Women's Cross Country Takes Fifth At NCAA Championship

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HANOVER, Ind. - The UW-Eau Claire women's cross country team finished in fifth place out of 32 teams at the NCAA Division III Championship at L.S. Ayres Complex today.

The Blugolds' fifth place finish was their best since 1997 when the team took second. A season ago Eau Claire finished eighth, while they took 12th in 2006 and 23rd in 2005. The women's runners finished with 310 points this year.

Mary Palmer *(Sr.-Anoka, Minn.)* earned All-American honors and led the Blugolds, finishing in 26th place with a time of 21:34.82. A season ago, Palmer took 43rd at the national championship with a time of 22:25.3.

Beth Easker *(So.-Wittenberg, Wis./Wittenberg-Birnamwood)* was only 30 seconds behind Palmer, crossing the finish line at 22:04.73 in 55th place. Today was Easker's first appearance at nationals.

Freshman **Alyssa Sybilrud** *(Savage, Minn./Burnsville)* was the next Blugold finisher, taking 99th place with a time of 22:29.22. **Hannah Humbach** *(Jr.-Madison, Wis./Abundant Life Christian)* and **Jenna Smith** *(So.-Robbinsdale, MN/Cooper)* crossed the finish line within almost a second of each other to take 145th and 147th, respectively. Humbach finished with a time of 22:51.60, while Smith ran to a time of 22:52.84. A season ago, Humbach took 76th with a time of 22:45.5.

Ellie Lutz *(Sr.-Eau Claire, Wis./Memorial)* and **Molly Woodford** *(So.-Waukesha, Wis./South)* also ran for the Blugolds at this year's championship. Lutz was the sixth finisher for Eau Claire, taking 251st place overall with a time of 23:58.70, while Woodford finished 275th with a time of 24:49.02.

Middlebury won the national title with 179 points. Two years ago Middlebury also claimed the title. This was the fifth time in program history Middlebury won the national crown, previously winning in 2000, 2001, 2003 and 2006.

Calvin finished today in second place with 237 points and Williams took third with 240. Wartburg finished in fourth place with 284 points. UW-La Crosse took eighth place with 342 points and UW-Oshkosh finished 18th with 405.

On the individual side, Bethel's Marie Borner took the top spot on the 6,000-meter course out of 279 runners with a time of 20:43.91 and Amherst's Elise Tropiano finished second coming in nine seconds later. Oshkosh's Ayla Mitchell took third with a time of 21:02.91.

Complete Results

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