

Josh Kerr breaks mile world record with 3:42.66s run at London Diamond League



Kerr branded the eight months leading up to this meet as 'Project 222' S Bardens - British Athletics via Getty Images



By [Liam Tharme](#) and [George Edwards](#)

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Josh Kerr has broken the long-standing mile world record with a 3:42.66s run at the London Diamond League on Saturday.

This performance was the result of an eight-month build which the Scot branded Project 222, as he wanted to better the 3:43.13s record which Hicham El Guerrouj had held since 1999.

Led by pacemakers Brandon Kidder (his Brooks Beasts teammate) through to 800m, and then Zan Rudolf to 1,000m, he ticked off laps at a metronomic pace: 54.75s, 55.88s and 55.76s to hit the bell.



Kerr crossed the line well before his competitors Michael Steele/Getty Images

U.S. record-holder Yared Nuguse was chasing behind him over the final lap, as was Jake Heyward, but Kerr showed supreme speed to win by three seconds and take 0.47s off the world record.

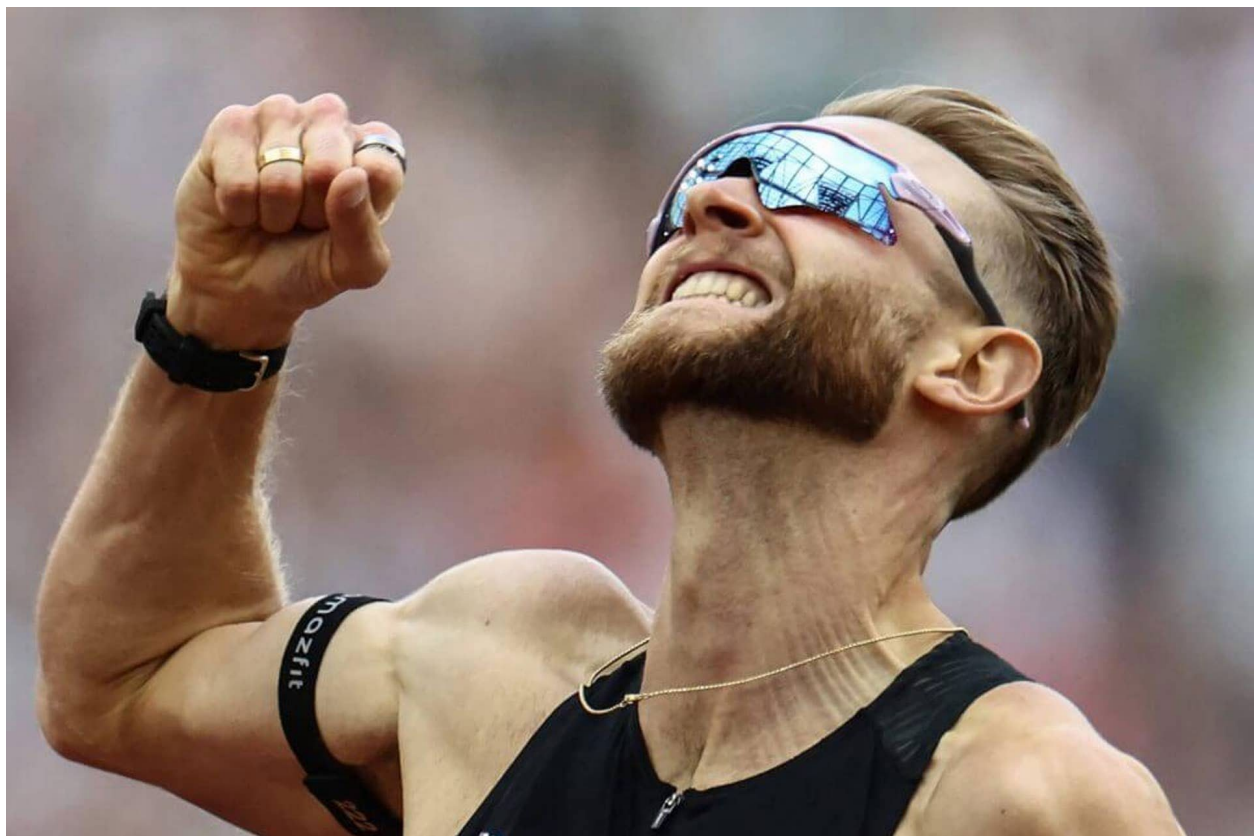
It means that El Guerrouj's time, which had stood for longer than any previous mile world record, is finally broken.

“That was not me, that was my team every single step,” Kerr said in an on-track interview, a reference to the support that Brooks had given him in developing a bespoke spike and speed suit for this race.

There were six other personal bests in the field, including a German national record for fourth-place Robert Farken (3:46.82s), as nine men broke 3:50s — that feat has only occurred previously at the Prefontaine Classic (Oregon, USA) and the Oslo Diamond League meet.

Kerr covered the first 1,500m in 3:27.62s, an improvement on his British record time from the 2024 Olympic final (3:27.79s), and held his form immaculately to hit the line to the sound of a roaring crowd.

The making of Josh Kerr’s mile world record: Altitude training, technology and teamwork



Josh Kerr set a new mile world record of 3:42.66s in London on July 18. Henry Nicholls / AFP via Getty Images

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With a fist pump as he crossed the line, Josh Kerr cashed in a check that he had spent eight months writing.

The clock stopped at 3:42.66s and the London crowd erupted.

