

SPORTS

Indoor Track and Field Season Underway as Women Ranked 8th and Men Ranked 6th in NSIC

BY HARRY LIEN

THE NORTHERN SUN CONFERENCE (NSIC), Concordia's home conference, released its preseason coaches' poll for both the men's and women's indoor track and field teams. On the men's side, the Golden Bears ranked eighth among the 12 men's teams in the NSIC. Meanwhile, the women's team bodes a more favorable ranking as they are placed sixth out of the 15 women's teams competing in the NSIC. That said, both teams have improved from their position last season as the men were listed at ninth and the women at tenth.

Topping the list on the men's side for the conference are the nine-time defending NSIC champions, MSU Mankato. For the women, the three-time defending NSIC champions, University of Mary (ND), were picked to win.

The 2020-21 NSIC indoor track and field season, for both the men and women, began in January and, barring any compounding circumstances, will reach its conclusion with the NSIC Championship, which is slated for February 26th and 27th. As usual, the championship will be held at Myers Fieldhouse in Mankato, Minnesota and hosted by the perennial powerhouse, MSU Mankato.

The 2020-21 indoor season marks the ninth-year for Sam Johnson as head coach of the Concordia University track and field team. Regarding returning athletes, the men have 26 and the women have 23. The team also welcomes 20 new athletes, 15 of these being men and five being women.

Assistant distance coach David Pieper is "proud of the resolve this team has demonstrated" and applauds the will and commitment they have shown to adapt to unique circumstances, namely the pandemic. He goes on to say, "There has been substantial growth and development



Photo Credit: Rene Elias

evident from workouts earlier in the season. It is something to be excited about!"

Senior Zeke Green, a distance runner on the men's team, is ecstatic at the belated return to competition. He says, "I'm just thankful to be back on the track! It's going to take a few races to dust off the cobwebs, but I'm

excited to get back into racing shape."

Following the end of the indoor season, the Golden Bears track and field team will transition into the outdoor season that is likely to begin some time in March.

NCAA National Football Championship

BY THOMAS PRESNALL

THE OHIO STATE BUCKEYES were riding high after their impressive win over #2 ranked Clemson, beating the Tigers 49-28 in convincing fashion. In that game, Justin Fields, the quarterback for the Buckeyes, decimated the usually stout Clemson defense with 385 passing yards and 6 touchdowns. Last Monday in Miami, Fields and Co. came ready to face the #1 ranked Alabama, who was returning to the title game for the fourth time in the past five years.

In what some thought would be a competitive game, it soon turned into a slaughterhouse as the Buckeyes were shredded by the star-studded Crimson Tide, boasting not only the Heisman Trophy winner Devonta Smith at wide receiver, but also a host of NFL-bound players including Mac Jones at quarterback, wide receiver Jaylen Waddle, offensive tackle Alex Leatherwood, cornerback Patrick Surtain II, running back Najee Harris, and many others. While Ohio State can boast the debated second-best quarterback in this upcoming NFL draft Justin Fields, that is a drop in the bucket

compared to the future first-round draft picks that littered the team from Tuscaloosa. Out of the names previously mentioned, Leatherwood is the only player that is not locked in as a first-rounder, though there is still the potential that he goes that high.

Against Alabama, Fields threw a measly 194 yards on 17-33 attempts, connecting with sophomore wide receiver Garrett Wilson for a single touchdown in the third quarter. By that point, though, the game had already been decided, with Alabama extending their lead by another two scores to finish the game 52-24. In the end, no Buckeye receiver had more than seventy yards, and Fields was the leading rusher for his team with 67 yards and no touchdowns.

On the other side of the field, in scarlet and white, Mac Jones and Co. had done what they had always done: dominated a game from start to finish. After rolling through #4 ranked Notre Dame, Alabama continued the same level of dominance against the Buckeyes. Jones torched the opposing defense for 464 yards on 36-45

attempts and 5 touchdowns, three of those courtesy of DeVonta Smith and his 12 receptions for 215 yards; impressively, all those yards came in the first half!

Speaking of Smith, even without the added intensity of his running mate Jaylen Waddle, he still managed to put up more yards receiving than all of the Buckeyes receivers combined, the finishing touch on arguably the best season by a college receiver. In his final game, Smith not only proved why he was the first wide receiver since 1991 to win the Heisman, but he also etched his legacy as one of the best players to come out of Alabama in the past decade.

At the end of the game, many wondered if this team had been Nick Saban's best in his many championship-winning years. While that will be debated in the next decade, there is one subject that won't: Clemson, the Buckeyes, and whoever else wishes to topple Alabama in the National Championship have a long road ahead of them before the team from Tuscaloosa relinquishes their title as the best team in college football.