

Irish Cross Country Women Move Up To 19th In Nation, Men Remain Fifth

2001 Schedule

SEPTEMBER

7 Sat. Valparaiso Invitational M-1st
Valparaiso, Ind. W-2nd
Top Finishers:
M - Todd Mobley (first)
W - Christi Arnerich (fourth)

21 Fri. National Catholic M-1st
Notre Dame, Ind. W-2nd
Top Finishers:
M - Ryan Shay (first)
W - Jen Handley (first)

29 Sat. Central Collegiate M- 1st
Kalamazoo, MI W-2nd
Top Finishers:
M - John Keane (second)
W - Hilary Burn (18th)

OCTOBER

5 Fri. Notre Dame Invitational M -1st
Notre Dame, Ind. W-1st
Top Finishers:
M - Luke Watson (first)
W - Lauren King (first)

13 Sat. Pre-National Meet M - 4th
Greenville, SC W - 11th
Top Finishers:
M - Luke Watson (fourth)
W - Lauren King (15th)

26 Fri. BIG EAST Champ. M-1st
Van Cortland Park, NY W-4th
Top Finishers:
M - Luke Watson (second)
W - Jennifer Handley (seventh)

NOVEMBER

10 Sat. NCAA Great Lakes Region TBA
Terre Haute, Ind.

19 Mon. NCAA Championships TBA
Greenville, SC

All home meets run at the N.D. Golf Course
All times local to site

Strong BIG EAST Conference performance launches women's team back into the top 25, both teams begin preparations for NCAA regional action: Two of the most important races of the season loom ahead for the Irish men's and women's cross country teams, but with the men earning their third BIG EAST Championship title last weekend and the women placing fourth in a highly-competitive field, both teams have added confidence heading into the NCAA Great Lakes regional in Terre Haute, Ind., next Saturday, Nov. 10.

The Irish will not compete this weekend, using both this week and next to fine tune for the regional competition. If the teams are able to continue the strong performances characteristic of their competition this season, both are probable selections for the NCAA Championships, to be held Nov. 19, in Greenville, SC.

Irish women utilize blend of experience and youth as a springboard to national ranking: The Notre Dame women's team, ranked 24th in the nation earlier in the season, was rewarded for its BIG EAST efforts with a reentry into the rankings at 19th. After taking sixth place in the BIG EAST Championships last season, the Irish were searching for a higher finish and accomplished that goal while facing one of the toughest conference fields in the nation. Third-ranked Georgetown, #5 Boston College, #8 Providence and #16 Villanova (rankings indicated were the spots occupied before the BIG EAST meet) were in the BIG EAST Championship field last weekend.

The Irish were led by junior Jen Handley's seventh-place finish, taking the course in 20:45. Handley, who placed 31st last year, has made great strides over the past year, establishing herself as one of the top Irish distance runners over the course of the 2001 track and field and cross country seasons. The champion of the 2001 National Catholic meet and third-place finisher at the Notre Dame Invitational, Handley clearly serves as the top veteran and competitive leader for the Irish this season.

Coupled with the experience of Handley and her fellow juniors, Jennifer Fibuch and Muffy Schmidt, the Irish also have a squad loaded with underclassmen talent. This has been a season of exceptional freshmen performances for the Irish, punctuated by the fact that the team roster for the BIG EAST meet did not include a single senior. The 2001 Notre Dame rookie class is led by Lauren King and Christiti Arnerich, who were the third and fourth Irish runners across the finish line at the BIG EAST Championship.

Last weekend's meet marked just the third collegiate race and first championship meet experience for King, but the rookie responded well with a 24th-place (21:50) finish. King has already made her mark on the Notre Dame team, finishing first overall in the Notre Dame Invitational - which was her first race as a member of the Fighting Irish.

Arnerich also has made a large impact on the squad in her rookie season, opening her collegiate career as the top Irish finisher at the Valparasio Invitational with a fourth-place finish, and contributing to the team's fourth-place result at the BIG EAST meet with her best race of the season (finishing 25th overall).

Sophomore Megan Johnson improved significantly over her 39th-place finish at the 2000 BIG EAST Championship to move up to 14th place in 2001, the second finisher across the line for the Irish. Jennifer Fibuch, a consistent Irish runner who has contributed in each race this season, continued to produce strong finishes for the team. Her 37th-place effort as the number six runner, up from her 40th place finish in 2000, helped Notre Dame finish ahead of 16th-ranked Villanova. Close behind Fibuch was Muffy Schmidt in 44th, followed by sophomore Rachel Endress in 48th.

With a strong mix of experience and youth, the Irish will have high expectations for the NCAA Regional Meet, with a possible berth in the NCAA Championship meet

on the line. With a national ranking in hand, the Irish will be a target for others at the 2001 Great Lakes Regional. The team also will have to contend with several other Top-25 rivals that will be competing - including sixth-ranked Michigan State. Marquette, currently ranked 18th in the nation and the winner of the 2001 National Catholic Invitational, also will be in the women's Great Lakes Regional field.

Men Continue Impressive Season with BIG EAST Victory: In the middle of one of the most successful cross country seasons in Notre Dame history, the Irish men held on to its fifth place national ranking (the highest in school history) with some exceptional performances en route to a BIG EAST team championship last weekend.