A Briton, on home soil, [had just taken down a world record from 1999](#). Hicham El Guerrouj's time of 3:43.13s, once considered untouchable, was no longer.

"I'm following the footsteps of the giants," Kerr told reporters afterwards, referencing the fact he is the seventh British man to hold the mile world record, 72 years after Roger Bannister broke the four-minute barrier for the first time.

This performance was the product of Kerr's self-branded Project 222 — the number of seconds that go into 3:42. He pitched it to Brooks, his sponsor, last November, just four weeks after hobbling to the finish in the 1500m World Championship final because of a calf injury.

"The body is electric right now," said Kerr. "I felt pretty incredible. My legs felt good, my mind was ready, but it's been a long journey."

Kerr does not so much race middle-distance events as play poker within them, always running in sunglasses and being one of the smartest at showing his hand late and covering moves by others. By the same analogy, with this project, he went all-in on a blind hand — and won.

The split of 3:27.62s at 1500m was even quicker than Kerr's British record run, which [earned him silver at the 2024 Paris Olympics](#), and he was near-perfect when cutting the race in half. He passed 800 metres in 1:51.1s, then pacemaker number one Brannon Kidder dropped out, and then Kerr clocked the second 809m in 1:51.6s. "I knew I had it in the first 400m because my pacemakers did an incredible job," he said.

The preparation for this race was intense, and needed to be for the 2.68s improvement the 28-year-old produced compared to his own previous best time. But what made it a reality?



Brooks crafted Kerr a bespoke spike, [made for his mechanics and to run 55-second laps on repeat](#), in addition to an aerodynamically tested speed suit. The process of creating his footwear involved VO2-max (how much oxygen your body can use during intense exercise) and perception testing, plus a visit to a bespoke facility to run on a treadmill in the race-day spikes.

Kerr spoke about the “sacrifice” his team-mates and his family had made. For the past five weeks, his parents have lived with him at altitude in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to enable Kerr to train on a track at 1,626m (5,335ft) above sea level, with his mother Jill providing physiotherapy.

“The mantra was that we’re not chasing world records, we’re creating the conditions where world records become inevitable,” Kerr said.

That meant 70-mile weeks and running as many 55-second laps as possible. One of the key sessions was a 4 x 800m workout, with the third and fourth reps at 1:50, in which Kerr tested spike prototypes.



Nothing was left to chance in Kerr’s world record attempt. Henry Nicholls / AFP via Getty Images

Fellow Brooks Beasts athlete Kidder played rabbit in the race, just like he had in training. He hoped to get to 1,000m rather than 800m, and suffered because of a slightly fast opening lap (54.75s).

“I knew Josh was really fit, so I felt a little bit of pressure to not mess things up,” he said afterwards. “Josh just looked so good. I was like, ‘If he wants to squeeze, I don’t want to get in the way’. (It’s) such a cool moment. I’ve known the guy for years. He’s a gamer.”

Their relationship goes back to 2017, when Kidder was already running for Brooks and they recruited Kerr, a three-time NCAA champion, from the University of New Mexico.

Kerr first shared his desire to break the world record in December and asked if Kidder wanted to be involved. Little convincing was needed.

Zan Rudolf also stepped in as a late replacement after another pacer dropped out. He and Kerr did one ‘workout’ together the day before the race — 300m, 200m and 100m at target pace — as Rudolf only arrived in midweek, having been in Budapest for other pacemaking duties. The Slovenian went three-tenths of a second quicker than his own national record to lead Kerr through the kilometre mark in 2:18.7s, also dropping out short (he planned to go to 1,200m).

Coach Danny Mackey, who has worked with Kerr since he turned professional in 2018, was watching from the stands. He said he was “a little worried” to have the Scot running alone that early but had complete faith in his athlete.

“That was the most elated I’ve ever been,” said Mackey afterwards. “In the lead-up to the race, there have been cameras and attention on us, something we just aren’t used to. We all knew he could do it. I told him I love him.”

Kerr, however, relished the high-pressure moment, which is partly why he publicised his record-breaking attempt back in March. “He’s a rare person like that, but he’s still human,” Mackey said.

The coach’s one complaint? That it was *only* 3:42.66s. “Based on a couple of his workouts, if he had better weather, I think there’s another second there,” mused Mackey.

Mild crosswinds meant conditions were not perfect. They knew that coming in, and Kerr was happy to roll the dice to do this in front of a home crowd, whereas Mackey would have staged it in Monaco or California.

He and Mackey work as a coach-athlete pairing because of their differences in opinion. “I’m a little bit of a bodyguard,” said Mackey.

An 800m personal best for Kerr in mid-May confirmed what Mackey and the team knew in training: his top-end speed was better than ever, and he had rediscovered the “final form” that Kidder saw in 2025, but a calf injury prevented it from fully flourishing. This was not, as Kerr put it in the pre-race press conference, his “first time” being in mile world-record shape; rather, the “first moment” he could dedicate a season to target it.

Kidder paced Kerr in a 1,200m time trial at altitude at the start of July. They simulated their shakeout run and physio treatment to mimic race day. “(We were) working on every detail that we possibly could to come to London, an international trip, and (make it) like a practice.”

Kerr finished the time trial in 2:42.45s, more than five seconds quicker than El Guerrouj’s split in his world record run. “I was like ‘Oh man, let’s line it up tomorrow, he’s got this in the bag,’” Kidder remembers. Kidder was already convinced, having seen Kerr finish a workout totalling 4,000m at world-record speed — four sets of 200m, 600m, 200m.

