needed.

**Garrett:** So you're a Georgia fan through and through. I love it. I love it.

**Annie:** Yes, graduate and everything. I lived in Athens for seven years.

**Garrett:** Really?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Garrett:** Oh. All right. That's what I'm talking about.

**Annie:** Go Dogs!

**Garrett:** When did you graduate?

**Annie:** 2002.

**Garrett:** 2002, okay.

**Annie:** So I'm your senior by a few.

**Garrett:** I'm '16.

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Garrett:** Don't worry about it. I've been talking to kids. Like I went to Tallahassee this weekend and I got kids who are graduating, like 24, 23. I'm like, "Oh my goodness gracious. Here we go."

**Annie:** So here's why you're on the show is because our friend told us, our mutual friend who follows you and follows me said we should be friends. And I jumped on following you that day. And it was like maybe two weeks before you went to Tokyo.

**Garrett:** Yeah, it was. I remember that.

**Annie:** I came in at the best part of this movie. Like I came in at the best part of the movie.

**Garrett:** You sure did.

**Annie:** This is awesome. Okay, so will you back me up? I mean, I've done my research because I'm a pro but I also want you to tell us who you are and about your life a little bit. So will you back me up? Tell me how you ended up at Georgia. How did you end up at UGA?

**Garrett:** So I am born and raised here in Jacksonville, Florida. Football first always. My first love is football. I mean, I'm an American athlete, of course, your first love is going to be football. And I did track just to stay in shape for football. I went to Episcopal School of Jacksonville here in Jacksonville, Florida.

Just the offers that I was getting in track were a lot better than what I was getting in football. For football, it was a bunch of D1AA schools, and track it was Florida, Florida State, Georgia. The big time schools that you hear about and you want to go to.

I knew how much I love pole vaulting and just doing something myself. You know track is individual. All the coaches that recruited me wanted me to do the decathlon, which I had no idea what the heck I was getting myself into in the first place. I just knew it was a way to get to college, get to the places that I wanted to be.

Just starting out, I went to Georgia on a Sunday, Monday visit, there was no one there. I mean, the campus was dead, but I just fell in love with the place. I mean, it was just an incredible experience. And that's how I ended up there.

**Annie:** I mean, it brings my heart so much joy that you pick Georgia over Florida.

**Garrett:** Don't worry. I grew up a Florida State fan. I actually went on a visit to Florida and I gave them a chance and I just could not do it. I just was like, "Ahhh." I grew up hating Gainesville, and this is just worse being here now.

**Annie:** "There's just so much blue and orange. Get me out of here."

**Garrett:** It was ridiculous.

**Annie:** We had Coach Mark Richt on the show last week who was at Florida State before he came to Georgia?

**Garrett:** Oh, really?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Garrett:** Of course. Because he was a coach when I was there.

**Annie:** Tell me about Coach Bowden, tell me about Coach Richt, tell me about these men that you've kind of seen leading.

**Garrett:** I mean, it's incredible. You see how many lives they've touched. And I know that Bobby was in a similar situation with, you know, having to announce something he was going through that obviously not a lot of people have to deal with. And just the responses that he got and the support, it was just incredible. Obviously, he was an incredible man.

Like I told you, I grew up a Florida State fan, so it was always Bobby. Bobby, Bobby, Bobby. I remember staying up with my dad just watching football games. Those are memories that I cherish. It's all led by Bobby.

Going to Georgia. I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know if I was going to turn into a Georgia fan or what. But I got to meet Mark Richt a few times. And just the man that he is, and... the same way with Bobby, just the people, the lives that he affected. My friends were on the football team and I just heard how highly they speak of him and just how great of a person he is, and I mean, I switched just like that.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's right.

**Garrett:** I think I went to the Georgia LSU game in 2014. And that was when it happened. It was so good.

**Annie:** "Give me that red and black. Let's go."

**Garrett:** Exactly.

**Annie:** Listen, are we about to be national champions? Is this too early to talk about this?

**Garrett:** Oh, man, I don't know. Listen, I can't comment or speculate this early because I always do and it always turns out wrong.

**Annie:** It's always bad.

**Garrett:** But we look great. We look awesome. Our defense looks incredible.

**Annie:** They're unreal.

**Garrett:** I mean, I think we're going to be a force. It's going to be hard to stop us. We just got to stay out of our way. You know Georgia does.

**Annie:** That's exactly right. We got to not cost ourselves this thing.

**Garrett:** Exactly.

**Annie:** No one's going to take it from us. We're going to hand it over if we're not careful.

**Garrett:** Right, right.

**Annie:** I know. In neither of our lifetimes has Georgia won a national championship. So this is going to be the year. Okay. Pole vaulting as well where it started, this might surprise you, but I've never pulled vaulted.

**Garrett:** Oh, that does surprise me.

**Annie:** Everyone should have tried it in their childhood and I missed out.

**Garrett:** At one point, yeah.

**Annie:** Tell me how you started with that. Why is that the one you like so much?

**Garrett:** I was a baseball player growing up. I used to play baseball. I have one older brother. His name is Hunter. He played baseball at Florida State, so I knew that baseball was going to be his sport. It was always his sport. He was always the tall athlete. My brother is 6'9.

**Annie:** Oh, my God.

**Garrett:** I was like 5'5 until 10th grade. So I was the stunted, annoying little kid just running around just doing my own thing and my English teacher actually came to me and he said, "Look, you got a lot of energy and I want to try this out with you." He happened to be the pole vault coach and track coach. His name is Pat Crandall.

