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For Immediate Release: Oct. 31, 2002

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Cross Country Poised For A Run At The BIG EAST Title This Weekend In Boston

2002 Schedule

September

6 Fri.	adidas Invitational Notre Dame, Ind.	W, 1st M, 2nd
20 Fri.	National Catholic Notre Dame, Ind.	W, 1st M, 1st

October

4 Fri.	Notre Dame Invit. Notre Dame, Ind.	W, 3rd M, 3rd
11 Fri.	Bronco Open Three Rivers, Mich.	W, 2nd M, NTS
19 Sat.	Pre-National Meet Terre Haute, Ind.	W, 4th M, 11th

November

2 Sat.	BIG EAST Champ. Boston, Mass.	W, 12:20 p.m. M, 11:30 a.m.
16 Sat.	NCAA Great Lakes Reg. West Lafayette, Ind.	TBA
23 Sat.	IC4A Championship New York, N.Y.	TBA
25 Mon.	NCAA Championship Terre Haute, Ind.	TBA

Home meets in **bold**. All home meets are run at the Burke Memorial Golf Course on the west side of campus (enter at Dorr Road).

All times indicated are local to site.

NTS = no team scoring

The University of Notre Dame women's and men's cross country teams are in the middle of the most crucial stage in the 2002 schedule - and ready to take on several of the best teams in the nation at the 2002 BIG EAST Championship, held at Franklin Park in Boston, Mass., on Friday. The 6K women's race is set for 12:20 p.m., while the men's 8K race begins at 11:30 a.m.

The men's team will be looking to defend their 2001 team title, while the women are looking to break through for their first championship after finishing fourth a year ago.

Women's Outlook: The Irish women have been among the best in the nation this season and enter the meet ranked 13th in the nation (after having been ranked as high as third this season) and claiming the team titles at the adidas Invitational and National Catholic meets. Head coach Tim Connelly has successfully mixed a talented veteran team with one of the strongest freshman groups in the nation into a squad that will contend for the team title on Friday.

Early in the season, any discussion about the Irish women's team began with sophomore Lauren King. Lauren King burst on the scene last year at the Notre Dame Invitational, winning her first collegiate cross country and not looking back. She finished as an All-American in 2001, but had a disappointing performance at last year's BIG EAST meet.

Freshman Molly Huddle has followed Lauren King's pattern from the 2001 season this fall. Huddle utilized the Notre Dame Invitational to announce her presence to the nation, finishing fourth as the top Irish runner in the meet. Since her first race, Huddle has proven to be a dependable scorer, taking sixth place at the Pre-National meet in a possible precursor to All-America honors at the national meet.

Lauren King and Huddle are not the only Irish harriers prepared to run at the front of the pack this Friday. Senior Jennifer Handley ran a great race at the BIG EAST Championship in 2001, finishing seventh and earning all-BIG EAST honors. Handley has been following a tough training regiment over the last few weeks, but Connelly believes the veteran is ready to put it all together at the league championship. Handley's finishes include sixth in the adidas Invitational, ninth in the Notre Dame Invitational and 37th in the Pre-National. She has earned all-BIG EAST honors the last two seasons and should make it three in a row this weekend.

Behind Lauren King, Huddle and Handley, the picture becomes fuzzy but the talent level does not drop off. Freshmen Stephanie Madia, Lori King and Jean Marinangeli have all shown the ability to be the fourth runner for the Irish and sophomore Katie Wales in the mix as well. Lori King ran her best race of the season in the Pre National's open race two weeks ago, finishing seventh and assuring herself a spot in Notre Dame's nine runners in the BIG EAST Championship field.

Madia took fifth place in her first collegiate meet (National Catholic) and has run well since, finishing 34th in the Notre Dame Invitational and 71st in the Pre National. Marinangeli followed Lori King's pattern with a solid performance in the Pre National open race, finishing in 17th.

Wales has been among the most dependable runners on the Irish roster, with a seventh-place effort in the adidas Invite, fourth at the National Catholic, 24th at the Notre Dame Invitational and 93rd in the Pre National.

Ana Morales, who began running cross country late this season, has force her way into the BIG EAST lineup with solid efforts over the last few weeks. Morales ran to an eighth-place finish in the Notre Dame Invitational Gold Division race, then followed up with a 24th-place finish in the Pre National open race.

Jennifer Fibuch will also run among Notre Dame's nine entries on Friday. Fibuch has been steady throughout her entire career with the Irish, and the 2002 season has seen no change in her effort. She finished ninth at the adidas Invitational, 39th at the Notre Dame Invitational and 124th at the Pre National.