It’s easy to see now why Kerr and the whole team were so full of belief. “It won’t look like a chase,” he insisted pre-race, preferring the word “pursuit” instead.



Britain's Josh Kerr set a new world record in front of his home crowd in LondonHarry
Murphy/Getty Images

Kerr held pace throughout the final lap, pulling away from Yared Nuguse (who finished second in 3:45.69s). The American had been close behind when they hit the bell, but faded to finish a little over three seconds back.

"It was just deafening, that last 200m," Nuguse said afterwards. "I've never heard a stadium that loud."

If one moment captures things perfectly, it was the evening before race day. Instead of dissecting possible outcomes or making last-minute adjustments, Kerr and co were at the warm-up track. He was a stand-in videographer as Brooks staff — including assistant coach Julian Florez and chef Jamil Austin — took part in a mile race of their own.

They ran relay legs of 200m each to see if they could beat Kerr: a finish time of 3:55 was 13 seconds slower than the Scotsman would run the next day.

"If it was just me, he wouldn't do it," Mackey said. "We are all really tight, and that creates an atmosphere for Josh to thrive."

Correction: A previous version of this article incorrectly reported the previous record for the mile. It was 3:43.13, not 3:43.16. The article has been corrected. The article also has been updated to clarify that Josh Kerr improved his previous best mile run by 2:68.

"It is very overwhelming. There was a lot of hype," Kerr said in the mixed zone. "I am surrounded by amazing people, so I have continued to put the work in, so I knew I had a 3:42 in me. I nearly lost it there at the end, but I got over the line."

He has repeatedly spoken of the British legacy in the event — he's the seventh British man to hold the mile world record, and the first since Steve Cram in 1985. "The last lap was incredible. I was deaf in the last 110 meters," Kerr added.

Elsewhere, Cierra Jackson won the women's discus with the final throw of the competition, launching a 71.72m effort to beat fellow American Valarie Sion and break the Diamond League record of Sandra Perkovic from 2018 (71.38m), adding nearly four meters to her previous personal best.

“I’m so happy, I definitely wasn’t expecting that, I knew it was in there, just not when it was going to come,” the 23-year-old said in an on-track interview after her maiden Diamond League win. Her throw is the second-furthest this year (behind Sion’s 73.10m in April at Ramona) and she jumps from 66th to 15th on the all-time list.

Inside Josh Kerr’s mile world-record attempt: Bespoke spikes, speed suits and 800m races



On Saturday at the London Diamond League, Josh Kerr will attempt to break the world record for the men's mile Brooks



By [Liam Tharme](#)

July 17, 2026 Updated July 18, 2026

Editors note: This article was written before the London Diamond League meet on Saturday, Josh Kerr has since [broken the world record](#) with a run of 3:42.66s.

“The problem is it’s so fast,” Danny Mackey says with a nervous laugh.

Mackey has spent the last eight months building up Olympic 1500-metre silver medalist Josh Kerr for his mile world-record attempt at the London Diamond League this Saturday.

“What’s weird is that he called it and is doing it in an actual race,” Mackey, who has coached the Briton since he turned professional in 2018, adds. “That’s not something that happens.”

Kerr is using the rare opportunity of a year without a global championship — the last off-season was the Covid-affected 2020, and there won’t be another until 2030 — to try and beat the three minutes, 43.13 seconds run by Hicham El Guerrouj in 1999, a time that has stood longer than any previous men’s mile world record.

‘Project 222’ is how this record attempt has been billed, and it is based on the number of seconds the 28-year-old wants to run the mile (equating to 3:42s). To support the Briton, there has been plenty of research, testing and product development.

The Athletic spoke to multiple people to understand the science behind Kerr’s world record attempt:

- Danny Mackey: Kerr’s long-time coach, and lead coach for Brooks Beasts Athletic Club
- Bryan Conrad: Senior manager of run research at Brooks, his sponsor
- Danny Orr: Senior director of product development at Brooks
- Brad Wilkins: PhD in human physiology, professor and director at the University of Oregon’s ‘Performance Research Laboratory’



The technology: Bespoke spikes and speed suit

“We’ve got to deliver just as much as Josh,” says Orr, who spent 15 years at New Balance before he joined Brooks last June. Just five months later, Kerr pitched his record-breaking idea.

Since foregoing his final year of NCAA eligibility and turning professional, Kerr has been a Brooks athlete, allowing the brand to build nearly a decade of data explaining how he runs.

Kerr has won Olympic and world championship medals running in non-personalised Brooks spikes. For Saturday’s attempt, the approach has been different.

Orr explains their thought process: “There are opportunities to make marginal gains: put a new (foam) formula, change the plate or the pins. But we’re building something from the ground up, reinventing the way we think about this type of product and trying to be led by Josh and the data.”

The process? A lot of computational modelling, in-the-lab and on-the-track testing, and multiple prototypes.

The result? A one-of-one spike built for Kerr and his biomechanics, which Orr says is “optimised” for this race. It is built to go at 55.5 seconds per 400m, the speed that Kerr needs to hold for four laps to knock at least 2.22 seconds off his PB and beat El Guerrouj.

