

2014 SEASON OUTLOOK



The University of Colorado cross country teams have consistently been one of the top combined squads in the nation and this year the Buffs looks like they will remain that way with all of the talent returning to both men's and women's teams.

Both of CU's cross country programs are ranked in the USTFCCA's Coaches' Preseason Poll. The men are the preseason favorite, while the women are eighth overall.

Mark Wetmore, in his 20th year as the head coach, has made a name for himself in the distance world as year after year his teams perform at an elite level. The men, who are the reigning NCAA Champions, return eight letterwinners this year, including seven postseason scorers from the 2013 team that won its third straight Pac-12 Conference title in as many years. Four of those eight, seniors Morgan Pearson and Blake Theroux, junior Pierce Murphy and sophomore Ben Saarel, earned All-American honors at nationals in 2013. Jake Hurysz, a redshirt senior, will also return for the Buffs. He was an All-American in 2012.

The returning non-All-Americans on the team have all contributed greatly to the team's success. Senior Hugh Dowdy, juniors Ammar Moussa and Connor Winter and sophomore Zach Perrin have all scored for the Buffs. CU also has a great deal of talent with several newcomers this season, which include five freshmen. With all of that talent, Wetmore will have a tough job of deciding who will race for the Buffs.

"Virtually everybody returns," Wetmore said at the preseason media day press conference. "We graduated away only our alternate who didn't race (at nationals) but was there in case. We have one of our best runner from 2012, who we kept out last year, returning. My task will be deciding who to use and who to save because five comprise the scorers of the NCAA Championship and you can put seven on the line. You can run 10 at the conference meet but there is no point in using people unnecessarily, so that will be one of my tasks, along with coach [Heather] Burroughs, figuring out who to use."

Despite returning five All-Americans, Wetmore is cautious about the Buffs defending their Pac-12 and NCAA Championships from 2013.

"Our sport is a little unlike most other sports in that an opponent can have a completely different team, and entirely different roster than they had a year ago; it's not impossible to not make the NCAA Championship in one year and have a contending team the next, it's just the way our sport works and recruiting works. Yeah, we're the defending champions and every defending coach makes up reasons why they shouldn't be the favorite, but

the landscape could be very different by November just as far as personnel is concerned."

The women placed seventh at NCAAs in 2013 and return six letterwinners from that group. Unlike the men, the women don't have a returning All-American with the graduation of CU's first four-time female cross country All-American Shalaya Kipp. Junior Carrie Verdon is the likely leader on the team as she was CU's No. 2 harrier in every race behind Kipp which included a fourth-place finish at the NCAA Mountain Region Championships that earned all-region honors. Three other Buffs, junior Jenny DeSouchet and sophomores Erin Clark and Melanie Nun also earned all-region recognition and return to the Buffs this season. Juniors Maddie Alm and Catrina McAlister scored for the Buffs in 2013 as well.

Like the men, the women have several newcomers this year. CU added four freshmen, in addition to Sara Sutherland, a graduate student who ran three seasons at Texas.

"The women will probably be led by Carrie Verdon," Wetmore said. "But Erin Clark, who was a freshman last year, did some real good running and Melanie Nun, also a freshman, did some good running and Maddie Alm and Jenny DeSouchet are returning varsity runners for us. Plus, we've had a good freshman recruiting class, no superstars but people that can help us, and unlike men's cross country and unlike most other collegiate sports it's not impossible for a freshman woman to come in and help your team immediately as did two a year ago. The women were seventh a year ago and they can be very good again; they can be better than that. Our goal always is to contend for the conference championship, which in our conference takes a lot of contending, and then to take a shot at the podium at the NCAA, top four finish, and this team can do it."

The Pac-12 Championships will be hosted by California this year on October 31. Colorado's men have won all three team titles since joining the league in 2011. The women won the championship in 2011 and were fifth in 2012 before placing second in 2013. Both teams are poised well to contend for another team title this season.

