Men's Cross Country Places Fifth at Midwest Regional

By: BJ Pickard, Sports Information Student
Posted: Saturday, November 14, 2009 at 6:25 PM

WINNECONNE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The UW-Eau Claire men's cross country team placed fifth out of 39 teams in Saturday's NCAA Division III Midwest Regional Championship hosted by UW-Oshkosh.

The team finished with 169 points and an average time of 25:18. North Central College (Ill.) placed first with 21 points. UW-La Crosse took second with 105 points. Washington University (Mo.) took third with 118 points and UW-Platteville placed fourth with 124 points. North Central and UW-La Crosse automatically qualify for the NCAA Division III Championship which will be contested next Saturday in Highland Hills, Ohio.

The Blugolds' **Chris Wirtz** *(Sr.-Weston, Wis./D.C. Everest)* finished in ninth place with a time of 24:56. **Tom Breitbach** *(Jr.-Muskego, Wis.)* took 19th place with a time of 24:56. **Josh Wieland** *(Jr.-Menomonie, Wis.)* took 38th and finished in 25:26. **Ben Pearson** *(Sr.-Clinton, Wis.)* finished in 25:38, good for 49th place and **Brent Kann** *(Sr.-Rice Lake, Wis.)* finished in 25:42 for 54th place. **Mark Sanders** *(Sr.-Hammond, Wis./St. Croix Central)* and **Max Renner** *(Jr.-Green Bay, Wis./East)* finished in 26:19, good for 81st and 82nd places, respectively.

Wirtz and Breitbach earned All-Region honors for their performances. The top 35 runners at the event make the All-Region team.

Michael Spain of North Central took first place with a time of 24:17.

The Blugolds are ranked 25th nationally in the U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association poll and will now have to wait until tomorrow to see if the team or an individual are selected to compete at nationals next weekend.