The appropriately named Hyperion 222 spike has little foam in the heel, a lot in the mid-foot, and an aggressive taper that cuts sharply to the toes. It’s designed to act as a rocker, propelling Kerr forwards. Brooks say it “breaks all previous (design) moulds” and the titanium pins are not available on the mass market. The parts, including a carbon-fibre plate, provide “maximum stiffness”.

One key detail is Kerr’s size. At 6ft 2in (187cm), he’s tall for his sport. “He’s bigger than most on the start line, his feet are generally bigger too,” Orr says.

That means more force and more potential energy to return. “He’s got a specific view of what locking his foot onto the (spike) platform looks like, so we’ve taken his feedback there,” he adds.

In the main, they have asked Kerr for his full trust. “He won’t mind me saying this — in some ways, we’ve scared him a little bit,” Orr smiles. “The prototypes were very rough. As we got into the second one, he could start to see the vision.”

How does Kerr find the spikes? “You feel like you can’t slow down,” he told *The Athletic* [in a recent interview](#). “They’ve taken the brakes off. It’s aggressive. They can run 55s (per lap), and, if it’s time to slow down, then those spikes aren’t going to let you. You might fall flat on your face.”

Josh Kerr wants to break the men’s mile world record: ‘There’s no reason to be quiet’



Josh Kerr will attempt to break the men's mile world record in London this weekend. Kirill Kudryavtsev / AFP via Getty Images



By [Liam Tharme](#)

July 16, 2026

Between sips of coffee, Josh Kerr contemplates achieving greatness.

“If you want to be remembered as the best miler ever, you have to go after these records,” he says over a video call.

Born and bred in Edinburgh, Scotland, his accent today is tinged with American English, which stems from having moved in his teens to the United States, where he won three NCAA titles and broke the U.S. collegiate 1,500m record while attending the University of New Mexico.

Albuquerque in that state is his home now, though this summer the focus is on being back in the United Kingdom to pursue history.

On Saturday, at the Diamond League meet in London, the 2024 Olympic 1,500-meter silver medallist is targeting a takedown of Hicham El Guerrouj’s men’s mile world-record time of 3 minutes, 43.13 seconds, which the Moroccan set in 1999.

The Scotsman is as defiant as he is unapologetic when it comes to being ambitious.

Speak to Danny Mackey, who has coached Kerr since he turned professional in 2018, and he says the mindset shift is the Briton’s biggest development.

At age 28, he talks about how he wants to run: with complete conviction. “I’m not scared to lose. I don’t really care,” Kerr says. “I’m scared to not do myself justice, and I’m in full control of that. So there’s no reason to be quiet about things.”

In late March, just days after he [beat America’s reigning Olympic 1,500m champion Hocker into second place over 3,000m to win his second world indoor title](#), Kerr went public with Project 222, a name he devised based on the number of seconds he wants to run for the mile (it equates to 3:42 flat) at the London Stadium this weekend.

But the big question: why put a pin on a date and be so loud about it? Doesn’t that raise the stakes? Isn’t he setting himself up for failure?

“I’m sure it would be easier for some people to not come out and say it, to sneak their way around. It’s just not who I am, and it is not the way that I like to do the sport,” Kerr says.

“I was hoping to rattle some cages,” he adds, grinning.



Josh Kerr (right) won 3,000m gold at the World Indoor Championships in March. Kirill Kudryavtsev / AFP via Getty Images

He also sees the attempt as adding to the long British lineage in this event; from Roger Bannister breaking the four-minute-mile barrier in 1954 to the trio of Sebastian Coe (now World Athletics' president), Steve Ovett and Steve Cram, all of whom held the world record at various stages in the 1980s.

“For me, the only way you can affect this sport is by promoting it,” Kerr says. “I owe a lot to British and Scottish middle-distance running, and British athletics. This is my ode to that, and to the sport as well. I’m just saying, ‘This is my signature’, to go after something loudly, with my full team, my full heart, and whatever the result is going to be, we’ll stand up to that. But I’m telling you, it’s an all-out effort.”



It was only in January that Kerr stepped onto a track again, having been blighted by a calf injury sustained at the World Championships in Tokyo four months earlier.

He'd slowed near the line in his 1,500m semifinal and strained the calf in a tumble, having been nudged in the back by Timothy Cheruiyot as the Kenyan lunged for a top-four spot. Despite much physio work — performed by Kerr's physiotherapist mother Jill — in the two days before the final, the leg did not hold up. The defence of his 2023 world title ended in agony. The calf gave out at the 900m mark, and he hobbled to the finish.

"I was in great shape going into Japan, and I wasn't able to show that," he reflects. Mackey believed his conditioning was at world-record level, and, while Kerr won't give a direct answer on whether he agrees, he trusts the judgement of his coach.

"I pitched this (world-record attempt) to Brooks (his sponsor) back in November, when I hadn't been back on the track yet," he says. "It's how I want to run my career and, mentally, obviously I knew I was injured and I knew I had some problems, but I'm surrounded by amazing people with the right nutrition and the right physio. It was going to be as quick a turnaround as it could be."

There have been markers to hit along the way this season.

He set an 800m personal best in Los Angeles at the end of May, finally breaking the 1:45 barrier two months after his world indoor title. "Winning that world title was really important for this process," Kerr says, smiling as he remembers his March success. "I had a real appreciation for the amount of work it takes to get to that point."