I went there in seventh grade and I never looked back. It was something so unique, and I like doing things that are out of the ordinary. Just how I felt that first practice, there's no other feeling. I still remember it. It was just like, "I can't believe that this is a thing." Just slowly I progressed over the years to where the fact that I was really good at it. And it's definitely changed my life. That's for sure.

**Annie:** I mean, tell me about the first day. I'm just trying to picture I'm walking out onto a field and someone says, "Here's the pole. You're going to throw your body up feet first over that other pole." I just don't know how you start.

**Garrett:** Okay, it's different. I'm afraid of heights. That's one thing that I can admit to you right now. I'm like, "I don't go on roller coasters. I don't go on like any..." I can't do it. I just can't do it. But with pole vaulting, you start out so low. I mean, I'm a seventh grader, I can only have so much athletic ability and I can only go so high. So you don't start off by swinging up and going upside down. You just kind of straight pole before you can bend it. And then eventually you get to that point.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Garrett:** I was very nervous at first because heights are not my thing. And so, he was just like, "Don't worry, you can start out low." And then now it's like, I mean, you're floating in the air for a few seconds then you land. That's how it feels the whole time. And it's awesome.

**Annie:** One of the things in my research I've done about you is you have a real endurance bone in your body. Like you're just not a quitter. Would you say that's true?

**Garrett:** Yes. I've been beaten up a lot this life.

**Annie:** Really?

**Garrett:** Some of it is my own doing, some of it is just life. I mean, life throws stuff at you that you don't know. It's all about how you adjust, how you adapt. I think it's sports has definitely instilled the fact that I don't give up. I just feel like if I give up I lose.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Garrett:** And I'm not really keen on losing. That's not really me as a person. So yeah, I've been through a lot. But honestly this last competition at the Olympics, I kind of felt everything that I've been through, and it helped prepare me for that moment. Honestly, I had competitors coming up to me asking me how I stay so calm, how I like... just before the 1500 which is the worst event you could do yourself.

**Annie:** Right. How far is it? Sorry. A mile?

**Garrett:** It's the metric mile. So 100 meters less than a mile. But before, you're sitting in a mixed room with all your competition. Everyone knows what they have to run to beat you, to beat them, to beat that. So just imagine the anxiety and tenseness in the room.

Well, the people would come up to me afterwards and just be like, "You look like you were calm. You were joking around. You were doing all this." So I was like, "Well, the preparation is done, man. There's nothing else I can do. I gotta go out there and just do it." So the years have taught me a lot. It's my secret weapon.

**Annie:** Yeah. I mean, that's how I wish I said it is that it seems like endurance is your secret weapon.

**Garrett:** I think so. I really do.

**Annie:** How does that play out in other parts of your life? How does that play out in your relationships and your health? Where does that play out everywhere else?

**Garrett:** I think I'm doing pretty good on my health. My body is in great shape. I mean, I have no complaints about that. Relationships, whoa.

**Annie:** I'm not about to make you do a dating podcast here.

**Garrett:** I will. I will give it to them.

**Annie:** Unless we're here to set you up, in which case we've got female listeners out the wazoo, my man.

**Garrett:** There we go. There we go. No, I'm big on going through stuff and learning from it. With relationships and just connecting with other people, I learn a lot from my past. And I feel like right now everything is starting to come full circle. I feel like I'm ready.

A lot of stuff in my life, it was very slow developing. Like my height, my figuring out how to put in the work, just figuring out how to chase my dreams. Everything has been a process. And so I think that the love life and Garrett and his feelings, it's going to take the same amount of time. And I'm starting to figure it all out that you have to be right with yourself before trying to get right with someone else. So I'm feeling good.

**Annie:** I mean, the beautiful thing too is you've really modeled for yourself and for all of us that if you will think about one area of your health, if you'll think about your physical health and what you can do and not give up, then you already know you have the ability to not quit on your emotional health, your spiritual health, your mental health, all the other places that we want to grow. If you learn it in one place, you can take that lesson to the other areas. Right?

**Garrett:** Exactly. It's simple. I'm a very simple person. I like to take things... Let's say I'm competing, I say in my head one word over and over and over again. I try to keep it as simple as possible. My life I like to say it's simple. I don't really get into things that I don't feel... I feel like I'm very simple. That's it. That's the only word I can think of. I think the way that I live my life it's made things a lot easier for me that I simplify things. Before it was all insane. Everything was going this way, that way, this way. And then when I retired from track the first time-

**Annie:** Yeah, I was going to say you retired once.

**Garrett:** I knew that was coming.

**Annie:** And you do 10 events.

**Garrett:** Exactly.

**Annie:** So Mr. Simple over here does 10 events.



**Garrett:** I know. I say it's simple but for me, you know, just going through everything I've been through, I just try to keep it one thing at a time and not try to overcomplicate things.

**Annie:** Talk about retiring that first time.

**Garrett:** 2016, this was my last year of college. So I went to the Olympic trials and I came in fourth. So fourth place is you're the alternate. If you're like the sprint, you make the relay team and stuff like that. So you still get to go. But for decathlete, you have to make top three or else you don't get to go. So I was the alternate. I had to go into team processing, try on all the uniforms. I had to try on... everything. I had to book my tickets just in case. And it hurt. I mean, it stung. My mom was in there with me and she could see how much it was bugging me. I didn't even get to leave with a shirt.

**Annie:** No? They didn't even get any give you one?

**Garrett:** They didn't give me anything.

**Annie:** Come on America. Better than that.

**Garrett:** That's what I'm saying. So it actually drove me to retire. I felt like there was something else I needed to be doing at least at that moment in time in my life. I actually tried football.

