

GREAT NORTHWEST ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

Contact: Bob Guptill (509-535-5291/Fax 535-5293/e-mail – bguptill@gnacsports.com)

Report No. 2A (Sept. 1, 2010)

USTFCCA National (Pre-Season): Men - 6. Western Washington, 16. Alaska Anchorage, 20. Western Oregon. **Women** - 3. Alaska Anchorage, 7. Western Washington, 14. Seattle Pacific. **Regional (Pre-Season): Men** – 1. Chico State; 2. Western Washington; 3. Alaska Anchorage; 4. Western Oregon; 5. Cal Poly Pomona; 6. Humboldt State; 7. Northwest Nazarene; 8. UC San Diego; 9. CSU Stanislaus; 10. BYU-Hawaii. **Women** – 1. Alaska Anchorage; 2. Chico State; 3. Western Washington; 4. Seattle Pacific; 5. Northwest Nazarene; 6. Cal Poly Pomona; 7. UC San Diego; 8. Cal State L.A.; 9. Western Oregon; 10. BYU-Hawaii.

For Most GNAC Teams Cross Country Season Begins This Weekend

The 2010 cross country season begins for seven of the 10 Great Northwest Athletic Conference teams this week in meets at Fairbanks, Billings, Bellingham and Honolulu.

Western Washington, which is the defending GNAC men's champion, opens its season at home in the Lake Padden Relays. Western Oregon and a partial team from Seattle Pacific will also compete.

The Falcons will also send athletes to Fairbanks to compete in a pair of meets on Thursday and Saturday along with Northwest Nazarene and host Alaska Fairbanks.

Alaska Anchorage, which is the defending GNAC women's and NCAA West Region team champion, is in Hawaii this weekend to compete Saturday in the Hawaii Pacific Invitational. Meanwhile, Montana State Billings makes its debut at home in the MSUB Open.

Central Washington begins its season Sept. 11 in the CWU Appleridge Invitational in Yakima, while Saint Martin's and Simon Fraser don't make their debuts until Sept. 18 at the UW Sundodger at Lincoln Park in Seattle.

Six GNAC teams are ranked nationally in the USTFCCA pre-season national poll, including three in the Top 10.

Western Washington's men, which returns three All-Americans from a team that placed fourth in the 2009 NCAA national meet, is ranked sixth. Alaska Anchorage, which placed 17th at nationals last fall, is ranked 16th and Western Oregon is ranked 20th.

On the women's side, Alaska Anchorage is ranked third, Western Washington is ranked seventh and Seattle Pacific is ranked 14th.

The Falcons finished fourth in last year's national meet, but graduated five of their top six runners including three-time national champion Jessica Pixler. UAA and WWU placed fifth and eighth last season in the national meet.

Nine of the Top 10 finishers from last year's men's conference meet return for another season including champion Marko Cheseto (Sr., Kapenguria, Kenya – Chewoyet) of Alaska Anchorage.

Also back from the Top 10 are Bennett Grimes (2nd, Sr., Pocatello, ID – Century), Jordan Welling (3rd, Sr., Burlington, WA – Burlington-Edison) and Blake Medhaug (9th, Sr., Bothell, WA), all from Western Washington; Cheseto, Alfred Kangogo (4th, Jr., Eldoret, Kenya – Kitale Boys) and Micah Chelimo (5th, So., Kapkoi, Kenya - Tambach), all from UAA; Chris Reed of Western Oregon (7th, Sr., Klamath Falls, OR); Kyle Van Santen of Saint Martin's (8th, Jr., Lake Stevens, WA) and Barak Watson of Northwest Nazarene (10th, So., Nampa, ID – Columbia).

Cheseto, Grimes, Welling, Medhaug, Chelimo, Reed and Watson are all former All-Americans.

Cheseto earned All-American honors in 2008 when he placed ninth before finishing 42nd last fall. Grimes, who placed 56th at the 2009 national meet, earned All-American honors in 2007 and 2008 with 43rd and 41st finishes, respectively.

