



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



TRACK & FIELD / CROSS COUNTRY



ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



Cross Country Championship Season Summary

Spartan Women Finish Fifth in the NCAA Meet

by Eric D. Zemper

This past fall I was able to attend all three of the championship meets at the end of the cross country season, the Big 10 meet, the NCAA regional and the NCAA championships. The following are my observations on how things went.

Big 10 meet In the Big 10 meet at Ohio State, the MSU men finished seventh while the women finished second, one point behind Minnesota. The women were running without their strong number five runner, Katie Kelly, who was laid up with a bad back. If she had been in there, I have no doubt the MSU women would have won. Nicole Bush led the way with a second place finish in 19:49.4, followed by Alissa McKaig in eighth (20:19.6), Lisa Senakiewich in 12th (20:26.1). Junior Sarah Price crossed the line in 20:45.8 for 19th, and freshman Emily McLeod rounded out the Spartan scoring with 47th in 21:34.9. As they have all year long, the men ran very well as a pack, but just too far back. During much of the season no seniors or juniors really stepped up to lead the team, and the top six often were freshmen and sophomores. They needed someone to really take the lead and pull the rest of the team along. But, if they can find someone to step up and fill that role, when they add five red-shirted freshmen that I've seen run good strong 10Km races as unattached runners this fall, things look like they could develop nicely for the men in the next couple of years.

NCAA Great Lakes Regional The regional meet was at Indiana University. Both MSU teams ran very well. The men finished sixth out of 30

teams, much better than I expected. They again ran as a good pack (about 64 second spread between first and fifth runners over 10Km), but this time they ran a little more aggressively and were in the upper quarter of the field the whole way. Sophomore Max Goldak was the first Spartan in, with a 23rd place finish. An unusual circumstance that not many people were aware of was the fact that an alternate, junior Bill Peterson, a recent transfer from Central Michigan, had to step up to the start line just before the gun went off to replace an MSU runner who was not feeling well. He ran very well to finish as the Spartan's third finisher in 40th place. Michigan surprised everyone by tying Wisconsin for first place. They were followed by Notre Dame, Indiana, Ohio State, and the Spartans. MSU beat MAC champions Eastern Michigan for the second year in a row at the regional.

The MSU women successfully defended their regional title, beating Michigan by three points. The UM women ran a stronger race than they did at the Big 10 meet, but the Spartan women were still able to handle them (again without Katie Kelly).

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The MSU Finish Line Club

FLC Board Meeting on Feb. 17

The Board of Directors for the MSU Finish Line Club will meet on Sunday, February 17, at 2 p.m. in the Varsity 'S' Alumni Club Room on the second floor of the stadium tower on campus. The board oversees the operations of the MSU Finish Line Club and the MSU Track and Cross Country Alumni group. All board meetings are open to all members of the Finish Line Club and the alumni group.

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Message from Head Coach Walt Drenth

Greetings to MSU Track and Field/Cross Country Alumni and Friends:

We hope the FLC newsletter finds everyone enjoying the New Year. Eric (Zemper) has asked us to contribute a bit of insight from “inside the program.”

The cross country season ended well for both teams. The men struggled through parts of the season as we chose to red shirt a couple of key upperclassmen (Adam Sprangel and David Bills) and all of the freshmen. While the Men did not qualify for the NCAA championships, there was plenty of evidence of progress, primarily in the underclass ranks. Redshirt freshmen (Pat Grosskopf, Mike Quick and Spencer Beatty) and Sophomore Max Goldak saw significant improvement, culminating with Max earning All-Region recognition in his first year of running with the traveling squad. The men’s final meet, the Regional Championship, was easily their best as they exceeded their regional ranking by two places finishing 6th, narrowly missing an NCAA birth.

The women were able to build through the entire season finishing with a number of individual and team accolades. The women’s team spent the entire year ranked near the top 10 nationally, finishing 3rd at the Roy Griak Invitational and 3rd at the Pre-National Invitational. The women saw great year-end success finishing in a flurry with a second place (by one point) at the Big Ten Championships, a first place finish in the Great Lake Regional championships, and a terrific fifth place at the NCAA championships. The fifth place finish was the second best finish in program history.