Kerr was the world 1,500m indoor champion in 2024, winning gold on a 'home' track in Glasgow, Scotland, six months after out-kicking Jakob Ingebrigtsen to earn his maiden outdoor crown over the same distance at the World Championships in Budapest. "When you win a world title and then you get another one, back to back, within five or six months... you feel like they're going to come around very often," he says, knowing first-hand how brutal and unforgiving middle-distance racing can be.

In 2024, he had his sights set on Olympic gold. "There was no shying away from the fact that I wanted to win the Olympics. I didn't quite do that," Kerr says.

That day in Paris, he ran 3:27 to set a British record and a huge personal best. He [timed his kick perfectly to beat rival Ingebrigtsen](#), but Hocker finished even faster to deny him gold. "I had my best race ever," Kerr says, "and when you're racing other people you have those variables that you can't control."



Cole Hocker celebrates winning Olympic gold in Paris with Kerr taking silver. Steph Chambers / Getty Images

Kerr will return to Glasgow after Saturday's race in east London to compete over that same distance at the Commonwealth Games — the first time the mile has featured in that event since 1966 (it's been the slightly shorter 1,500m for the intervening 14 editions). Then, if he and coach Mackey consider it feasible, he could end the season competing at the European Championships in Birmingham, England, in the middle of August.

"It's funny that I hear people saying, 'It's an off year' (with no Olympics or World Championships), and that is the opposite of what I feel like this year is," Kerr says. "Being in the prime time of my career and going after huge goals makes it feel like a really important year — and that puts the pressure on me a little bit."

[What You Should Read Next](#)



[Josh Kerr and Jake Wightman were once club mates. Now they are rivals for gold](#)

[Jake Wightman ended Britain's 38-year wait for a global men's 1,500m medal, then Josh Kerr made it two world titles in as many summers](#)

But Kerr does have the opportunity to dedicate a whole season to one non-championship race and a world record almost as old as he is.

Because of the rescheduling caused by the pandemic, the past five summers have presented opportunities for outdoor global-level medals — Kerr earned one of each hue during this period. Next year, the World Championships are in Beijing, China, before focus moves onto the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles.

“It’s not a record that you can fall upon,” Kerr says. He believes there are two ways to approach El Guerrouj’s long-standing milestone. Either at the end of an “amazing season”, providing there is enough mental energy left, “or you can turn the whole season into it”.

To an extent, he knows what this will take.

Kerr holds the quickest time indoors for two miles (8:00.67s, at the 2024 Millrose Games in New York City) and now, over half that distance, needs to improve his personal best and Scottish record by 2.22s if he is to dethrone El Guerrouj. “I’ve gone after records before,” Kerr says, and immediately caveats. “But this is another step above that.”

Help comes from Brooks, his long-standing sponsor, which is producing a bespoke speed suit and spike for the race. London Diamond League meet organizers are also allowing him to both choose the pacemakers and control the field size.

Kerr describes the target pace as “humbling”. Mackey has had him running 800m reps of it in training. “It is one of those paces that never feels all that comfortable. From a strength

standpoint, we're in a really good spot," Kerr says. "But there's only a certain level of comfort you can have with 55.5 (seconds per lap)."

For someone as meticulous, obsessive and as much of a student of the game as Kerr, one wonders how many times he has watched the slightly [grainy footage of El Guerrouj setting the record](#) in Rome, Italy, in 1999.

"A good amount, I'd say. I'm a good portion of the views," he smirks. That video has 2.9 million hits on YouTube.

Kerr is dreaming of achieving something even faster on Saturday.

He wants to be remembered as the best miler ever.

[Liam Tharme](#) is one of The Athletic's Football Tactics Writers (and sometimes athletics). He graduated from Chichester University with an MSc in Sports Performance Analysis in 2022, and was previously an academy performance analyst. He was one of MHP Group's award-winning 30 Journalists to Watch in 2025.

They did a wear test in a session when Kerr ran in old spikes and a couple of prototypes.

"I went into that day pretty nervous because it was recent, not six months ago," Kerr says.

"I didn't know how many more changes we could make. I went up to the spike team, told them that I'm feeling nervous, and asked how they were feeling. They were like, 'We feel f***ing great'. I thought, 'OK, that's good, because that's what I would say before a race'."

In addition to the spikes is a bespoke speed suit. It's made from two fabrics and has breathable features: laser-cut holes, deliberately few seams, and moisture-wicking panels. Multiple versions were crafted because London has unpredictable summer weather and they were tested in wind tunnels for aerodynamic analysis.



Josh Kerr will be running in a bespoke speed suit in London Brooks

“There’s nothing we leave on the table that we think could have given him even a fraction of a per cent towards that goal,” says Bryan Conrad, whose research department works across all distances (100m to 100 miles) and surfaces to support athletes “who are trying to push the limits”.