**Annie:** For my team. For the Falcons.

**Garrett:** For the Falcons, yes. It was definitely an experience.

**Annie:** Also how does someone get to try the NFL? What does that even mean? Do they have open trials?

**Garrett:** My dad has a bunch of friends. My family has a lot of people in Jacksonville and they have a lot of friends. One of my dad's friends was an NFL agent. He's an agent for Von Miller and Cordarrelle Patterson and a bunch of other big names. He got me a tryout with a bunch of teams and I went to Atlanta. Dan Quinn looked at me and he tried me on offense and defense.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Garrett:** He was like, "No, I love just how open you are to try new things." The next day they signed me. Everything happened so fast. Obviously, I put in months of training for it. Like I had to do the classroom and all this stuff.

But just being in there with Julio Jones and Mohamed Sanu, and Justin Hardy, and all these professional football players that you see on TV, you never thought you'd meet, it was a lot. I mean, it was definitely hard. Athletically, I was right there with them, but just having those four years that I missed in college, I think is what sets them apart from me.

The one thing that I say I did learn from football is how to be a true professional. I learned that if you don't come in every single day and put in the work that you know needs to be done, someone else is going to take your dream.

**Annie:** You better say that. You better preach that. Someone else will take your dream if you don't do the work.

**Garrett:** Somebody else, I'm telling you. So I think that was the last straw of someone else taking something from me. After football, I was a financial advisor for two years and I was really good at it. I moved home. I'm a people person so I'm good at talking and just kind of relating to people. But it just kind of felt like something was missing. That's when version two came up and I wanted to give track a shot again.

**Annie:** You did the decathlon the first time when you tried out for Rio? Would it have been Rio?

**Garrett:** Yes. Yeah, So I did decathlon from 2011 to 2016 and then I took from 2016 to 2019 off. And then 2019 to now I'm doing decathlon.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh, dude. Let's do a high-level thing and then we're digging in. Tell me the 10 sports you do as a decathlete.

**Garrett:** First event is the 100-meter dash. So sprinter.

**Annie:** That's cute. That's like an elementary school. 100-meter dash.

**Garrett:** Exactly. Just go sprint somewhere.

**Annie:** Right.

**Garrett:** Second of it is the long jump. So rundown, jump as far as you can.

**Annie:** Is it always the same order?

**Garrett:** Yes, always the same order.

**Annie:** Got it.

**Garrett:** Third event is one of my favorites, which is the shot put. That's a 16-pound ball that you throw as far as you can. High jump is the fourth. And then the 400-meter dash, which is once around the track.

**Annie:** Oh, my Gosh.

**Garrett:** That's the end of day one.

**Annie:** Oh, that's right. This goes two days. Dear everyone listening, Garrett does Olympics that last for two days. Jeez.

**Garrett:** Then you get treatment, you go home. Like at the Olympics, I got four hours of sleep between days.

**Annie:** Oh.

**Garrett:** Wake up, and you have to do the 110m hurdles, which is 10 hurdles on a straightaway. And then you go to the discus, which is there on the disc, and pole vault, which is my favorite.

**Annie:** Also mine. I told you.

**Garrett:** There you go. And then the javelin. Actually-

**Annie:** And then you end with a mile?

**Garrett:** Mm-hmm.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh.

**Garrett:** So it's a lot. Like in Tokyo, I would go up to people and I guess the main conversation amongst the athletes were "what event do you do? Where are you from?" I told them I do the decathlon. Not one person gave me a different reaction

than like, "Holy crap. You're the ultimate." Which was so cool for me to kind of realize that what I'm doing not a lot of people can do.

**Annie:** Not a lot of people can do that, Garrett. If you needed someone else to tell you, you should have called me sooner. Not a lot of people can do 10... I mean, each of those individually are an Olympic sport that you can get a medal for and you do all 10 of them.

**Garrett:** Right. Yeah. It's crazy. I know.

**Annie:** You hear that ladies?

**Garrett:** Somehow I got here. I'm going to be out of here. I'll be out of here.

**Annie:** I got you. I got you

**Garrett:** There you go.

[00:19:59] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about another one of our incredible partners, Brooklinen. Here's the thing. We've basically spent a third of our lives sleeping, so we ought to make our beds as comfortable as possible. But maybe you looked at some retailers and calculated the years of interest you'd pay on just one set of sheets and gave up. Trust me, go check out Brooklinen.

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**Annie:** Talk to me about the day where suddenly the tension in your mind of "Should I come back to this or not?" bubbles over and you're like, "Okay, I'm going back." What was that day?

**Garrett:** I remember it like it was yesterday. It was National Running Day. Everyone was posting all their Instagrams of their favorite moments in track and field. I posted mine and it was my 100-meter dash from competition in Austria from 2016. It's like the biggest decathlon competition in the world. And just the atmosphere there is incredible. It just kind of brought me back.

As a financial advisor, I'd already been going to work out every day at the gym because I have a lot of energy. I mean, you could see it. I can't stop moving. So I felt myself, I felt my strength, and I felt like everything was there. My body was healthy.

So I sat down with my coach who used to be the head coach at Georgia. He has since moved on to coach here in Jacksonville and run his pro group. So I told him, "Look, I got an itch and I want to come back." And he said, "Look, I got a position for you as assistant coach, and you can train." So I was like, "Of course, I'm going to jump on that." That's unheard of just out of the blue getting a position like that.

