

## Crusaders finish 6th and 7th at NCAA D.II West Regional Championships

### By NNU Sports Information

SAN FRANCISCO - Northwest Nazarene University freshman Barak Watson continued a sensational rookie season on Saturday morning, finishing 11th to lead the NNU men's cross country team to a 7th-place finish at the NCAA Division II West Regional Cross Country Championships, held at Speedway Meadows at the Golden Gate State Park in San Francisco, California. Watson earned All-Region honors and also qualified as an individual for the NCAA National Championships to be held in Evansville, Indiana on November 21st.

Jaclyn Puga finished 24th (22:16) and led a trio of NNU women's harriers that finished within 15-seconds of each other as Jordan Powell finished 27th (22:21), and Michelle Phillips was 29th (22:30). The tight grouping led the NNU women's team to a 6th-place finish. Entering the race the men were ranked 7th in the region, while the women were ranked 8th in the West.

"Barak is the first athlete on the men's side to earn all-region honors and to qualify for the NCAA D.II national championships for us," commented NNU assistant coach Ben Gall. "Both teams ran very well today and this is the first time we have had both teams finish inside the top-10, so that's pretty exciting. Looking forward to next year, we only graduate one senior (Kyle Gray), so we are excited about our future."

Following Watson on the men's side were Matt Stark (29th, 32:51), Jesse Baggenstos (50th, 33:45), Neil Easter (61st, 34:07), Kyle Gray (65th, 34:17), Seth Clark (66th, 34:18), and Luke Hetrick (67th, 34:20). The men scored 212 points, finishing ahead of 8th-place CSU-Stanislaus with 248, and behind Humboldt State with 157.

Twenty teams competed in the men's championship and 25 teams raced on the women's side. The course was set at 10,000-meters for the men and 6,000-meters for the women.

NNU women's results behind the opening trio were Christine Harwood (52nd, 23:18), Ashley Rendahl (68th, 23:39), Meagan Swenson (125th, 25:03), and Elisa Decker (129th, 25:18).

The women's team scored 200 points and were only three points behind 5th-place Cal Poly Pomona with 197, while UC San Diego finished behind the Crusaders in 7th-place with 217.

All-Region honors are awarded to the top-15 runners in each field. National team selections went to Alaska Anchorage (1st), Chico State (2nd), Seattle Pacific (3rd), and Western Washington (4th) on the women's side, while Chico State (1st) won its eighth-straight regional men's title and is joined by Western Washington (2nd) and Alaska Anchorage (3rd) in earning national team invitations.

"Today's results show how competitive our conference is," Gall added. "Chico State is the only non-GNAC school advancing to nationals, so that's pretty impressive for our conference."

**Men** - Chico State 42, Western Washington 74, Alaska Anchorage 96, Western Oregon 105, Cal Poly Pomona 129, Humboldt State 157, Northwest Nazarene 212, CSU Stanislaus 248. UC San Diego 262, BYU-Hawaii 303, San Francisco State 314, Hawaii Pacific 324, Saint Martin's 340, Central Washington 362, Hawaii Hilo 433, MSU Billings 464, Grand Canyon 475, Notre Dame de Namur 477, Alaska Fairbanks 552, CSU Monterey Bay 579. **All-Region (10,000 Meters)** - 1. Marko Cheseto, UAA, 30:42.5; 2. Jordan Welling, WWU, 30:59.4; 3. Micah Chelimo, UAA, 31:05.6; 7. Anthony Tomsich, WWU, 31:23.7; 8. Chris Reed, WOU, 31:26.1; 10. Alfred Kangogo, UAA, 31:35. 80; 11. Barak Watson, NNU, 32:39.8; 12. Bennett Grimes, WWU, 31:42.9; 14. Mike Schmidt, WOU, 31:46.3.

**Women** - Alaska Anchorage 35, Chico State 58, Seattle Pacific 75, Western Washington 121, Cal Poly Pomona 197, Northwest Nazarene 200, UC San Diego 217, Cal State L.A. 245, BYU-Hawaii 300, Western Oregon 303, Humboldt State 304, CSU Stanislaus 306, San Francisco State, 339, MSU Billings 352, Hawaii Pacific 396, Alaska Fairbanks 403, CSU San Bernardino 414, Central Washington 420, Sonoma State 490, Saint Martin's 536, Hawaii Hilo 634, CSU Dominguez Hills 641, CSU Monterey Bay 715, Grand Canyon 726, Notre Dame de Namur 753. **All-Region (6,000 Meters)** - 1. Jessica Pixler, SPU, 20:08.9; 2. Sarah Porter, WWU, 20:42.3; 3. Hallidie Wilt, UAA, 21:11.5; 4. Ruth Keino, UAA, 21:11.8; 5. Mariam Kipngeno, UAA, 21:17.9; 7. Jane Larson, SPU, 21:28.8; 9. Laura Carr, UAA, 21:30.03; 12. Lauren Breiholf, WWU, 21:44.5; 14. Soshana Keegan, UAA, 21:45.7.