The training: Simplified and at target pace

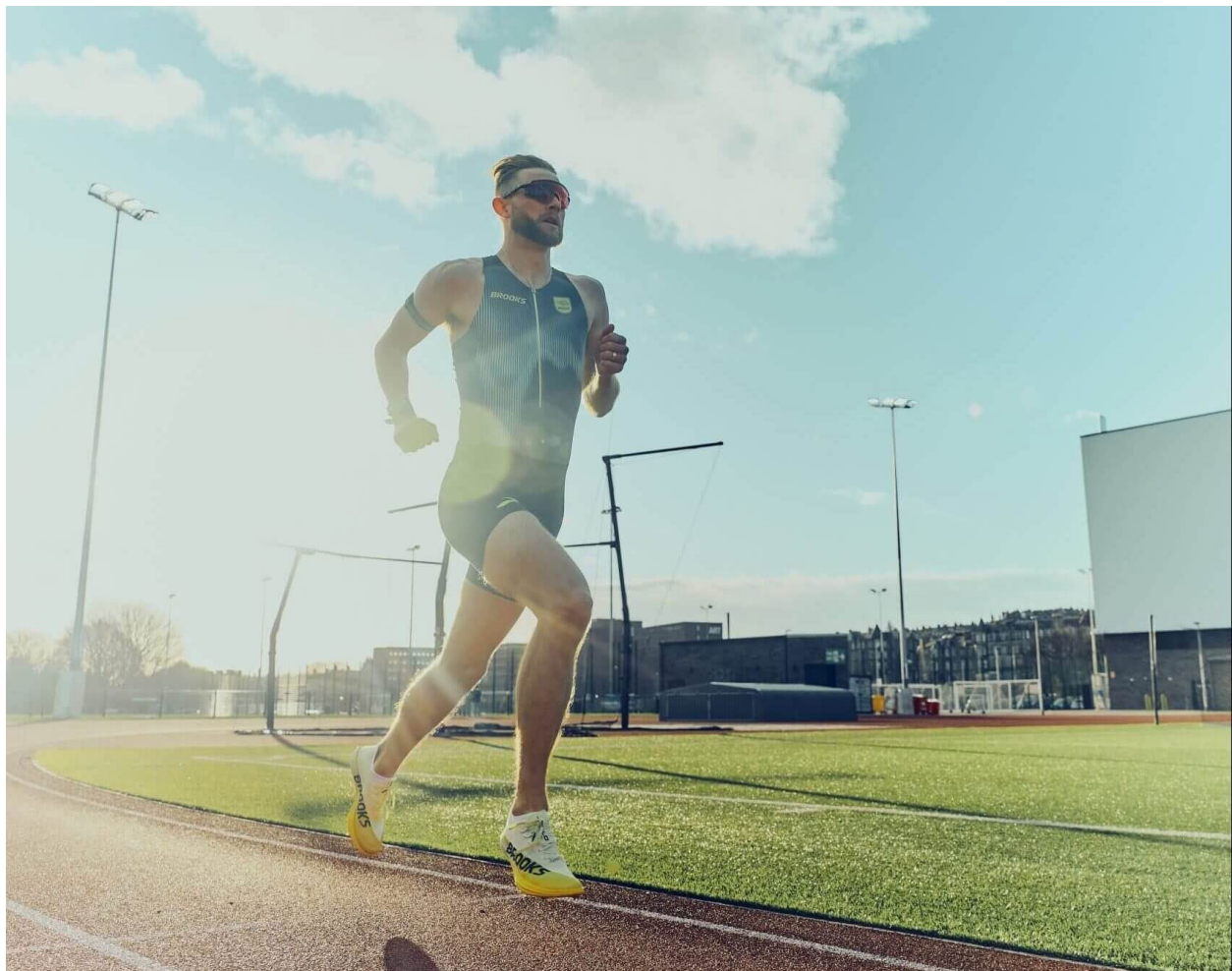
Kerr has dedicated his year to this. That meant rebuilding from a grade two calf strain at the World Championships last September, which he sustained at the end of the 1500m semifinal and tried to race through. He hobbled to the finish line in the final as the defence of his 2023 title ended in agony.

“Given the injury and nature of it, I didn’t know how he would heal,” says Mackey. “He didn’t get on a track until January. This will be Josh’s opening mile of the year.”

Mackey adjusted Kerr's indoor schedule. Winning world indoor gold over 3,000m in March was a big moment, [particularly as he beat Olympic 1500m champion Cole Hocker](#), who had come out on top the month prior over two miles at Millrose Games.

"I've gradually added in more sprint work," Mackey explains. The first time Kerr went "full bore" was for an 800m PB (1:44.60s) in Los Angeles at the end of May. He has only raced once since then, another 800m last month. "We go into a cave and train. You'll see him in July," Mackey said on a video call in mid-June between Kerr's two races.

His mileage is consistently around 70 per week, with strength and 1500m work prioritised. "I felt pretty secure in what we did in 2025," Mackey says, believing Kerr was in world-record shape last year, which is why they have not made drastic changes.



The Briton has been training at the University of New Mexico Brooks

In some senses, the preparation has been simplified. They are training to run at a set pace rather than preparing for the various tactics and pace changes that a championship final might throw up.

Kerr offers an analogy: “We’re playing a video game. There are no variables with this opponent.” When he ran 8:00.67s for two miles indoors in early 2024, a world-best performance, “we were just making sure he beat Grant (Fisher) and Cole (Hocker),” Mackey says.

Track sessions always look the same. Kerr lives at high altitude in Albuquerque and trains at the University of New Mexico, where he won multiple collegiate titles in his teens and set a 1500m record. He has stayed there ever since, and chases Mackey round the track, with the coach cycling in front.

The major difference to other training blocks is the work at target pace. “We did some 800m reps at 1:50s. Even though he felt good and controlled, I didn’t want him to run faster,” Mackey says. “I wanted to see how he felt at this pace.”

Kerr is rather philosophical about it. “You can understand the pace, you run it as much as possible, and try and feel comfortable with it, but there’s only a certain level of comfort you can have.”