And just like that I moved everything and went to Athens. Went right back. And the second time around, it was almost as good as the first. I loved it. Because it's different. Like you get a different perspective of everything. You're no longer the student, you're now the coach who can go to these grown-up places and hang out with your grown-up friends.

**Annie:** Right.

**Garrett:** That's kind of how it started. The way that Petros, who was my head coach, he's my coach now, the way that he made me prove to him that I really wanted to do it this time around, he made me train by myself for two months, and do everything by myself. Because version one Garrett would always find a way to get out of practice. He would always have an excuse. Version two, there's no way I was going to come back and have that same mentality because of the football experience and what I told you: I don't want anyone taking anything from me.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Garrett:** So my mindset this time around is so much more stronger and so much more disciplined. The decathlon, I mean, you said it, it's two days of competition. So it's more mental than it is physical. So the fact that I have that down now I think has made me more dangerous than ever.

**Annie:** Oh, I like that language. So tell all of us, because our friends may not know, about that you go to the Tokyo and is the last summer the trial. For Rio, the trials for Rio, you come in fourth, right? So tell everybody what happens when you do the trials for Tokyo.

**Garrett:** So we come into the trials and I feel great. I mean, I already have my Olympic standard because I did one more decathlon before it to qualify. I have my Olympic trials qualifier and I'm number two in the world-

**Annie:** Number two in the world.

**Garrett:** ...so the confidence is up there. So I go on to the trials and I know Garrett... All my friends have been telling me just be myself. I mean, if I'm myself, that means I'm having fun, I'm not worried about anybody else, I'm just doing what I need to do. And when I tell you that the Olympic Trials is the most fun I've ever had in a competition, it was incredible.

I mean, I was joking around the whole time, I was doing the marks that I needed exactly, if not better. Everything was flying by. It was incredible. So out of the gate I think I was winning. I think I came in top four and every event except for the 1,500-

**Annie:** Oh, gosh

**Garrett:** ...which I came in like eighth or ninth. But I think I won like four events at the trials. Honestly, it was the most dominating performance I've ever had in my life in anything I've ever done. So just having that and doing that on America's biggest stage in track I think was exactly what I needed to kind of propel me to where I knew I would be in the first place. But you got to get there first. So, yeah, I won.

**Annie:** "I won." That's it. You won the whole thing.

**Garrett:** I won the whole thing. Olympic Trials Champion. That was great.

**Annie:** That is just incredible. There's so many of us listening that we're not Olympians most of us. Some people listening might be. But there are a ton of us who care about something and walked away from it and are afraid to go back. Because we think we'll be worse, we think we'll be embarrassed, we think the pain was too much we can't go back. Whether it's a relationship or a church or a job or a sport. And your story is reminding me that we can go back to the thing that we love and try again.

**Garrett:** Yes, you can. Yes, you can. I mean, the post that I posted right after I finished, I think it's just that I'm not supposed to be here, but you're not supposed to let anyone tell you what you're supposed to do. So just go out there and do what you want to do-

**Annie:** That's so good.

**Garrett:** ...and do what you love. I am definitely an advocate for chasing after your dreams. That is 100%. So, yeah, Trials was awesome. Actually, I'm going to put that out there that I am now number five all time in American decathlon history. And that's one in front of Bruce Jenner.

**Annie:** Oh, that is incredible. That is absolutely incredible that you're the one above Bruce Jenner. Wow.

**Garrett:** Yes. That's a fun fact.

**Annie:** That is a very fun fact. That means the likelihood that your name is beside Bruce Jenner's name for the rest of forever is very high.

**Garrett:** Exactly. Exactly.

**Annie:** Fantastic. That's really great. So, how was Tokyo? Don't talk about the competition. Tell me about flying to Tokyo. We'll talk about the Olympic part in a minute, but tell me about Tokyo first.

**Garrett:** Tokyo was awesome. I mean, it's a lot different than I expected to put it that way. I left at like 5 a.m. to get on my flight. I had my neighbors were all outside at 5 a.m. in the morning with their signs out and I was driving away. It was so awesome.

But I flew from Jacksonville to Chicago and then all of the people who were flying with me... they only let you go there for a total of two weeks. So I missed opening ceremonies, which stinks.

**Annie:** Right, that does stinks.

**Garrett:** I missed closing ceremonies, which stinks.

**Annie:** Right.

**Garrett:** But I was there.

**Annie:** You can only be there for two weeks. Is that a COVID thing? Or is that an Olympic thing?

**Garrett:** I think it was... They wanted you to get there like four days before you competed. But since I do so many events, I was like, "That's not going to happen. I need to get adjusted." Actually, we had a humongous plane and there was only 25 people on it.

**Annie:** Oh, wow. All athletes?

**Garrett:** All Team USA. And a couple of them, one was JuVaughn Harrison who is a high jumper. He competed for LSU. The other one was Raven Saunders, the shot putter, the one who wore the big glasses and the Hulk mask. So she brought her Xbox on the plane with a projector screen.

**Annie:** Oh, my god.

**Garrett:** So we were playing Madden and we were doing every... Oh, it was so much fun. That passed the 13-hour flight.

**Annie:** Right.



**Garrett:** And then we got there. I mean, it took us about three hours to get through all their COVID stuff in the airport. Everything was strict. Everything. You had to follow all the rules, which made it run perfectly smooth.

