

Women's Cross Country Revved Up For Nationals

Posted: Wednesday, November 16, 2005

DELAWARE, OH - The UW-Eau Claire women's cross country team will finish their spectacular season this Saturday when it competes in the NCAA Division III National Championships, hosted by Ohio Wesleyan University at the MTSO & Dornoch Golf Club.

Eau Claire qualified for the event by being one of the five top teams in the NCAA Division III Midwest Regionals on Saturday. The team took fourth out of 39 teams with 194 points.

The nationals will consist of 24 teams from eight regions throughout the country. There will also be 47 individuals racing, whose teams did not qualify for the event.

The team has taken fourth place in three events this year, the other two being the WIAC Championships and the UW-La Crosse Invite. It has taken third twice, in the Lake Wissota Tri-Meet and then also in St. Olaf event. The team has come in runner-up in the Roy Griak Invitational and at the home Blugold Open. The first race of the year, the UW-River Falls race, the team took the top spot.

The top Blugold runner has been **Molly Warner** (*So.-Mosinee*). She has finished first for Eau Claire in every event but one. She helped the team march on to nationals with a 22:01 race Saturday, her best time of the year. She was the fastest runner overall in the opening meet of the year and she has never finished below 16th this year overall.

Rachel Anderson (*Sr.-St. Paul, MN/Harding*) has also had a great year. She finished first in the conference championships for the Blugolds, finished second for the team in three other events and was the third Blugold to cross the line in three more events. Her best finish was second in the first race of the year, the UW-River Falls event. Her top time is 22:34.

Jane-Marie Ovanin (*Sr.-Amherst*) has been one of the top four Blugolds in every race but two. She finished second for the team twice, third three times and fourth once. Her personal best this season is 22:54. Her third-place race in River Falls was her best placement of the year.

Korah Petrasko (*Jr.-Appleton/East*) has brought it on as of late. She finished second for the team in regionals with her best time and team finish. The time was 22:30. She also finished third for Eau Claire in the WIAC Championships and fourth the race before.

Cassie Haak (*Sr.-Shoreview, MN/Mounds View*) finished fourth at the regionals. She had a season-best 23:06 race. She also finished sixth for the Blugolds in the WIAC Championships.

Another runner who stepped it up last race was **Bridget Bocher** (*So.-Watertown*). Her 23:07 race is her fastest of the year. She has also finished fourth for the team three times and fifth once.

Kasey Stanek (*Sr.-La Crosse/Central*) was the final member of the Eau Claire crew to cross the line last race, but did so with a season best 23:55. She finished fifth for the team in the conference championships.

The last time Eau Claire went to nationals was in 1997-98, where it took second overall. The team's record so far this year is 121-15. The most wins ever is 145 by the 1997-98 squad and the last team to go over 100 was the 113 in 2000-01. The 15 total in the loss column is the fewest since the eight of 1985-86. It is currently the third fewest in school history.

The Division III National Championship race will begin at 11:00 a.m. for the women.