

Blugold Women Lead WIAC Teams In NCAA Nationals

Posted: Saturday, November 18, 2006

WEST CHESTER, Ohio - The UW-Eau Claire women's cross country team led two Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference teams in the NCAA Division III cross country nationals, finishing 12th in the 32-team field.

WIAC champion UW-La Crosse placed 15th in the meet which was won by Middlebury College of Vermont by a single point over Amherst College of Massachusetts.

After placing fourth in last week's NCAA Midwest Regional and advancing as one of 16 at-large teams, the Blugolds were the second highest regional finisher out of five participants at the national meet. Midwest champion Washington University of Missouri placed fourth in the meet. Midwest runner-up North Central was one position behind the Blugolds in 13th place. La Crosse was third in the regional while the University of Chicago was fifth in the regional and placed 19th in the nationals.

The Blugolds' 12th place team finish is the second best in five NCAA appearances by UWEC teams. Only the 1997 team, which was the national runner-up, had a better performance.

During Eau Claire's 11 years in the NAIA nationals, the Blugolds had nine top 10 finishes including a national championship in 1984.

As she has all year, junior **Molly Warner** (*Mosinee*) was the top Blugold runner, finishing 43rd with a time of 24:03. As evidence of the slow course conditions, the result of heavy rains this past week in the Ohio Valley, Warner was 75th last year in 23:39.

Sophomore twins **Beth** and **Ellie Lutz** (*Eau Claire/Memorial*) were the second and third Blugold finishers, Beth placing 46th, just three seconds behind Warner in 24:06, and Ellie placing 112th in 25:03. While Warner and Beth Lutz ran together, **Christina Locke** (*Sr.-Racine/Horlick*) ran with Ellie Lutz, finishing a second behind her in 114th with a 25:04 clocking.

The other three Blugold runners were senior **Cassie Haak** (*Shoreview/Mounds View*) who was 183rd in 25:46, junior **Amber Hertz** (*Baraboo*) who was 218th in 26:14 and junior **Bridget Bocher** (*Watertown*) who was 232nd in 26:24.

A total of 279 runners finished the race which was won by Williamette's Sarah Zerzan in 22:31. The slowest time was 29:18.

Only Warner, Haak and Bocher ran in last year's nationals when the Blugolds placed 23rd out of 24 teams. The Lutz twins, Locke and Hertz were running in their first national competition.

Team Results / Individual Results

2006 NCAA Division III Cross Country Championships Web site

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