The team has won all but one meet this season, placing second in its division of the Pre-National Championships to top-ranked Colorado. Overcoming such highly-ranked BIG EAST opponents as Providence and Villanova, ranked eighth and 14th in the country at the time, the Irish demonstrated their power and depth with a three-point victory over Villanova.

Senior Luke Watson led Notre Dame to its repeat championship performance at Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx (the Irish won the team championship the last time the meet was held at Van Cortlandt in 1999) earning all-BIG EAST honors with a second place finish in 24:22. Senior Dan Wilson of Connecticut just edged Watson at the finish line for the individual title. Watson has not finished below fourth in a race this season and is one of the most consistent runners for the Irish. The senior co-captain will continue to serve as one of the team's top leaders entering the NCAA Championship season.

Sophomore Todd Mobley, 26th at the 2000 BIG EAST championships, finished eighth last weekend, continuing a strong season that has seen Mobley perform as one of the top Irish runners in almost each race this year.

On this experienced team, the third, fourth, and fifth Irish runners were all members of the senior class. Marc Striowski finished ninth overall, followed by All-American Ryan Shay in 11th and Sean Zanderson in 19th.

Notre Dame BIG EAST Championship Team Finishes:

Men

1995	third	83 points
1996	fourth	81 points
1997	first	50 points
1998	third	91 points
1999	first	43 points
2000	fourth	100 points
2001	first	49 points

Women

1995	seventh	175 points
1996	fifth	123 points
1997	fourth	126 points
1998	fifth	144 points
1999	fifth	98 points
2000	sixth	160 points
2001	fourth	107 points



Notre Dame's lineup at the 2001 BIG EAST Championships:

Men's team

(2000 finish in parenthesis):
 Luke Watson - second, 24:22 (seventh)
 Todd Mobley - eighth, 24:47 (26th)
 Marc Striowski - ninth, 24:48 (eighth)
 Ryan Shay - 11th, 25:05 (--)
 Sean Zanderson - 19th, 25:30 (38th)
 David Alber - 20th, 25:32 (--)
 Mario Bird - 32nd, 25:59 (--)
 Patrick Conway - 26:14 (21st)

Women's team:

Jennifer Handley - seventh, 20:45 (31st)
 Megan Johnson - 14th, 21:09 (39th)
 Lauren King - 24th, 21:50 (--)
 Christi Arnerich - 25th, 21:53 (--)
 Jennifer Fibuch - 37th, 22:28 (40th)
 Muffy Schmidt - 44th, 22:43 (--)
 Rachel Endress - 48th, 22:49 (32nd)
 Julia Schmidt - 22:56 (--)
 Megan Peterson - 23:05 (--)

2001 MONDO

Men's Cross Country Poll

Oct. 29, 2001

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Prev.</u>
1.	Colorado (13)	MT	393	1
2.	Stanford (2)	W	381	2
3.	Arkansas (1)	SC	373	3
4.	Wisconsin	GL	352	4
5.	NOTRE DAME	GL	329	5
6.	NC State	SE	324	6
7.	Villanova	MA	283	14
8.	Portland	W	275	7
9.	N. Arizona	MT	267	9
10.	Providence	NE	254	8
11.	Michigan	GL	227	12
12.	Brigham Young	MT	223	16
13.	Santa Barbara	W	211	11
14.	Arizona State	W	189	19
15.	Air Force	MT	171	9
16.	E. Michigan	GL	165	15
17.	Wake Forest	SE	120	21
18.	Oregon	W	114	20
19.	Michigan State	GL	111	18
20.	Arizona	W	102	13
21.	Utah State	MT	73	25
22.	Duke	SE	66	17
23.	Colorado State	MT	52	22
24.	William & Mary	SE	24	--
25.	Indiana	GL	20	23
	Utah	MT	20	--

Also receiving votes: Oklahoma State 19, Alabama 16, Washington 16, Butler 9, Dartmouth 7, Georgetown 7, Ohio State 2, Weber State 2, LaSalle 1, Texas A & M 1.

2001 FinishLynx

Women's Cross Country Poll

Oct. 30, 2001

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Prev.</u>
1.	Stanford (11)	W	323	1
2.	BYU (1)	MT	311	2
3.	Georgetown (1)	MA	299	3
4.	NC State	SE	281	4
5.	Boston College	NE	265	5
6.	Michigan State	GL	260	6
7.	Colorado	MT	255	10
8.	Arizona	W	231	11
9.	North Carolina	SE	221	9
10.	Providence	NE	210	8
11.	Arizona State	W	199	7
12.	Arkansas	SC	186	12
13.	N. Arizona	MT	157	17
14.	Virginia	SE	150	15
15.	Yale	NE	126	21
16.	Colorado State	MT	113	18
17.	UCLA	W	102	22
18.	Marquette	GL	92	24
19.	NOTRE DAME	GL	82	--
20.	Oklahoma St.	MW	67	--
21.	Villanova	MA	59	16
22.	Cornell	NE	56	23
23.	James Madison	NE	50	19
24.	Washington	W	45	13
25.	Duke	SE	26	20

Also receiving votes: Georgia Tech 15, Michigan 14, Boston University 12, Wisconsin 11, Texas 5, Minnesota 2.