Individually the women earned three All Big Ten honors (Lisa Senakiewich 12th, Alissa McKaig 8th and Nicole Bush 2nd), five All Great Lake Region honors (Becky McCormick 25th, Sarah Price 15th, Lisa 10th, Alissa 8th and Nicole 2nd). Nicole ended her best year as a cross country runner finishing 5th at the NCAA championships, earning All-American honors. This was Nicole’s third All American honor and first on the cross country

course. The coaching staff was also honored for the team’s finish at the Great Lakes Region with Region Coach of the Year recognition.

Moving to the track, there has been one personnel change since the fall with the addition of throws coach John Newell. Coach Newell joins our staff from Ashland College where he assisted with coaching the throwers. John earned numerous SEC and All American honors while attending the University of Georgia. Coach Newell has had a tremendous impact on our young throws group in his short time with the program and he will develop the group into a highly competitive part of our team.

With indoor track in full swing, one of the changes you will see over the course of the year - especially during the indoor season - is an early emphasis on taking part in scored meets. In an effort to create a proper sense of urgency along with a better understanding of how to compete when the team moves to championship season, scored meets will become a mainstay on our January schedule. Insight into the early impact of this philosophy can be gleaned from reading Jeremy Orr’s blog. The blog can be found on Track Shark, a national T&F web site; and, as mentioned, Jeremy is a consistent contributor as he chronicles his experience during the year (www.trackshark.com).

With the influx of a number of competitive new people (most mentioned in the spring news letter) the team will continue to grow. The Track and Field team had a very good fall of training and looks to progress. Developing a competitive program takes time; signs of improvement will be evident this spring in both teams. The next news letter will include a recap of recruits we have signed for the 08-09 school year. Early signs indicate a very good balanced recruiting class that, if commitments hold up, will help continue the momentum toward a healthy, successful program.

Please remember that weekly updates and program information are at your fingertips by going to www.msuspartans.cstv.com. Also our outdoor home meet is scheduled for April 12th. The home meet will coincide with our team banquet the night of the 12th. Information regarding the banquet will be finalized soon and then posted on the team’s MSU web site.

Respectfully,
Walt Drenth MSU Track and Field/Cross Country

MSU Cross Country Season (continued from page 2)

Senior Nicole Bush led the women with a second place finish, and the Spartans had all five scorers in the top 25 finishers. Juniors Alissa McKaig and Lisa Senakiewich were eighth and tenth, respectively, followed by junior Sarah Price (who passed a bunch of runners in the last 250 meters, including UM's Big 10 800M champion) in fifteenth and freshman Becky McCormack in 25th (who also passed a number of runners in the last 300 meters). In nearly every case, the MSU women were overtaking other runners down the stretch to the finish, or holding off challenges. It was a great team effort, up and down the line.

NCAA Championships The women's team put together another great performance at the NCAA championship meet nine days later, finishing fifth. This is the second best women's performance in MSU history, topped only by the fourth place finish of the 1981 team in the first NCAA women's championships. The next best performances were 11th place in 2001 and the twelfth place finishes of 2002 and last year. The Spartans were ranked seventh coming out of the regionals, so they outperformed their ranking once again. An important observation afterward was that the team members seemed pleased, but not at all satisfied. The consensus among them was that they could have done better, and they immediately started thinking about making it to the awards platform next year (the NCAA gives out trophies to the top four teams).



Nicole Bush and NCAA hardware over 6Km was nearly two minutes faster than she ran last year on the Indiana State University course. The second MSU finisher was Alissa McKaig, who finished 71st overall (50th in team scoring), and was no doubt disappointed

The Spartans were led by Nicole Bush, a senior with a year of eligibility left, who finished a very strong fifth place overall, garnering All-American honors with the best Spartan finish ever in the women's national meet. Her time of 20:14

after finishing 9th in this race last year. The steadily improving Sarah Price put in another great performance, finishing as the third Spartan in 111th (82nd in team scoring). Lisa Senakiewich, usually the third runner, finished fourth for MSU in 90th place in team scoring (122nd overall). The final Spartan scorer was Emily MacLeod, who has come on very well at the end of the season to fill the gap left by the injury of Katie Kelly. She finished 94th in team scoring, 126th overall out of 253 finishers. The usual 1-5 split this year of 75-80 seconds stretched to 91 seconds for this meet, and the usual split of 30-35 seconds between the first and second MSU finishers ballooned to 68 seconds. This was probably due to a combination of some fading in the stretch by McKaig and a very strong finish by Bush. Nicole got out early and was with the lead group much of the race, where the running was easier, while the others got caught up in the huge pack that always is a feature of this race and where it is difficult to move. Something they'll need to keep in mind next year.