We got to the village, and it's huge. I mean, it's humongous. Which gives you that sense of freedom. I mean, you have some sense of freedom to walk around you. It took maybe 20 minutes to walk from one side to the other.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Garrett:** I mean, it was very large. You have stuff you could do. You could hang out with people as long as you had your mask on. Like just being there around those athletes I think that's when it clicked. Like, "Holy crap. I'm in the Olympics."

I mean, you're around people who were... the basketball players were like seven feet tall. I've never felt that small in my life. Yao Ming was there and I was trying to bug him for a picture the whole time but he didn't want to take a picture with anybody, which I understand. You're that tall, that stuff has happened your whole life.

It was definitely different. I mean, you miss the experience of going out into the city and being amongst the people. But Team USA's camp was 45 minutes outside of the village. So we got to take a bus all the way through Tokyo. So I got to see everything. I mean, everything.

We took off from the village and there were skyscrapers around you. You drive 45 minutes and there are still skyscrapers around you. It's insane. I haven't seen anything like it, which is why there's so many dadgum people there. I don't know if I would have wanted to go outside the village.

**Annie:** Right, right, right, right.

**Garrett:** So like I said, it was different but the experience was a lot better than I expected. I mean, it was awesome.

**Annie:** The mattresses, it was all cardboard? Is that real?

**Garrett:** So the mattresses, they were like webbing. They were like the plastic webbing. It was comfortable. Comfortable. But the bed frames were cardboard.

**Annie:** Amazing.

**Garrett:** I know. I had a suite with four people. One was a pole vaulter, one was an 800 runner, and then one was... his name is Ryan Crouser. He's the shot put world record holder. He won gold at the Olympics. He had a Tempur Pedic queen size bed.

**Annie:** Oh, excuse me.

**Garrett:** I'm like, "Listen, Ryan, I know you're like 6'8, but I have nine other events. Can I please?" And of course, he said that he would have given it to me if he would have left earlier. But of course our events ended at the same time. So I didn't get to.

**Annie:** Right. That's unfortunate.

**Garrett:** But yes, the beds were not as bad as people were making. The media blew it out of proportion. I could stand up on it. I could jump on it.

**Annie:** I was impressed. I was like, "If they made cardboard, and they're holding all these Olympians, that's impressive."

**Garrett:** That's what I'm saying.

**Annie:** Yes, I'm here for that.

**Garrett:** So I got lucky I didn't have a roommate. I mean, I had the suitemates. I had my own room, though, because I was a medal contender. But if you weren't, if you were part of relay or just like individual events, they gave you a roommate. So you had the room and then you had to sleep next to somebody. I didn't have to do it though.

**Annie:** You got your own room. That's fancy. Okay, talk about the two days of competition. I got to watch it on TV. I felt like we were already besties. I was like, "Let's go! Let's go, Garrett!"

**Garrett:** I love it. I love it.

**Annie:** I was losing it.

**Garrett:** So longest two days of my life by far. That whole two weeks was just... I mean, just since I competed at the end of the two weeks, it was drag out and it was so long.

**Annie:** And all the other days were just practicing and...?

**Garrett:** Practice and then go home and just sit there. I watched a lot of Netflix.

**Annie:** Right.

**Garrett:** My competition, the first four events is where I... for me, I lost the medal in the first four events. I missed the energy that my family brings, the crowd brings. Usually, I can bring it myself, but I think I was missing it and I felt a little flat. The 100 wasn't that bad. But the long jump and shot put and the high jump, just those three consecutive kind of threw me off.

There was a mixed area. So everyone had an air mattress who was competing. There was 24 of us. We were all in a room. And we do three events and then we take like six hours and do the next two.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh.

**Garrett:** Yeah. Usually, it's 30 minutes after each other. But at major championships they do a morning and an afternoon session.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Garrett:** This was my first time experiencing that. So I slept on an air mattress. I think I posted on Instagram me with my... I had a face mask and my boots and I was passed out. I actually got to call my parents and talk to them after the high jump. They were having a watch party. They were all sitting there, and they were just like, "Garrett, there's nothing you can do about that four events that you just did. You got to turn it on now. I mean, it's your last decathlon of the year."

So, 400 is usually not my bad event, but I mean, it's all about how your legs feel. So I went out there and I busted it. I just went as hard as I could and I ended up PR-ing and I think that's what set the pace for the whole next day.

The whole next day was the best second day I've ever had in a decathlon. You know, I was on it, every event. Like I said, it drugged out the whole day. I mean, I got up at 4:45 and then I was running the hurdles by 9 a.m.

**Annie:** Oh.

**Garrett:** Like I told you, four hours of sleep that was, oh, my god. That drag I think we ended up around the 1,500 at like 10 p.m or something.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh.

**Garrett:** It was an all day. I mean, it's all day. But the javelin... actually, I think before the javelin I was sitting in sixth place. Sixth place I think is what it was and I needed a big throw. I need to PR. And I went out there first throw and just let it rip. And it's exactly what I needed, and then bumped me up to fourth and I was really close to that third spot.

So like I told you, I knew what I needed to run going into the 1,500. Petros, my coach, walked up to me and he said, "You have everything to gain and nothing to lose. So just go out there, don't run it for yourself, run it for all the people who are back home supporting you, all the people who are back home." My parents are watching at my aunt's house.

And I think that's what kind of flipped the switch for me because usually in the 1,500, it's like it's not my event. And everyone knows it. I mean, I'm a big guy and the first nine events are my forte. That's what I'm good at. So he just said, "Garrett, just go out there and run it." I think I had to beat the Australian by like 12 seconds and I ended up beating him by nine.