Medhaug was also a 2008 All-American finishing 36th. He ended up 61st last fall. Welling, Reed, Watson and Chelimo all earned All-America honors in 2009 placing 13th, 35th, 38th and 40th, respectively. Welling also was an All-American in 2008 placing 29th.

In addition to Cheseto and Chelimo, UAA also returns 2008 All-American Jake Parisien (So., Palmer, AK), who redshirted last season after finishing second in the conference meet and 17th in the national meet two years.

On the women's side, four All-Americans and seven of the Top 10 finishers in last year's conference meet return. Gone, however, is Pixler.

That should make Sarah Porter (Sr., Hockinson, WA) of Western Washington the early favorite to win the conference and perhaps the regional and national titles as well. She finished second in all three races last fall.

Also back are All-Americans Lauren Breihof (Jr., Vancouver, WA – Mountain View) of Western Washington and Miriam Kipng'eno (So., Eldoret, Kenya) and Ruth Keino (Jr., Kapcheno, Kenya - Aldai) of Alaska Anchorage.

Breihof finished 31st at last year's national meet after placing ninth in the GNAC championships. Kipng'eno and Keino were 14th and 39th in the national meet and third and fifth in the conference meet.

Also returning from the Top 10 in the 2009 GNAC meet are UAA's Shoshana Keegan (4th, Jr., Anchorage, AK – Steller) and Hallidie Wilt (6th, Sr., Unalaska, AK) and Jaclyn Puga of Northwest Nazarene (10th, Sr., Meridian, ID – Nampa Christian).

With the loss of Pixler, Seattle Pacific's top returning finisher is Natty Plunkett (Jr., Bellevue, WA – Newport) who placed 11th.

AROUND THE GNAC: Central Washington returns a GNAC-best 10 male athletes from last year's meet, but just one finished higher than 38th. Seattle Pacific has eight returnees from its 2009 conference-meet lineup and Western Washington has seven. . .On the women's side, Northwest Nazarene and Western Oregon each have eight returnees and Alaska Anchorage and Central Washington each have seven placers from a year ago. . .Simon Fraser is the newest member of the GNAC, but the Clan will not compete in the conference meet which will be hosted by Central Washington in Yakima Nov. 6 due to a conflict with the NAIA Regionals in San Diego. SFU is a NCAA provisional member is not eligible to compete in the NCAA regional or national meet. The NCAA regional will be held Nov. 20 at Lake Padden in Bellingham. The national meet will be Dec. 4 at Louisville, Kentucky. The NAIA national meet will be Nov. 20 in Vancouver, Wash.

2010 GNAC Cross Country Schedule

September: 2 – Alaska Fairbanks Long-Course Dual (SPU, NNU, UAF). 4 – Alaska Fairbanks Short-Course Dual (SPU, NNU, UAF); MSU Billings Open (MSUB); Lake Padden Relays (SPU, WOU, WWU); Hawaii Pacific Invitational (UAA). 9 – Black Hills State Invitational (MSUB). 11 – CWU Appleridge Invitational (WWU, SPU, CWU); NNU Roger Curran Invitational (NNU); BYU-Hawaii Invitational (UAA). 18 – UW Sundodger at Lincoln Park (CWU, SFU, SPU, SMU, NNU, WOU); Montana State Invitational (MSUB). 24 – Western Oregon Open (WOU); Dickinson State Invitational (MSUB). 25 – Saint Martin's Invitational (WWU, SPU, SMU); Evergreen Invitational (SFU); BSU Bob Firman Invitational (NNU); Alaska Fairbanks at Chaminade; Spokane Erik Anderson Memorial Invitational (CWU); Stanford Invitational (WWU, SFU).