MSU finished as the top Big 10 team. The meet was won, as expected, by Stanford, with Oregon second (almost matching the Oregon men's win), followed by Florida State and Arizona State in fourth. Illinois finished sixth behind MSU, with Iowa in tenth, Minnesota (the Big 10 champion by one point over MSU) in 12th, Wisconsin in 20th and Michigan (who finished three points behind MSU in the regional) in 21st out of 31 teams.

Next year's women's team will be an interesting mix of seasoned veterans who will be hungry, and talented newcomers. Coaches Walt Drenth and Rita Arndt-Molis (who shared the women's regional Coach of the Year honors for the second straight year) have done a great job of getting the best out of the talent they've inherited, and they appear to be generating some good success in recruiting. With a very young men's team that looked like it was finally starting to learn what it's all about at the end of this season, things are looking very good for the future of MSU Cross Country.

The MSU Track & Field/Cross Country Alumni Newsletter is a publication of the Michigan State University Track and Cross Country Alumni and the MSU Finish Line Club. The newsletter is edited by Eric D. Zemper. Articles from MSU Track and Cross Country alumni or MSU FLC members for future issues are welcome, and may be submitted to the editor for consideration.

XC Highlights



MSU Athletic Director Ron Mason observes preparations for the men's race at the Spartan Invitational early in the season.



Dustin Voss chases down an Eastern Michigan runner at the NCAA Regional.



A cluster of Spartans at the front of the men's race in the Spartan Invitational...



Becky McCormack (left) and Emily MacLeod at the NCAA Championships.



... and a cluster of Spartan women at the Invitational.



Sarah Price moves up through the pack at the NCAA meet, while Coach Drenth (in green in background) looks for the next Spartan.

(photos by Eric Zemper and Ron Berby)

11 Spartan Harriers on 2007 Academic All-Big Ten Team

Eight MSU women's Cross Country team members earned Academic All-Big Ten Team honors this past fall, and three members of the men's team also received honors. To be nominated for consideration, a student-athlete must earn a varsity letter, be in at least their second academic year, and carry at least a 3.0 GPA.

The honorees are:

- Spencer Beatty So. Engineering Harbor Springs, MI
- Ashley Casavant So. Kinesiology Indianapolis, IN
- Leah Elenbaas So. Accounting Greenville, MI
- Elizabeth Hoefing Sr. Materials Science/Biomedical Engineering Rochester, MI
- Emily MacLeod So. Environmental Biology/ Zoology Cincinnati, OH
- Becky McCormack So. Psychology Canton, MI
- Alissa McKaig Jr. Kinesiology Fort Wayne, IN
- James Pancoast Sr. Geography Stevensville, MI
- Sarah Price Jr. Kinesiology Mankato, MN
- Mike Quick Fr. Supply Chain Mgt. Bloomfield, MI
- Lisa Senakiewich Sr. No-Preference Davison, MI

Congratulations to all these fine MSU student-athletes!

Websites of Interest:

<http://msuspartans.cstv.com/sports/c-track/msu-c-track-body.html> (MSU combined men's/women's T&F website)

<http://msuspartans.cstv.com/sports/m-xc/msu-m-xc-body.html> (MSU men's XC website)

<http://msuspartans.cstv.com/sports/w-xc/msu-w-xc-body.html> (MSU women's XC website)

<http://www.varsitymsu.edu/> (MSU Varsity Alumni Club)

<http://www.usatf.org> (USA Track & Field)

<http://www.iaaf.org> (IAAF)

<http://www.ncaa.org> (NCAA)

<http://www.nfhs.org> (NFHS)

<http://www.tflinks.com> (lots of T&F stuff)

<http://www.trackandfieldnews.com/> (*Track and Field News*)

<http://www.nationalmastersnews.com> (*National Masters News*)

Alumni Invited

Track-XC Team Banquet to be Held April 12

The MSU coaching staff has announced that there will be a Track and Field / Cross Country Team Banquet on the evening of April 12, following MSU's only home track meet this spring. Current team members, their parents, and all MSU track and cross country alumni are invited to attend. Details are still being finalized; check the team website for further details.