And so I PR'd in the 1,500 by 10 seconds. So there's nothing I could... I mean, when I tell you, I left it all out there. And I think that's why I'm so satisfied with the performance. Obviously, personal goals and stuff, you want more, but-

**Annie:** So you finished fourth?

**Garrett:** I finished fourth. I think I was 20 points outside of medal, which is-

**Annie:** Which is nuts. Because the points are-

**Garrett:** It's like two and a half seconds in the 1,500. I mean, you can think about that as much as you want and-

**Annie:** It's ruining my life currently.

**Garrett:** I know. I know. But at the same time, there was so much stuff that I could have done and I can't blame it on one singular event. But I went out there and I performed the way I knew I could perform.

**Annie:** And you lived in a way that made other people talk to you about your peace.

**Garrett:** Right. Exactly.

**Annie:** So you lived in the right way out there. And that's worth bringing home something, right? That's got to be worth something to you.

**Garrett:** Exactly. I mean after I got done with 1,500, that's what my dad... I talked to him on the phone, he was crying. My dad loves to cry. I get my cries from him. I mean I cried at Olympic Trials and it was because I saw him crying.

But it was more of the fact that he said, "There's nothing to hang your head on. You gave us everything to be proud of. It's incredible what you did for our family." And just the fact that after a year like this, I could have everyone gathered watching something as special as this.

I think that's why I do it. I'm a family guy and I do it for them. And just the fact that I can do this and my family can travel to places, they have something to be happy about, proud of, and be proud of me, I mean, it's everything for me.

[00:37:26] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Taking a short break from this conversation to give a shout-out to our amazing partners ThirdLove. You guys know that I am here for being comfortable. Our bodies truly are remarkable. And we ask a lot of them, don't we? I mean, pushing them to the limits for sports like we're talking about or family or fashion or just plain fun. And when you think about it, it's pretty incredible how our bodies keep up.

ThirdLove believes everybody is amazing and deserves to be treated that way. That's why they designed underwear, loungewear, active wear, and feel-good all-day wear that fits better, hold stronger, and supports longer so you can feel comfortable all day long no matter what your body faces.

Real talk, it actually changes my day when I'm wearing clothes and underwear that fit well and are made well. It makes me feel confident and ready to have fun in that T-shirt bra, y'all. Don't sleep on it, it is the very best. And I love that since I answered the quick simple questions on the fitting room quiz, they took care of all the details for the perfect fit.

ThirdLove obsesses over each stitch so you never have to think about how something feels, looks, or wears. And while trends come and go, ThirdLove has

always stayed true to one notion: we do comfort, you do you. ThirdLove brings comfort from the sheets to the streets with the softest sleepwear, luxe washable silk, and bras that you will want to take off when you get home.

The 90,000 five star reviews do not lie, my friends. Love your fit, guaranteed. If not, exchange and returns are free for 60 days. And [ThirdLove](#)'s team of expert fit stylists is available via chat or text to answer all your questions. Feeling is believing, y'all. So upgrade to everyday pieces that love your body as much as you do. Right now you can get 20% off your first order at [thirdlove.com/soundsfun](https://thirdlove.com/soundsfun). That's 20% off at [thirdlove.com/soundsfun](https://thirdlove.com/soundsfun).

And now back to our conversation with Garrett Scantling.

[00:39:08] <music>

**Annie:** The other decathletes that you're competing against, do you know them year round? Do you see them all over the place and these are the same people and you know when he's having a good day, and you know when he's off or something?

**Garrett:** You know. There's 24 of them and they're the best in the world. I mean, any competition that I go to I'm competing against the same guys.

**Annie:** The same guys, yeah.

**Garrett:** Everyone knows what you're good at, everyone does their homework. But at the same time, what's nice about the decathlon is it's more of a camaraderie than anything else. We are super nice to each other. I mean, you're out there for 12 hours a day. You can't have any animosity towards another athlete or else you're going to make your time that much more miserable.

There was a photographer in Olympic Trials who came up to me afterwards and she said, "I had no idea that the decathlon was like this. You were cheering for him before you were about to go. He was cheering for you." And I'm like, "Well, I mean, it's just a bunch of great people. You have to find a really great and crazy individual to do what we do."

**Annie:** And you also have to a little be like, "You're as hardcore as me. Excellent!"

**Garrett:** It's mutual respect at the same time. Because like I said, not a lot of people do what we do. And so when that's the case, you have a respect towards your competitor that doesn't exist in individual events because they're over like that.

**Annie:** Right. Well, listen, I want you to hear me say you represented us so well.

**Garrett:** Thank you.

**Annie:** I mean, I thought it was awesome. I was disappointed you didn't medal just because I wanted you to come home with one for you.

**Garrett:** Right. Don't worry. We all won.

**Annie:** But I mean, it still was awesome. So what happens now, Garrett? Are you retiring again? Are you going to keep going?

**Garrett:** Oh, no, no, no.

**Annie:** Oh, good.

**Garrett:** I am now sponsored by Nike.

**Annie:** Let's go.

**Garrett:** I got a sponsorship from them right before I went to the Olympics.

**Annie:** You're also sponsored by That Sounds Fun podcast. It doesn't mean anything.

**Garrett:** Yes, yes.

**Annie:** But you are our favorite.

**Garrett:** I forgot about this.

**Annie:** Whoa, look at that tattoo.

**Garrett:** I got this right when I got back. This is USA Track. That's the Track & Field symbol.

**Annie:** Oh, sure, yeah.

**Garrett:** That goes with the Olympics.

**Annie:** That's awesome.

**Garrett:** Ryan did a great job. It's my first and only tattoo. I'm not doing it again.

**Annie:** That's a good one. Once you got to the Olympics, you have to get an Olympic tattoo.

**Garrett:** Yeah, exactly. But as for what comes next, like I said, I'm Nike athlete now. I wanted to come back and not be struggling financially. I wanted to make sure that this was what I wanted to do for a job and my life. So now that that is out of the way, I have to keep it. So we have World Indoors next year in March, which are in Serbia, and I've already qualified for this just for being top five in the world and all that stuff.

