

Women's Cross Country Wins National Title

By: Kevin Meinholz, Sports Information Director

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HIGHLAND HILLS, Ohio (UWECBlugolds.com) - The UW-Eau Claire women's cross country team won the 2009 NCAA Division III National Championship at Highland Park Golf Course today.

The national title is the second in program history but is the first NCAA Division III title. In 1984, the Blugolds won an NAIA national championship. The NCAA title is also just the third in Blugold Athletics history as the softball team picked up one in 2008 and men's golf won one in 2001.

The Blugolds, who won Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference and NCAA Midwest Regional titles earlier this season, have steadily progressed over the past few seasons to get to this point. After taking second at nationals in 1997, the Blugolds did not compete at the meet for seven years. They have been at the last four prior to 2009, however, and took 23rd in 2005, 12th in 2006, eighth in 2007 and fifth last season.

At the national meet today, the Blugolds finished with 171 points while St. Lawrence took second with 180 and Calvin College was third with 195. Last year's national champion, Middlebury College was fourth with 244 points and MIT took fifth with 254. UW-Oshkosh and UW-La Crosse also competed at the meet and took 13th and 17th, respectively.

The Blugolds were led today by **Alyssa Sybilrud** (So.-Savage, Minn./Burnsville), who took 21st overall with a time of 22:36.2. **Margaret Ho** (Jr.-Wisconsin Rapids, Wis./Lincoln) was the Blugolds' second finisher as she took 33rd with a time of 22:50.5. Both Sybilrud and Ho earned All-American status for their performance.

Beth Easker (Jr.-Wittenberg, Wis./Wittenberg-Birnamwood) came in next for the Blugolds in 44th place while **Hannah Humbach** (Sr.-Madison, Wis./Abundant Life) was right behind her in 45th place. Easker came in with a time of 23:03.4 and Humbach finished with a time of 23:04. **Jenna Smith** (Sr.-Robbinsdale, Minn.) was the last finisher for the Blugolds to score points as she came in 110th with a time of 23:41.7.

Also competing at nationals for the Blugolds were **Elly Prunty** (Jr.-Antigo, Wis.) and **Kacey Rindy** (So.-Fennimore, Wis.), who took 120th and 138th overall.

Wendy Pavlus of St. Lawrence took the top spot as she lead 280 individuals with a time of 21:28.