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The website is: <http://www.msufinishlineclub.org>

2008 Track Schedule

01/11/08	Chippewa Open	Mount Pleasant, MI
01/18/08	Akron Quad	Akron, OH
01/25/08	Notre Dame Inv.	Notre Dame, IN
02/08-09/08	Meyo Invitational	Notre Dame, IN
02/15/08	Iowa State Invite	Ames, IA
02/16/08	EMU Invite	Ypsilanti, MI
02/23/08	Silverston Inv.	Ann Arbor, MI
03/01-02/08	Men's Big 10	Madison, WI
	Women's Big 10	Twin Cities, MN
03/07-08/08	ND Last Chance	Notre Dame, IN
03/14-15/08	NCAA Indoor Champ.	Fayetteville, AR
03/28-29/08	Auburn Invitational	Auburn, AL
	Stanford Invitational	Palo Alto, CA
04/04-05/08	Colonial Relays	Williamsburg, VA
04/12/08	Spartan Invitational	East Lansing, MI
04/20-21/08	Mt. SAC Relays	Walnut, CA
04/21/08	EMU Classic	Ypsilanti, MI
04/27-28/08	Drake Relays	Des Moines, IA
	Hillsdale Relays	Hillsdale, MI
05/02-03/08	Jesse Owens Inv.	Columbus, OH
05/09-10/08	Len Paddock Invite	Ann Arbor, MI
05/16-18/08	Big 10 Champ.	Urbana-Champ., IL
05/30-31/08	NCAA Reg. Champ.	Fayetteville, AR
06/11-14/08	NCAA Champ.	Des Moines, IA
06/27-07/06/08	Olympic Trials	Eugene, OR

Support the Spartans!
Cheer them on at a meet near you



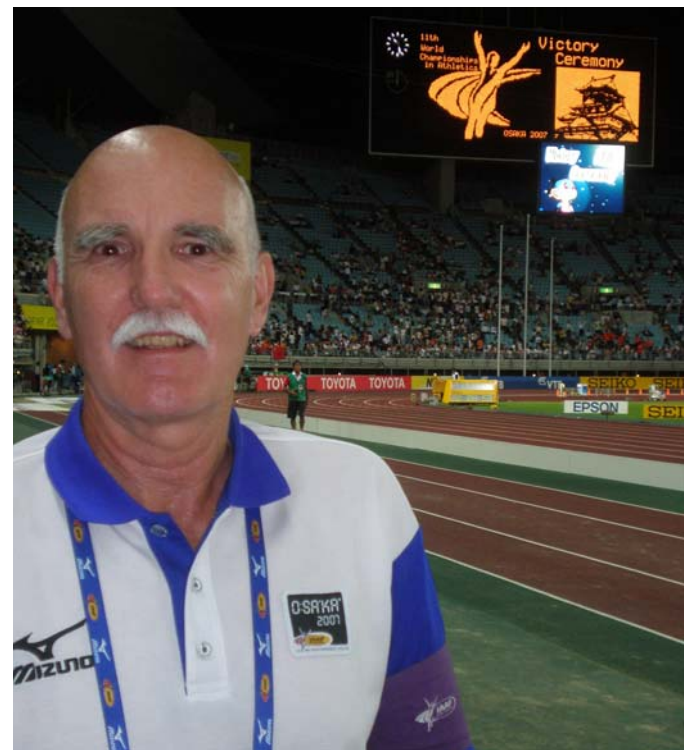
MSU Track & XC Media Guides on Way to FLC Members

The 2007-2008 edition of the MSU Track & Field and Cross Country Media Guide is available and is being sent to all members of the MSU Finish Line Club. This is one of the perks of membership in the FLC. If you have not yet joined the MSU Finish Line Club, you can find a membership application form at the club's website: <http://www.msufinishlineclub.org>

Renewal Time for FLC

It's now time to renew membership in the MSU Finish Line Club. Renewal notices were sent out to all 2007 annual members in January. If you have not sent in your annual dues for 2008, please do it today.

Date for 2008 Varsity S Alumni Club Weekend coincides with Homecoming next year, October 2-4. MSU Olympians will be honored. Plan to join your team-mates for a great weekend.



MSU Finish Line Club president Eric Zemper recently served as an IAAF International Technical Official at the 11th IAAF World Championships in Athletics in Osaka, Japan, and will also serve in the same role at the world indoor championships in Valencia, Spain, in March.