October: 2 – Willamette Charles Bowles Invitational (SPU, NNU, WOU, UAA); U. of Colorado Rocky Mountain Shootout (MSUB); Emerald City Invitational (SPU, CWU); Greater Louisville Classic (WWU). 8 – San Francisco State Invitational (CWU). 9 – Pacific Lutheran Invitational (CWU, SMU); Western Washington Tune-Up (SPU, SFU, WWU). 15 – Oregon City Mike Hodges Invitational (WOU). 16 – Santa Clara Invitational (NNU); Eastern Oregon Invitational (NNU); Inland Northwest Cross Country Classic at Cheney (CWU); Yellowjacket Invitational (MSUB); Concordia Classic (SFU). 21 – College of Idaho Invitational (NNU). 22 – U. of Mary Marauder Invitational (MSUB). 23 – Western Washington Invitational (WWU, SFU, SPU, SMU, CWU, UAF, UAA); Biola Invitational (SFU); Oregon State Beaver Classic (WOU).

November: 6 – GNAC Championships at Appleridge, Yakima; NAIA Regionals at San Diego, CA (SFU). 20 – NCAA Regionals at Lake Padden, Bellingham; NAIA Nationals at Vancouver, WA (SFU).

December: 4 – NCAA Nationals at Louisville, KY.

TEAM CAPSULES

ALASKA ANCHORAGE Seawolves

Head Coach: Michael Friess, Linfield '85 (21st year)

Assistants: T.J. Garlatz

2009 Conference Finish: Men – 2nd, 70. Women – 1st, 25.

2009 National Finish: Men – 17th, 415 (West Region - 3rd, 96). Women – 5th, 258 (West Region – 1st. 35).

Returning Conference Finishers: Men (6) – Marko Cheseto (Sr., 1st, 24:50); Alfred Kangogo (Jr., 4th, 25:12); Micah Chelimo (So., 5th, 25:13); Michael Adams (Jr., 31st, 27:21); Thomas Hill (So., 39th, 27:38); Paul Rottich (Sr., 42nd, 27:46). **Note:** Also returning for UAA is Jake Parisien, who placed second in the 2008 conference meet.

Women (7) – Miriam Kipng'eno (So., 3rd, 22:02); Shoshana Keegan (Jr., 4th, 22:06); Ruth Keino (Jr., 5th, 22:12); Hallidie Wilt (Sr., 6th, 22:16); Emma Bohman (Sr., 27th, 24:08); Alex West (Jr., 29th, 24:16); Ariel Rolle (Jr., 36th, 24:30).

ALASKA FAIRBANKS Nanooks

Head Coach: Scott Jerome, Bates '93 (7th year)

Assistant: Matt Dunlap.

2009 Conference Finish: Men – 8th, 219. Women – 7th, 196.

2009 National Finish: Men – 19th, 552 (West Region).

Women – 16th, 403 (West Region)

Returning Conference Finishers: Men (2) – Tyler Kornfield (So., 37th, 27:36); Lars Arneson (So., 72nd, 29:46). **Women (6)** – Theresia Schnurr (Jr., 17th, 23:33); Jana Bennedix (Jr., 39th, 24:32); Heather Edic (So., 44th, 24:44); Aurelia Korthauer (Sr., 70th, 26:22); Marit Rjabov (So., 72nd, 26:43); Rebecca Konieczny (Jr., 81st, 28:49).

CENTRAL WASHINGTON Wildcats

Head Coach: Kevin Adkisson, Willamette '91 (17th year).

Assistants: Bryan Contreras

2009 Conference Finish: Men – 6th, 167. Women – 8th, 205.

2009 National Finish: Men – 14th, 362 (West Region).

Women – 18th, 420 (West Region).

