

Cross Country Falls Golden Bears Bowl Bound Short at Regionals

Despite Failing to Advance, Golden Bears Had Terrific Season

By T.G. Schoenberg

Concordia's cross country team wrapped up its season at Regionals in Wayne, Nebraska, and did so in a convincing manner. Running against some of the top teams in the nation, the women's team showed record improvement on their times, while everyone on the men's squad ran a personal-best time.

For the women, senior Katie Monahan led the way, finishing the 6k race with a time of 24:58.9. Her time was 49.5 seconds faster than her efforts at last year's Regional Meet and 29.8 seconds better than her time at Conferences this year just two weeks before, which were also held at Wayne. Freshman Becca Richter finished in 25:51.1 seconds, which is the fastest time by a Concordia freshman since 2006.

In the men's race, a 10k run, senior Jake Womeldorf led the way with a time of 34:38.2, which is a personal best time by 41.3 seconds. Travis Wagers, Matt Eicheldinger, Jonathan Erber, and Chris Kotlarek all posted the best times of their careers as well.

Concordia faced some stiff competition at the meet, stacking up against teams from the Northern Sun and Rocky Mountain conferences. The Golden Bears



found the schools from the Rocky Mountain Conference to be the most challenging at Wayne. Western State and Adams State, the top two teams present, both have storied cross country histories. In the women's races, one of these two has won the National Championship for the last 18 years, while on the men's side it has been 14 of the past 18 years.

The Golden Bears were unable to capture one of the four men's and women's spots that would have allowed them to move on to nationals, but they had one of the best seasons in recent memory. Every runner on the team posted personal best times this year and several long-standing Concordia cross country records were broken. For seniors Katie Monahan, Jake Womeldorf, Chris Kotlarek, and Matt Eicheldinger, the Regional meet down at Wayne was their last as a collegiate athlete.

This year's senior class was a solid group of leaders and will be tough to replace. The four of them have been consistent anchors for the team, not only this year, but throughout their careers at CU. Coach Jonathan Breitbarth had only positive things to say about this year's senior class as their cross country careers drew to a close: "Their contribution this year, and previous years, has been impactful and they will be missed. As a coach I'm just looking for them to enjoy the race this weekend and feel good about how they end their career."

Accept Invitation to Mineral Water Bowl

By C. Cody Wilcoxson

St. Paul, Minn. - The Concordia University football team capped off an 8-3 regular season with a 32-14 victory at Southwest Minnesota State on November 13th in Marshall, Minn. The victory completed the Golden Bears first winning regular season since 2005 and earned them their first Mineral Water Bowl invitation since that 2005 season.

The Mineral Water Bowl is one of two NCAA sanctioned Division II bowl games, and matches the top non-playoff teams from the Northern Sun Conference and the Mid-American Intercollegiate Athletics Association. The Golden Bears, who finished fourth in the final NSIC standings, will take on Pittsburg State (KS) in the event held December 4 in Excelsior Springs, MO.

Coach Mauer was ecstatic when approached the following Monday. Mauer said, "As a head coach you have to take the good with the bad and in recent years we have struggled, but this bowl invitation means an awful lot to our players, coaches, and administrators. Everyone in the Concordia community has worked hard to help us experience the success we are having on the field this year." Mauer went deeper with this sentiment saying, "It comes down to everyone being involved turning us into a winning team. The guys have put in the work necessary to compete at the highest level, the administrators have lobbied for us to have improved facilities and the opportunities to get better, the faculty has worked diligently to make our guys successful in the classroom, and the community, especially our student body, has come out to support us all season long. We are all in this together at Concordia, and it is an unbelievably meaningful thing for our program."

Junior linebacker Al Quaye has been a leader on the defense all season long with his tough-nosed play, and he echoed the sentiment of coach Mauer saying, "Everyone is extremely excited. It gives us an opportunity to play a well know team in the country, and it also helps put Concordia football on the national map." On a personal note Quaye said, "this bowl game means a lot to me, this is the first winning season I've had at Concordia and I wouldn't want to experience this moment with any other guys than the guys that I have on my team right now."

Coach Mauer was happy to see the hard work of his players finally paying off. He declared, "This bowl game is a reward for the hard work and commitment the guys put in during last off-season and all fall long."

The turnaround from last year has been drastic in the win-loss column, but came as no surprise to the coaching staff and players. Quaye and Mauer both touched on a few keys to the success of the 2010 Golden Bears. Quaye said, "We worked extremely hard this off-season to get here and we have a good group of upper classmen that lead the team. Leadership is extremely important if you want to be successful. Going from 3-8 to 8-3 is a big change. It comes

from our combination of experience, hard work, leadership, and everyone being focused on one task, winning and playing for each other." Coach Mauer took this one step further saying, "We are the team we are this year because of the hard work of our players and coaches. We had a lot of guys gut through last season and take it on the chin at times when they were younger. Those guys are now veterans

leading this team in the right direction. When you combine those veterans with some of the talented recruits we've had coming in, it makes for a successful team on the field."

Two of those veterans experiencing breakout seasons are junior quarterback Spencer Ohm and junior running back Sam Campbell. Ohm is currently tied for the single-season record for touchdown passes, and a touchdown pass in the Mineral Water Bowl will officially etch his name alone on top of the record. Campbell has rushed for 878 yards on the season, and needs just 122 in the bowl game to have the first 1,000 yard rushing season for a Golden Bear since 2005.

One of the talented recruit's coach Mauer talked about is junior college transfer Charles Gilbert, who has come in and made a difference at the wide receiver position. Gilbert enters the bowl game one touchdown short of the single-season record, currently held by his position coach, Tyrone Ruffin. If Ohm and Gilbert can connect for a touchdown in the Mineral Water Bowl, both will be on top of the Concordia record books. The football team will take some time to rest up before preparing for their December 4th date with Pittsburg State. The team will have 11 total practices by the time they head south to Missouri. "This gives players time to heal up from nagging injuries and prepare for a tough opponent" said coach Mauer.

Kickoff in Excelsior Springs, MO is set for 12p.m. on December 4 at local Tiger Stadium.

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-Coach Mauer