One of the biggest efforts was a session of four sets of 200m, 600m, 200m, with short recoveries in between and four minutes rest between sets. All repetitions were run at world-record speed or quicker, in white-out spike prototypes, totalling 4,000m of work. At the start of July, he ran a 1200m time trial (three-quarters of a mile), and looked in control when he went through 800m on pace.



The physiology: The three key factors to running at world-record pace

On the simplest level, Kerr needs to run as quickly as he did in the Olympic 1500m final two summers ago, and then keep going for another 109m. He set a huge PB (3:27.79s) that day and earned a British record to go with his silver medal.

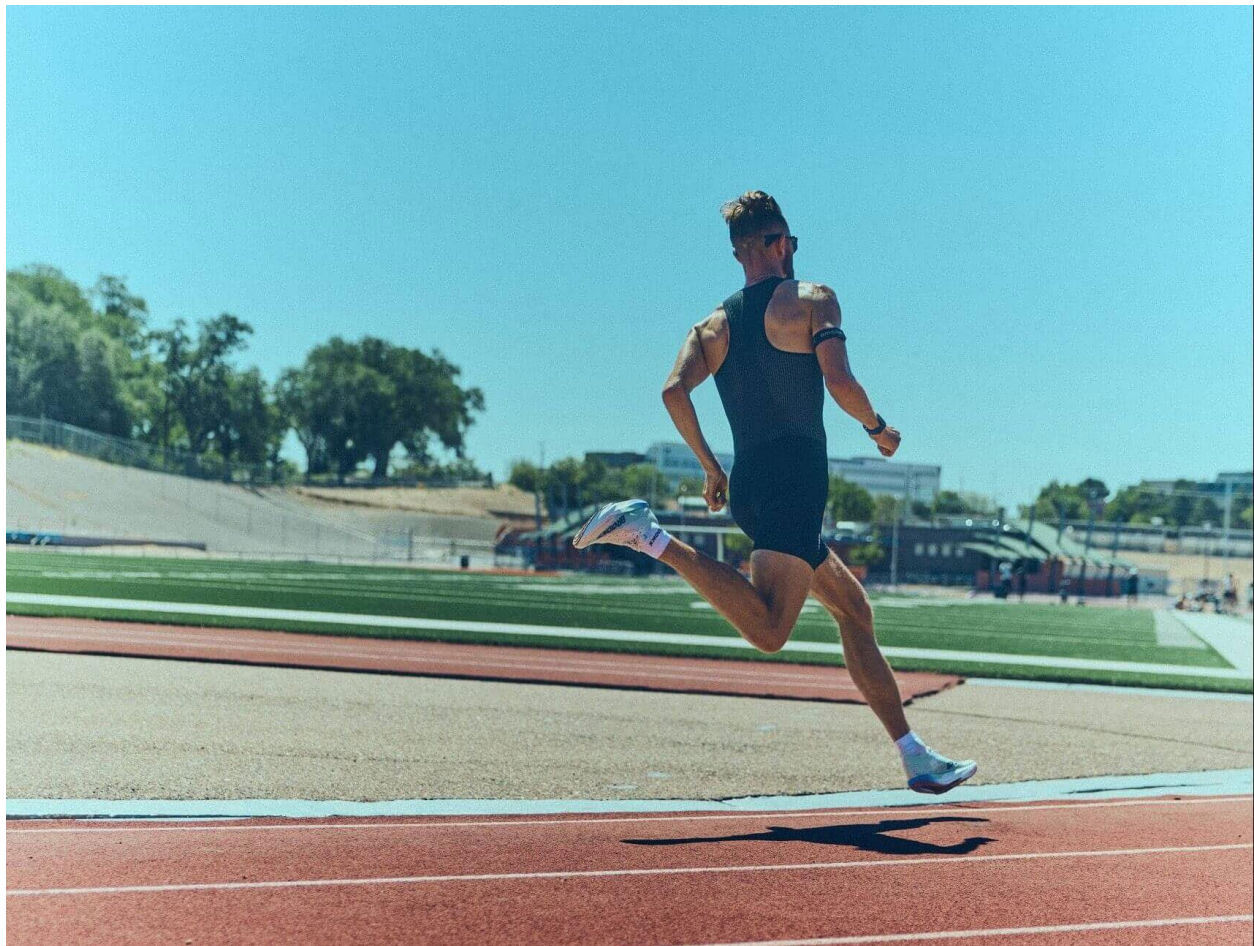
His raw speed now is better than it was then. “Coming (into the attempt) from these fast 800m races gives me confidence that he’s got the ability. I think he has the physiology,” says Brad Wilkins.

He has not worked with Kerr directly but has been a part of similar projects: Nike’s Breaking2 event in 2019, when they staged an attempt at a 1:59 marathon, and Breaking4 last summer, in which they tried (and came up short) to break another barrier — [the women’s four-minute mile](#).

“We know a lot about the physiology of the mile, but a little less about the mechanics and the nuance that might limit (an athlete),” he adds.

In short, he won’t give a definitive answer, though he’s cautiously optimistic.

There are three key factors, Wilkins explains, for running a world-record mile. First, “big anaerobic capacity”, which refers to energy created without oxygen, a process that happens more quickly than aerobic respiration but lasts for a very short period.



Kerr has been working to a target pace Brooks

Secondly, a high VO2 max — the maximum oxygen uptake for an athlete during exercise — because it means the “oxygen deficit” is smaller and redlining is delayed. Third, an individual’s capacity to “recruit as many motor units” as possible. These house muscle fibres, and the more that are recruited, the more forceful the muscle contractions are.