**Annie:** I mean, top five in the world. Do you hear yourself? Do you hear yourself?

**Garrett:** I'll tell you, now I'm third. My ranking is third, not four.

**Annie:** You are the third best decathlete in the world.

**Garrett:** Yes.

**Annie:** Garrett, that is no joke, man.

**Garrett:** It's crazy.

**Annie:** That's so cool.

**Garrett:** But at the same time I know what kind of work I put into this.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Garrett:** That's what I wanted. So that's in Serbia in March. World Athletics Championships are in Eugene Oregon, for the first time on US soil in July. That's '22. '23 World Indoors are in Nanjing, China. And then World Outdoors are in Beijing, China. And then 2024 is Paris.

**Annie:** Back at it.

**Garrett:** I have a contract through the next Olympics. So hopefully, everything goes well and I stay healthy and everything's going to keep going the way that it's going, because I feel like I have a lot more left.



**Annie:** Yeah, I mean, what history tells us is you upgrade every Olympic time.

**Garrett:** There we go. Exactly. Once I come in fourth I come in first after that.

**Annie:** Once I come in fourth I come in first. You better get that tattoo, Garrett Scantling.

**Garrett:** I know. I know.

**Annie:** Once I come in fourth I come in first. That is right.

**Garrett:** That's it. You know what? If that happens in Paris, I will get that tattoo, I promise you. You heard it here first. You heard it. I would get it tattooed across my chest or something. I don't know.

**Annie:** Oh, I love it. Do you like indoor or outdoor better?

**Garrett:** Oh, I used to like indoor a lot until this year. I think this year I enjoyed outdoor better. The reason I liked indoor before was because you don't have to run the 400. So the indoor is different. It's the tough one. So everything's shorter. Like the last event is the 1,000 not the 1,500.

**Annie:** You're about that life.

**Garrett:** I used to be about that life.

**Annie:** But now I know that I'm a lot better at running at 1,500 and a lot better running that 400. So I liked the decathlon a little more. But I still think that I might be a little better at the heptathlon than I am at the decathlon.

**Garrett:** So this next indoor I think is going to be a big, big year for me.

**Annie:** Can we watch it on the TV?

**Garrett:** Yeah. Can we watch it on the television? Yes. It will be on NBC again. So all of the World Championships are going to be on NBC. They'll have their streaming programs and stuff. So that's what's nice about these next few years is that track is going to be in the spotlight. And it's such a beautiful sport that I think gets overlooked in America a lot. Not in Europe. In Europe they're all about it. I mean, it's crazy. They have that big decathlon meet just for decathletes and there are

thousands of people that show for it. So just changing the culture here in America I think is my goal.

**Annie:** Just changing the culture. That's all. Simple.

**Garrett:** Just a little.

**Annie:** Just a little. I appreciate your small dreams, Garrett.

**Garrett:** Casual.

**Annie:** I appreciate you. The thing you don't know yet is that what happens when friends like you come on That Sounds Fun is suddenly you have tens of thousands of insane friends who love cheering for you all the time.

**Garrett:** There you go. I love it.

**Annie:** I don't think you're ready. I don't think you're ready.

**Garrett:** Yes. I don't know.

**Annie:** But this is all the warning I can give you is that these people are about to go bananas cheering for you.

**Garrett:** Bring it on because I love the love. The Love is what drives me and the support is the reason why I do what I do.

**Annie:** Well, listen. I mean, we've been friends for a day and it's besties already.

**Garrett:** I know, right? How crazy!

**Annie:** You're so easy to be friends with. And so this is like, no worries, you are our guy. You are our guy.

**Garrett:** It's great. That's what I like. I like that. Yes.

**Annie:** Okay. Is there anything we didn't talk about that you want to make sure we cover?

**Garrett:** Honestly, I think we just went through my whole life. I think that was great. I mean, I don't have... no.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Garrett:** I don't think I did anything else.

**Annie:** You're like, "All I've done for these long 20 something years."

**Garrett:** Oh, man, yeah.

**Annie:** Okay, well then, let me tell you our last question, because I'm dying to hear this answer. The last question we always ask is, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

**Garrett:** Okay. I mean, I know you saw my setup that I have in my computers. I am an avid gamer. I love to game.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Garrett:** I like to stream. I like to-

**Annie:** Twitch, these things?

**Garrett:** I stream on Twitch. My Twitch name is Gscant without the underscore. I had to put the underscore on Instagram. A lot of my friends over the past few years before I was this good at track always we're like, "Why do you play video games? This is a waste of time?" But I like to attribute it to my reflexes.

**Annie:** Oh, okay.

**Garrett:** Why I am so good at starting. I'm the best American decathlete out of the blocks. In the world, I think I'm like top three, top four. So my reaction time is what I credit it to. I think that has to do with, you know, I react all the time in the video games. This could be the weirdest excuse.

**Annie:** No.

**Garrett:** This could just be me just talking out the side of my mouth, but I believe it. So I'm going to say that video games help me with my track. When I'm not training, I need to be doing something. I need to be relaxing. I need to be just chilling. And when I can chill and just sit here at my desk and do that. And it also helps with my mind and mental aspect, why not?

