

Men's, women's XC place fourth at Big Tens

By Zack Feldman
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Already through 5,000 meters of the 8,000-meter Big Ten Championship race, Kyle Dawson and Vince McNally were up at the very front, tied for the overall lead.

But while the pair dropped back slightly toward the finish line, they still placed eighth and 13th, respectively, bringing the Penn State men's cross country team to its best conference finish since 2008.

At Sunday's Big Tens in Madison, Wis., both the men's and women's cross country teams finished in fourth place, with each finish far away from where the teams placed just one year ago.

Penn State's men finished near the bottom at the 2009 race, beating only Purdue. But led this year by Dawson, a captain, and McNally, the men found themselves going into the 8,000-meter race ranked third in the Big Ten and No. 23 in the nation, with expectations from coaches and runners placing them somewhere in the top-four Sunday.

Senior Ryan Foster, the men's third finisher, said while Wisconsin and Indiana were clear favorites, the team would be satis-

fied with a third or fourth-place finish.

Wisconsin took the Big Ten men's crown for the 12th consecutive year, earning four of the top-six spots.

For Penn State, Dawson, McNally and Foster took the top spots, with sophomore Danny Pawola and Chris Cipro rounding out the scoring in the top-five. Dawson and McNally each left with the honor of being named second team All-Big Ten runners.

And while the men improved from a ninth-place finish in 2009, the women's squad leveled out from last year.

Having won the 2009 competition led by the graduated Bridget Franek and injured Nicole Lord, the team took a different approach, staying together almost the entire 6,000-meter race. Each of the top seven finished within a minute of one another, a strategy the team has worked on all season.

Sophomore runner Brooklyn Ridder led the women's squad with a ninth-place finish overall. Sophomore Natalie Bower and junior captains Caitlin Lane and Kara Millhouse also placed within the top-25, with former Penn State soccer standout Maura Ryan com-

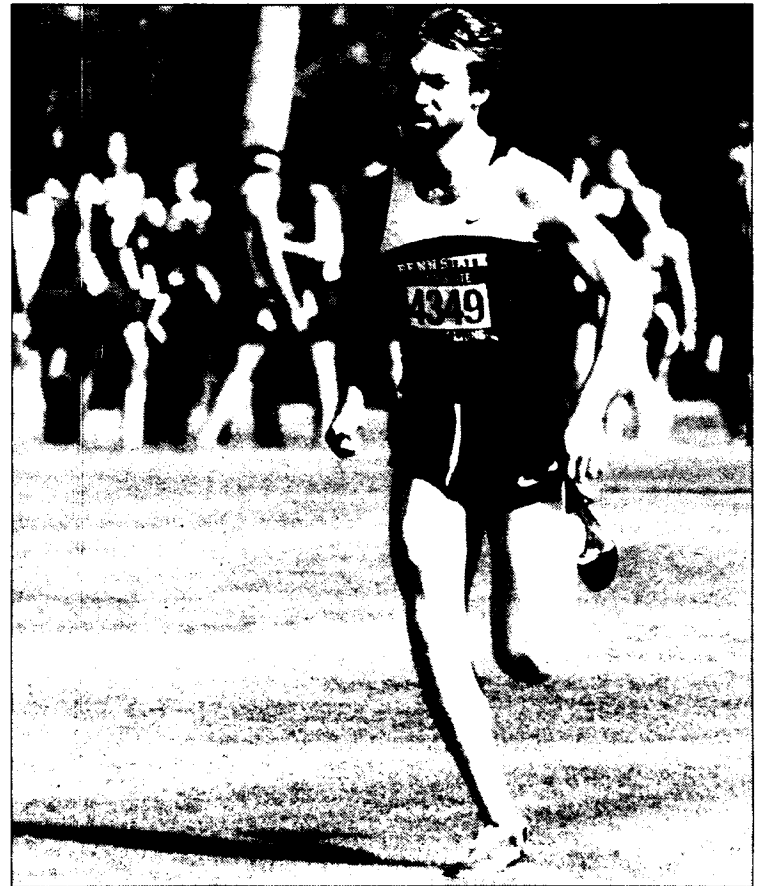
pleting the Lions' top-five.

The women entered the race ranked sixth in the conference, and for the second-consecutive year, finished the meet better than the rankings suggested, with their unranked squad topping No. 29 Indiana and No. 30 Iowa.

Runners from the women's team said they would aim for a win, though they did not fully expect to win. The team, nonetheless, saw plenty of opportunity to finish toward the top. Coach Beth Alford-Sullivan said before the race the top-seven teams had an almost equal shot of winning, and the outcome would depend completely on the determination of the runners among other variables Sunday.

Now, runners from both teams will shift their focus to training for the upcoming week. The teams' next meet will be the final meet Penn State will host at its Blue-White Golf Course this season, the Nov. 13 Mid-Atlantic regional meet.

The regional meet could potentially be the final showing for Penn State this season, unless individuals or the team qualifies for the Nov. 22 NCAA championships.



Kelly Rootes-Mundy, Collegian

To e-mail reporter: zef5005@psu.edu Junior Vince McNally runs in a meet this earlier season.

New gymnastics coach holds Halloween scrimmage

By Matt Howland
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Members of the Penn State women's gymnastics team painted their faces with beards and moustaches on Friday under the supervision of their new coach.

WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS

The Nittany Lions hosted a Halloween-themed intrasquad scrimmage Friday afternoon in the White Building, with parents and fans showing up to get an early look at the team under new coach Jeff Thompson.