Irish fans might be wondering why junior Megan Johnson's name is missing from Notre

**MONDO Men's
Cross Country Division I Poll
Oct. 22, 2002**

<u>Team</u>	<u>Pts.</u>	<u>Prev.</u>
1. Stanford (13)	448	1
2. Arkansas (2)	433	2
3. Colorado	424	3
4. Northern Arizona	405	4
5. Oregon	381	5
6. Iona	365	16
7. Eastern Michigan	358	6
8. Central Michigan	333	19
9. Weber State	305	9
10. BYU	297	10
11. Wisconsin	286	8
12. Michigan	260	21
13. Georgetown	257	7
14. Colorado State	233	12
15. Minnesota	229	13
16. Villanova	216	11
17. Providence	210	15
18. Indiana	189	17
19. Butler	164	20
20. Ohio State	162	-
21. North Carolina State	146	14
22. Montana State	141	26
23. Michigan State	131	-
24. Dartmouth	122	27
25. Arizona State	94	22
26. Alabama	73	-
27. Oklahoma State	58	25
28. Utah State	46	-
29. Iowa	41	-
30. LaSalle	38	-

Notre Dame Men's Lineup for
2002 BIG EAST Championship:

David Alber, Jr., Dayton, Ohio
 Ryan Johnson, So., Auburn, Ind.
 John Keane, Sr., Winona, Minn.
 Brian Kerwin, Jr., Pt. Pleasant, N.J.
 Tim Moore, Fr., Novi, Mich.
 Eric Morrison, So., Ancaster, Ontario
 Kevin Somok, Jr., Southburgh, Conn.
 Kaleb Van Ort, Fr., Waterloo, Ind.
 Austin Weaver, Fr., Brentwood, Tenn.

Dame's lineup this weekend. An all-BIG EAST performer last season (14th), Johnson stepped in a hole during the Pre National meet and tweaked her leg. She will be making the trip with the Irish on Friday and is hoping to return for the Great Lakes Regional on Nov. 16.

Men's Outlook: The men's team quest for a second consecutive BIG EAST title was dealt a blow two weeks ago, as junior Todd Mobley has been sidelined with a leg injury. The all-star, who boasted two individual victories this year at the adidas Invitational and National Catholic, will not be in Notre Dame's lineup on Friday.

That leaves the men's team fate in the hands of some talented, but unproven, runners. Freshman Tim Moore has lived up to all the expectations head coach Joe Piane held when the rookie hit campus this fall. Moore finished second behind Mobley at both the adidas Invite and National Catholic and ran well at the Notre Dame Invitational with a sixth-place effort.

Moore was the top Irish finisher at the Pre National as well, taking 22nd place and displaying the ability to earn All-America honors at the national meet. He will be charged with leading the Notre Dame team into a highly competitive conference meet this weekend.

The number three runner for the Irish (who will have to be #2 this weekend) has switched back and forth between freshman Kaleb Van Ort and senior John Keane. Van Ort ran extremely well early in the season, finishing eighth in both the adidas Invitational and the National Catholic. He fell to 84th, however, at the Notre Dame Invitational and ended up 183rd at the Pre National meet.

Keane has been strong the entire season, ending up fifth at the National Catholic and 33rd at the Notre Dame Invitational. One of the hardest workers on the team, Keane has shown he has the guts to run with more talented runners and defeat them at the end of the race.

Sophomore Eric Morrison should be among Notre Dame's scoring finishers at the BIG EAST meet. He has come through for the Irish this season in an unexpected role, as the track and field 800-meter specialist did not compete as a freshman. He won the National Catholic JV race this year, finished a solid 36th at the Notre Dame Invitational and took 83rd at the Pre National meet.

David Alber has run well this season, and stepped up at the Pre National meet to be the second Irish harrier across the finish line. He took 34th at the Pre National, and his 16th place finish at the adidas Invite, seventh at National Catholic and 43rd at the Notre Dame Invitational indicates that the junior has been steady and dependable the entire year.

The rest of the nine entries for the Irish have all shown the ability to compete with the best and will have to run the race of their careers on Friday to keep Notre Dame in the top five. Sophomore Ryan Johnson finished 20th in the Pre National open race two weeks ago and looks to be on top of his game right now. Junior Brian Kerwin has been up and down this season (22nd at the adidas Invitational, sixth at the National Catholic, 53rd at the Notre Dame Invite), but he ran well in the Pre National open race to finish 19th.

Junior Kevin Somok has not competed since the Notre Dame Invitational, but his 21st place effort at the adidas Invitational proves that he can run well in a talented field. Freshman Austin Weaver also is entering this weekend's race, coming off a fifth-place finish at the Bronco Open three weeks ago.

Scouting the field: The BIG EAST Conference is one of the best in the nation for cross country, and this weekend's meet will feature many of the top teams in the nation. The women's race will have five of the top 30 teams in the nation according to the latest FinishLynx ranking (Oct. 21). Defending BIG EAST Champion Georgetown will enter the race ranked fifth and return all five scoring runners from its 2001 squad. The Hoyas also finished third in their race at the Pre National meet.

Providence is always one of the best squads in the land, and the 2002 squad has won three meets as a team this season. They are currently ranked 14th.

Villanova has developed one of their best teams in recent history this year and will run this weekend's meet as the 22nd-ranked group in the country. They finished second behind Providence at the Penn State Invitational.