It’s why Wilkins puts stock in Kerr’s faster two-lap runs, because they demonstrate all three factors. “That is a big deal coming into these 1500/mile distances, where you need to

sustain those speeds. (It's important to) have the energetics or the aerobic capacity, but if athletes don't have that top-end speed, then I'm much more sceptical."

For Brooks, testing has been multi-faceted. They have a physiologist who has done perception, metabolic and VO2 max testing with Kerr, including visiting them at their altitude camp in New Mexico.

Conrad, the lead on the run research teams, explains an extra step they took: "We partnered with a lab that has a unique treadmill that you can run on with spikes, to test him in the footwear he'll be wearing for the event. (That way) we could get the detailed measurements of how much oxygen he's using, how his muscles are working, how his biomechanics change through that spike."



The race: Pacemakers and a small field

If it were up to coach Mackey, this attempt would be in Monaco or Carolina because of the more reliable conditions. Kerr wanted London and the Diamond League organisers have given him control over the race. Brandon Kidder, one of his Brooks Beasts team-mates, will be on pacemaking duties, alongside Zan Rudolf, the lead rabbit on the European circuit.

Mackey says there were discussions about a potential third pacer, someone to run on the outside of Kerr in case nobody went with him.

Field size has been kept small because, in the men's 1500m at this meet last year, a tangle of legs with 200m to go caused Australian Cam Myers to fall. "As long as everyone stays on their feet it's an open race," Kerr says.

The fastest mile on British soil is El Guerrouj's 3:45.96s in 2000 at Crystal Palace. There are 16 performances quicker than that, including Kerr's PB run to win the Prefontaine Classic in 2024.

The consensus is that he's got the best chance of coming close if someone else is pushing him right to the line.

Second on the all-time list is Noah Ngeny in 3:43.40s, when he finished second and just three tenths behind El Guerrouj in the record-setting run. "That's when the best results come," Kerr says. "There's only been one or two races that I've seen as fast as this without any kind of competition."

Yared Nuguse's presence is significant. The American record holder is fourth on the all-time list — and is just one of four men to run 3:43-something, achieving that by finishing runner-up to Jakob Ingebrigtsen at the 2023 Prefontaine Classic.



This project is clearly an opportunity for Brooks and Kerr to put themselves in the spotlight and attract attention.

In 2021, when Kerr won bronze at the delayed Tokyo Olympics — his first senior global medal — the Scot was racing in a pair of unmarked Nike Vaporflys because his sponsor did not have a '[super spike](#)'.

Orr, who helped lead the spike development, says its focus is the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. "This is stage one in terms of what 2028 looks like. It's a really fun opportunity to try some stuff, knowing that we have a little bit of time between now and then to get that right."

This is also a chance for Kerr to fulfil something he said Brooks pitched when they recruited him in 2018. "This is where we wanted to get to," he says.

A decade-long career and eight months of work are about to boil down into less than four minutes.

[Liam Tharme](#) is one of The Athletic's Football Tactics Writers (and sometimes athletics). He graduated from Chichester University with an MSc in Sports Performance Analysis in 2022, and was previously an academy performance analyst. He was one of MHP Group's award-winning 30 Journalists to Watch in 2025.

From Walt Murphy:

Following the race plan to perfection, Great Britain's (and Scotland's) Josh Kerr won the mile in 3:42.66 to break the 27-year old World Record of 3:43.13 that was set by Morocco's Hicham El Guerrouj in 1999. Kerr had made known his intention to go after the record on this meet back in March.

With pacers Brannon Kidder (54.75m, 1:50.63m), Kerr's training partner, and Slovenia's Žan Rudolf (800-1000) setting the tempo for the first 2-1/2 laps, Kerr was in front when he went through the ¾-mile split in 2:47.3. Yared Nuguse was doing his best to stay with Kerr, but he started to lose contact on the backstretch.

With the crowd of 60,000 going wild, Kerr was all alone as he finished off his historic run and brought the mile record back into British hands for the first time since Steve Cram's 3:46.32 stood from July 27, 1985-September 5, 1993.

Nuguse hung on to finish 2nd in a fine 3:45.69, 2nd only to his American Record of 3:43.97 on the All-Time U.S. list. Next with personal bests were Jake Heyward (GBR/3:46.73), Robert Farken (GER/3:46.82/NR), Nathan Green (USA/3:48.05/#7 A-T U.S.), Arlo Ludewick (GBR/3:48.17)...7.Ethan Strand (USA/3:49.13), DNF-Simeon Birnbaum

From Chat GPT:

Josh Kerr lives in **Albuquerque, New Mexico**, at an elevation of approximately **5,300–5,600 feet (1,615–1,700 meters)** above sea level. The exact elevation depends on where in the city you are, since Albuquerque rises from west to east.

More recently, reports have noted that:

- His **house sits around 6,000 feet** above sea level, chosen because his coaches found he responds especially well to that altitude.
- For his mile world-record preparation, he went even further by converting his bedroom into a **simulated altitude chamber**, increasing the effective sleeping altitude to about **8,250–10,000 feet (2,500–3,050 meters)** while continuing to train and live in Albuquerque.

This "live high, train smart" approach helps stimulate the production of red blood cells, improving oxygen-carrying capacity and endurance—one reason Albuquerque is a popular base for elite distance runners.