Winning the Pac-12 Championships won't be an easy task as several of the league's schools are ranked in the USTFCCA Top-30 Preseason Poll. After CU on the men's side, Oregon is ranked third and Stanford is fifth. UCLA and Washington are 24th and 27th, respectively. On the women's side, Oregon is ranked second and Stanford is fourth. Washington came in at 15th and Arizona State is 30th.

The NCAA Mountain Region Championships are set for Nov. 14 in Albuquerque, N.M. Terre Haute, Ind. will once again host the NCAA Cross Country Championships, its 10th time in 11 years, on November 22.



2014 ROSTERS

COLORADO WOMEN

Name	Ht	Yr	Exp.	Hometown (High School/College)
Madeline Alm	5-3	Jr.	1L	Louisville, Colo. (Monarch)
Sophia Angell	5-9	Fr.	HS	Saint Charles, Mo. (Lutheran)
Kaitlyn Benner	5-6	Fr.	HS	Superior, Colo. (Monarch)
Eryn Blakely	5-3	RFr.	TR	Monrovia, Calif. (Alverno)
Mackenzie Caldwell	5-3	Fr.	HS	Columbus, Ind. (Columbus North)
Erin Clark*	5-5	So.	1L	Eugene, Ore. (South Eugene)
Valerie Constien	5-6	Fr.	HS	Edwards, Colo. (Battle Mountain)
Jenny DeSouchet	5-6	Jr.	1L	Alamosa, Colo. (Alamosa/Columbia)
Annie Kelly	5-6	So.	TR	Alpharetta, Ga. (Milton/Mississippi)
Lucy May	5-4	RFr.	RS	St. Louis, Mo. (St. Joseph's Academy)
Catrina McAlister	5-3	Jr.	2L	San Clemente, Calif. (San Clemente)
Melanie Nun*	5-4	So.	1L	Broomfield, Colo. (Legacy)
Amanda Ortiz	5-1	RFr.	RS	Eagle, Colo. (Battle Mountain)
Hagen Reedy	5-3	RFr.	RS	Clovis, Calif. (Buchanan)
Olivia Rintala	5-5	So.	VR	San Jose, Calif. (Archbishop Mitty)
Sara Sutherland	5-6	Grad.	TR	Dallas, Texas (Highland Park/Texas)
Carrie Verdon*	5-2	Jr.	2L	Moraga, Calif. (Campolindo)

COLORADO MEN

Name	Ht.	Yr	Exp.	Hometown (High School/College)
Reiny Barchet	6-4	Fr.	HS	Downingtown, Pa. (Henderson)
Hugh Dowdy	6-1	Sr.	1L	Petaluma, Calif. (Petaluma)
David Emmert	6-3	So.	VR	Sycamore, Ill. (Sycamore)
Ryan Forsyth	5-11	Fr.	HS	Severna Park, Md. (Severna Park)
Chris Herrick	6-1	Fr.	HS	Missoula, Mont. (Hellgate)
Joe Holvey	5-6	So.	TR	Eugene, Ore. (South Eugene/Oregon)
Jake Hurysz	5-10	RSr.	1L/RS	Mebane, N.C. (Eastern Alamance/UNC)
Ethan Gonzales	5-11	Fr.	HS	Westminster, Colo. (Broomfield)
Paul Miller	6-2	Fr.	HS	Fort Collins, Colo. (Poudre)
Ammar Moussa*	5-7	Jr.	2L	Arcadia, Calif. (Arcadia)
Pierce Murphy*	5-8	Jr.	2L	Hanalei, Hawai'i (Island)
Morgan Pearson*	5-11	Sr.	2L	Morristown, N.J. (Delbarton/Duke)
Zachary Perrin*	6-0	So.	1L	Lakeside, Mont. (Flathead)
Adam Peterman	6-2	RFr.	RS	Missoula, Mont. (Hellgate)
Ben Saarel*	6-1	So.	1L	Park City, Utah (Park City)
Panos Smyrnios	5-8	So.	VR	Littleton, Colo. (Chatfield)
Blake Theroux*	5-8	Sr.	3L	Chesapeake, Va. (Western Branch)
Connor Winter*	5-11	Jr.	2L	Centennial, Colo. (Arapahoe)

*-indicates returning 2013 postseason scorers