Returning Conference Finishers: Men (10) – Manuel Santos (Jr., 14th, 26:01); Scott Power (Sr., 38th, 27:37); Jake Hastings (So., 44th, 27:52); Matt Nodine (Jr., 46th, 27:56); Tom Johnson (Sr., 50th, 28:05); Jon Swanson (So., 55th, 28:14); Tyler Roland (So., 56th, 28:15); Tyler Eidsmoe (Sr., 64th, 28:38); Wes Hargrove (Sr., 68th, 29:08); Zach Armstrong (So., 76th, 30:56). **Women (7)** - Kelsey Kreft (Jr., 31st, 24:23); Alex Borunda (Sr., 45th, 24:45); Adriana Mendoza (Jr., 46th, 24:49); Elizabeth Mann (Jr., 77th, 27:10); Amanda Valera (Jr., 78th, 27:19); Ashley Rice (So., 80th, 28:06).

MONTANA STATE BILLINGS Yellowjackets

Head Coach: Dave Coppock, Montana '79 (22nd year)

Assistants: Dan Biehl

2009 Conference Finish: Men – 9th, 257. Women – 9th, 255

2009 National Finish: Men – 16th, 464 (West Region). Women – 14th, 352 (West Region).

Returning Conference Finishers: Men (6) – Daniel Lombardi (Jr., 41st, 27:39); Taylor Canfield (Jr., 59th, 28:24); Tyson Vanderby (Jr., 66th, 28:50); Travis Hutchinson (Jr., 67th, 29:00); Ryan Blomback (So., 69th, 29:13); Travis Buttelman (So., 71st, 29:20). **Women (5)** - Sarah Jackson (Sr., 37th, 24:31); Mykel Ler (Sr., 47th, 24:53); Mary Owen (So., 55th, 25:09); Katie Thiel (Sr., 69th, 26:19); Malori Woodford (Sr., 75th, 27:02).

NORTHWEST NAZARENE Crusaders

Head Coach: John Spatz, Eastern Washington '88 (9th year)

Assistants: Ben Gall, Jake Perry, Ashley Puga

2009 Conference Finish: Men – 4th, 99 **Women** – 4th, 114

2009 National Finish: Men – 7th, 212 (West Regional).

Women – 6th, 200 (West Region)

Returning Conference Finishers: Men (8) – Barak Watson (So., 10th, 25:35); Matt Stark (Jr., 17th, 26:26); Neil Easter (Jr., 27th, 27:03); Luke Hetrick (Gr., 28th, 27:04); Jesse Baggenstos (So., 35th, 27:31); Matt Rankin (So., 48th, 27:57); Benard Ngeno (So., 51st, 28:05); Alex Crystal (Jr., 61st, 28:25). **Women (8)** – Jaclyn Puga (Sr., 10th, 22:48); Jordan Powell (So., 14th, 23:13); Ashley Rendahl (Sr., 33rd, 24:26); Christine Harwood (So., 49th, 24:57); Elisa Decker (Sr., 57th, 25:15); Meagan Swenson (Jr., 63rd, 25:37); Danielle Beesley (Jr., 79th, 27:45).

SAINT MARTIN'S Saints

Head Coach: Julie Sullivan, Seattle Pacific '01 (5th year).

Assistants: Malcolm Dunn

2009 Conference Finish: Men – 7th, 190. **Women** – 9th, 255.

2009 National Finish: Men – 13th, 340 (West Region).

Women – 20th, 536 (West Region).

Returning Conference Finishers: Men (5) – Kyle Van Santen (Jr., 8th, 25:28); Nick Harvey (Sr., 49th, 28:01); Spencer Hunt (Jr., 57th, 28:16); Joseph Patti (So., 58th, 28:19); Scott Bauer (So., 65th, 28:44). **Women (5)** – Annie Lawryson (Sr., 52nd, 25:01); Ashley Llapitan (So., 54th, 25:07); Joscelyn Minton (Jr., 61st, 25:34); Kaitlynn Pecha (Jr., 68th, 26:13); Carelia Agis (So., 83rd, 31:06).

SEATTLE PACIFIC Falcons

Head Coach: Erika Daligcon, SPU '97 (3rd year).