**Annie:** What games do you like to play? Which one?

**Garrett:** I like to play "Call of Duty". I'm a big Call of Duty guy. I like to play "It Takes Two." I don't know if anyone here has ever heard of that.

**Annie:** No. Tell me more though.

**Garrett:** It's basically a puzzle game. So you play with one other person. So the person that I like to play with she was actually in the Olympics. She was the Canadian heptathlete. Her name is Georgia. Her name is Georgia Ellenwood. She got me on it. And so we sit here and we play. She leads me through it. It's so much fun. It's just like it... It's hard to explain. You have to try it. I promise it is a fun game. You get a person that you can just sit there and enjoy talking to and just relax and just have fun. So I like to play that.

I also like my you know... I hate to say this but I like playing Grand Theft Auto.

**Annie:** You don't have to hate to say that. It's fine.

**Garrett:** I don't know if that's okay.

**Annie:** Of course, it is.

**Garrett:** Obviously I don't wish to do anything when I'm playing it.

**Annie:** So nice.

**Garrett:** But it's nice to, once again, play with my friends and then just roam and do whatever I want.

**Garrett:** You don't actually hijack cars, which I appreciate.

**Garrett:** I promise that's not me. That's not the Garrett that you're looking at.

**Annie:** Me neither actually.

**Garrett:** There we go. I think that's why we're friends.

**Annie:** That's why we're friends because neither of us hijacks cars. You're exactly right.

**Garrett:** Exactly

**Annie:** Exactly right. Well, listen, Garrett, I want you to hear me say you are welcome back here anytime.

**Garrett:** Awesome. Anytime you want to come talk about anything. When you're in Nashville, if you don't tell me, it's over.

**Garrett:** Oh, no. I'm telling you now. I got you. Because she said... When the lady was emailing me, she was asking if I was ever going to be in Nashville. I actually haven't ever been to Nashville.

**Annie:** We got to make that right. We got to make that right. Okay, we're going to make that right.

**Garrett:** So if the Jaguars ever play the Titans in Nashville, I think that that's the trip I need to make.

**Annie:** Oh, 100%. Do y'all have a pro soccer team in Jacksonville?

**Garrett:** No, I think we're like Semi-Pro or something.

**Annie:** I was going to say, you don't even know. We're going to have to cut that out so we don't embarrass you.

**Garrett:** No, we do. We have a Jacksonville Armada. We have the Jacksonville Armada.

**Annie:** Oh, boy. It's safe.

**Garrett:** It's a Jacksonville thing. I just saved it.

**Annie:** Okay. I'm looking at the Titan schedule right now. Hold on. Titans-Jaguars.

**Garrett:** We play two times a year.

**Annie:** Yes. But we're coming to you... Hold on, hold on. Just hold on. December 12th. See you here. December 12th.

**Garrett:** December 12th is in Nashville?

**Annie:** I've got us.

**Garrett:** Right. No, I'm dead serious.

**Annie:** You don't know how dead serious I am.

**Garrett:** Oh, yeah, I need to.

**Annie:** It's happening. It's happening.

**Garrett:** You heard it here first.

**Annie:** December 12th, everybody. Anybody wants to come to the Titans game. Annie and Garrett will be at the Titans-Jaguars game.

**Garrett:** Here we go. All right. Sounds awesome.

**Annie:** Dude, thanks for making time to do this. Really it is such an honor to talk to an Olympian and a Georgia Bulldog. But you are one of the best in the world and a lot of things and I just think it is really impressive. And I just want to celebrate you for how you've spent your time putting into something and not giving up. And I think that is really impressive.

**Garrett:** I appreciate that. And I'm going to say something to make you jealous. I'm actually going to Athens next week for the South Carolina game. I'm going to sit in the Athletic Director's Box. That will be awesome.

**Annie:** What's it like? What's it like?

**Garrett:** I haven't done it yet, so I'll let you know.

**Annie:** Yeah, I'm going to need you to let me know. Because the chances of us sitting in a box at a Titans game is not high. I'm sorry to tell you.

**Garrett:** Don't worry about that. That's what I'm saying. I usually only ever sit in the student section.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's right. But now that you're an Olympian-

**Garrett:** I guess it's a little different.

**Annie:** ...then you get to sit in the Athletic Directors Box.

**Garrett:** There we go.

**Annie:** Instagram not too much. Show us too much of the inside.

**Garrett:** Oh, yeah.

**Annie:** Well, thanks again for doing this, bud.

**Garrett:** Thank you so much, Annie. It was great meeting you.

**[00:50:56] <outro music>**

**Outro:** Oh, you guys, don't you love him? Isn't he the coolest? I mean, I guess we needed an Olympian to be our favorite Olympian. So, nailed it. Garrett Scantling is now officially That Sounds Fun Podcast very favorite Olympian. Hey, make sure you give him a follow on Instagram, tell him thanks so much for being on the show, and how much you enjoyed hearing from him. And let's get ready to cheer him on in 2022 as he does the indoors and outdoors. And then y'all, Paris. We're cheering for him all the way to Paris.

If you do anything else for me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find except pole vaulting—you'll never find me there. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, all the places you may need me, that's how you can find me. And I think that's it for me today, friends. What a fun show! Right?

So go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you. I'll do the same. Have a great couple of days. We'll see you back here on Friday with Kurt Thompson. See you guys then.

**[00:51:54] <music>**