Boston College, ranked 30th, should not be overlooked either. They have won all three meets in which they have competed this season and a different Eagle runner has taken

**FinishLynx Women's
Cross Country Division I Poll
Oct. 13, 2002**

<u>Team</u>	<u>Pts.</u>	<u>Prev.</u>
1. BYU (11)	388	1
2. Stanford (2)	379	2
3. Colorado	364	4
4. Wake Forest	347	26
5. Georgetown	335	5
6. North Carolina State	327	6
7. Northern Arizona	302.5	21
8. Notre Dame	300.5	13
9. Wisconsin	279	9
10. Arkansas	269	10
11. Missouri	259	20
12. Columbia	253	12
13. Duke	239	11
14. Providence	219	7
15. North Carolina	215	14
16. Virginia	201	16
17. Arizona State	181	8
18. Indiana	165	-
19. UCLA	156	17
20. Marquette	138	23
21. William & Mary	122	24
22. Villanova	119	19
23. Michigan State	109	3
24. Michigan	94	18
25. Washington	77	28
26. Toledo	65	-
27. Northwestern	41	-
28. Texas	38	-
29. Colorado State	24	25
30. Boston College	22	15

Notre Dame Women's Lineup for
2002 BIG EAST Championship:

Jennifer Fibuch, Sr., Leawood, Kan.
 Jennifer Handley, Sr., Barrie, Ontario
 Molly Huddle, Fr., Elmira, N.Y.
 Lauren King, So., Toronto, Ontario
 Lori King, Fr., Arlington Heights, Ill.
 Stephanie Madia, Fr., Wexford, Pa.
 Jean Marinangeli, Fr., Arlington Heights, Ill.
 Ana Morales, Sr., San Mateo, Calif.
 Katie Wales, So, Carmel, Ind.

first in each race.

Over on the men's side, Georgetown is looking to break through for its first men's team title since 1994. The Hoyas have finished in second place six out of the last eight years and enter the meet ranked 13th in the nation.

Providence will give the Hoyas a run for their money, as the Friars look to return to the winner's podium for the second time in three years (2000 was their last team victory). Providence has won three cross country meets this season and are currently ranked 17th in the nation.

The Villanova Wildcats cannot be overlooked. They have been ranked nationally every week this season and currently sit in 16th place.

Notre Dame's BIG EAST history: The past few seasons have been very kind to the Notre Dame men's cross country team, while the women have been steadily moving toward the 2002 season - the year they will contend for the conference title.

The men's team has claimed the team title three out of the last five years, breaking through in 1997, then following up with wins in 1999 and 2001. In 1999, Ryan Shay became the first Irish runner to win the individual title and a Notre Dame runner has finished in the top eight every year since 1995 (the first year the Irish started BIG EAST Conference competition).

The Irish women, on the other hand, have been slowly moving up the ranks since 1995. They finished fifth in 1998 and 1999, then moved up to fourth last season. Individually, current senior Jennifer Handley has two all-BIG EAST finishes on her resume (12th, 1999, seventh, 2001) and JoAnna Deeter owns the highest-ever female individual finish, taking second in 1996.

The BIG EAST Championship course: The 2002 BIG EAST Championship returns to Franklin Park in Boston, Mass., this season. The league meet began in 1979 in Franklin Park, with the Providence Friars claiming their first of four consecutive BIG EAST Championships. The venue changed to Van Cortlandt Park in 1988 and has changed back and forth periodically ever since. The men will run 8K, while the women will run 6K.

MEN'S TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS:

Year	Champion	Score	Runner-Up	Score	Site
2001	Notre Dame	49	Villanova	52	VCP
2000	Providence	39	Georgetown	46	FP
1999	Notre Dame	43	Georgetown	57	VCP
1998	Providence	36	Georgetown	75	FP
1997	Notre Dame	50	Providence	74	VCP
1996	Providence	76	Georgetown	79	FP
1995	Providence	50	Georgetown	74	VCP

WOMEN'S TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS:

2001	Georgetown	36	Boston College	53	VCP
2000	Boston College	38	Providence	71	FP
1999	Georgetown	41	Providence	59	VCP
1998	Villanova	40	Georgetown	63	FP
1997	Providence	52	Georgetown	58	VCP
1996	Providence	47	Georgetown	58	FP
1995	Providence	37	Villanova	51	VCP

TOP NOTRE DAME MEN'S FINISHER:

2001	Luke Watson	2nd
2000	Luke Watson	7th
1999	Ryan Shay	1st
1998	Ryan Shay	6th
1997	Jason Rexing	4th
1996	Jason Rexing	2nd
1995	Derek Seiling	5th

TOP NOTRE DAME WOMEN'S FINISHER:

2001	Jennifer Handley	7th
2000	Chrissy Kuenster	18th
1999	Allison Klemmer	4th
1998	JoAnna Deeter	3rd
1997	JoAnna Deeter	16th
1996	JoAnna Deeter	2nd
1995	Maureen Kelly	23rd