Assistants: Letiwe Patton (interim head coach), Doris Heritage

2009 Conference Finish: Men – 5th, 138. **Women** – 2nd, 48.

2009 National Finish: Men – Did not compete. **Women** – 4th, 151 (West Region – 3rd, 75).

Returning Conference Finishers: Men (8) - Nate Sleight (Jr., 30th, 27:21); Caleb Parker (So., 32nd, 27:27); AJ Baker (So., 40th, 27:39); Andrew Van Ness (So., 45th, 27:54); Gavin Brand (So., 52nd, 28:06); Will Harrison (So., 53rd, 28:08); Jordan Lance (Sr., 73rd, 30:17); Nate Seely (So., 74th, 30:24). **Women (5)** – Natty Plunkett (Jr., 11th, 22:48); Mary Williams (Jr., 42nd, 24:42); Krysta Carrick (So., 50th, 24:58); Kelsey Brown (So., 64th, 25:43); Laura Moser (So., 65th, 25:49).

SIMON FRASER Clan

Head Coach: Brit Townsend (13th year)

2009 A.I.I. Finish: Men – 2nd, 41. **Women** – 2nd, 36

2009 NAIA National Finish: Men – 6th, 275 **Women** – 4th, 195

Returning A.I.I. Finishers: Men (3) - Ryan Brockerville (Sr., 4th, 24:53); Keir Forster (Jr., 7th, 25:18); Brett Wakefield (Sr., 19th, 26:46). **Women (4)** – Jessica Smith (Sr., 4th, 17:48); Angela Shaw (Sr., 5th, 17:50); Helen Crofts (Jr., 9th, 18:08); Emily Palibroda (Sr., 14th, 18:21).

WESTERN OREGON Wolves

Head Coach: Mike Johnson, Eastern Washington '72 (7th year)

Assistants: Isaac Frederick, Jessica Harper

2009 Conference Finish: Men – 3rd, 74. **Women** – 5th, 146.

2009 National Finish: Men – 4th, 105 (West Region).

Women – 10th, 303 (West Region).

Returning Conference Finishers: Men (5) – Chris Reed (Sr., 7th, 25:26); Justin Karr (Sr., 16th, 26:24); Dan Sprinkle (Jr., 21st, 26:43); Conner Kasler (So., 23rd, 26:44); Matt McCrary (Jr., 26th, 26:59). **Women (8)** – Janelle Everetts (Jr., 22nd, 23:53); Tricia Morrison (Sr., 30th, 24:21); Annan Applebee (Sr., 32nd, 24:24); Megan Everetts (Jr., 34th, 24:28); Amanda Wright (Jr., 38th, 24:31); Erika Snawder (Sr., 40th, 24:37); KayAnna Cecchi (Jr., 41st, 24:42); Zoe Skordahl (Jr., 48th, 24:57).

WESTERN WASHINGTON Vikings

Head Coach: Kelvin "Pee Wee" Halsell, Wayland Baptist '81 (24th year).

Assistants: Bill Roe, Al Reimer, Erik Bies, Keever Henry, Christina Ashby, Courtney Olsen

2009 Conference Finish: Men – 1st, 33. **Women** – 3rd, 64.

2009 National Finish: Men – 4th, 170 (West – 2nd, 74. **Women** – 4th, 121.

Returning Conference Finishers: Men (7) – Bennett Grimes (Sr., 2nd, 25:05); Jordan Welling (Sr., 3rd, 25:08); Blake Medhaug (Sr., 9th, 25:32); Eric Brill (Jr., 13th, 25:59); Yonas Berhe (Jr., 18th, 26:28); Nick Abraham (Jr., 24th, 26:48); Kyle Johnson (So., 36th, 27:32). **Women (6)** – Sarah Porter (Sr., 2nd, 21:13); Lauren Breihof (Jr., 9th, 22:37); Sierra Brisky (Jr., 21st, 23:51); Kristi Fairbanks (So., 28th, 24:12); Mary Rogers (So., 35th, 24:29).