The Nittany Lions finished 14th in the NCAA last year, and they hope to continue their success under their new coach despite graduating five seniors, who per-

formed almost half of the competitive routines done by the team last year.

Despite the losses, Thompson has his team off to a fast start. He was happy with the team's showing in the intrasquad, and felt the team is right where it needs to be.

Junior Whitney Bencsko said the team's adjustment to the coaching changes has been great, and the team is already three weeks ahead of schedule based on previous years.

"I think we've really jumped into things quickly, which is a really good thing," Bencsko said. "I think it'll make sure we're prepared by the time January comes and the beginning of the season."

The team already has planned its uneven bar routines and choreography on balance beam and

floor exercise, with more than two months remaining until its first meet Jan. 7 at Alabama. Several gymnasts on the team felt that Thompson's preparation of the team bodes well for their chances in the meet.

"We're all gonna be just so prepared," junior Daryl Konsevick said. "We're gonna go out there and have fun because of all the hard work we're putting in now."

Thompson, a two-time SEC coach of the year during an 11-year stint at Auburn, succeeds Steve Shephard, who led the team to a 256-144-2 record during his 18 years as coach at Penn State. Thompson doesn't lack for experience himself, having coached NCAA gymnastics for 26 years.

Thompson originally planned to coach college volleyball, but found

himself drawn to gymnastics while working toward his Master of Science in Biomechanics at the University of Kentucky. Thompson's work in biomechanics put him into close contact with gymnasts at Kentucky, and he found that his understanding of physics and mechanics was directly applicable to gymnastics.

"I found that I could look at a skill and give them a correction that would make it easier without even knowing what the skill was called," Thompson said. "It just evolved from there. I always had a love for the sport and all I needed was the opportunity."

Thompson has coached since then and has now taken the reins of the Nittany Lions, and he expects that the hard work in practice will pay off. Thompson

said he expects the team will be very competitive in the Big Ten.

He likes what he's seen from the gymnasts and thinks they've adapted well to the coaching change.

"They're enjoying what they're doing, they work really hard, and they feel like they're gonna be ready for the first meet," Thompson said.

The Nittany Lion gymnasts share that hope that their hard work will pay off come the end of the season, and they're looking to advance all the way to the six-team national finals.

"I think if we keep progressing from where we are now we'll be peaking at the right time," Bencsko said. "And then we'll just kind of carry on to nationals and then Super Six."

RING IN THE TRADITION

Sunday, November 7
3:00 p.m., Worship Hall
Pasquerilla Spiritual Center

The Penn State Alumni Association cordially invites you to attend your ring presentation ceremony.

The Penn State ring represents your dedication, achievement, and Penn State pride, while reflecting the heritage and tradition of Penn State.

Mark this milestone and receive your official Penn State ring at this special ceremony.

RSVP to Greg Albert, Jostens representative at greg.albert@jostens.com or 814-861-5092.

Registration begins at 2:15 p.m.
Ceremony starts promptly at 3:00 p.m.

Four guests are welcome to attend.
The ceremony will be followed by a reception with light refreshments.
Business casual attire is recommended.

Penn State Alumni Association

meridian
on college avenue

Don't miss out!
Apartments fill as early as November!

- Fantastic Location, directly across the street from PSU campus!
- Fully Furnished, Carpeted & Air Conditioned Apartments with GREAT views!
- CATA Loop Stop at Entrance!
- An Awesome Apartment Conveniently Located in the Midst of Local Restaurants, Nightlife, Shopping, and Entertainment!
- Walking Distance to Beaver Stadium and the Bryce Jordan Center!
- On-Site Laundry Fabulous Fitness Center!
- 24 Hour Spacious and Quiet Study Lounge with FREE Wireless Internet!
- 200+ Reserved Parking Spaces Available!
- Roommate Matching Service Available!
- 24 Hour Emergency Maintenance Service!
- On-Site Professional Management that Cares!

CAREER

ORNER

Earn Credit & Advance Your Future this Spring

CN ED 100: Effective Career Decision-Making (3cr) Tuesday/Thursday 11:15am-12:30pm

AG 100/SC 101: Job Search Skills and Strategies for Technical Majors (1cr) Wednesdays, 11:15am-12:05pm

LA 401: Professional Development for the Liberal Arts Student (1cr) Tuesdays, 11:15am-12:05pm

LSAT
Low cost prep course

Complete preparation course for the Law School Admission Test (LSAT):
Nov. 13-14, 2010 9am-5pm

Registration Fee: \$250
For more info visit:
<http://www.psu.edu/dus/prelaw/>

Peace Corps Information Session

Friday, November 5 - 6:30pm
234 Bank of America Career Services Center

UPCOMING INFO

November 2: The Conti Group, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Praxair, Inc.

November 3: Cambridge Associates LLC, Student Conservation Association (SCA)

November 4: MIT Lincoln Laboratory, EASC inc., Peace Corps

Want more information?
Use the EVENTS tab in Nittany Lion Career Network for dates and times!

<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/studentsINLCN.shtml>

Penn State Career Services
CAREER PLANNING FOR LIFE

Sponsored by **THE DAILY Collegian**

NOW IS THE TIME TO ENSURE YOU HAVE IDEAL LIVING FOR YOUR 2010-2011 YEAR!

NOW LEASING for next year

CALL US FOR MORE INFO
814.231.9000
WWW.MERIDIANCOLLEGEAVENUE.COM