

Former Buff Vaughn triumphs for USA title

Brent Vaughn earns trip to world championships

Camera staff report
Boulder Daily Camera

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SAN DIEGO -- Former University of Colorado standout Brent Vaughn won the USA Cross Country Championship on Saturday at Mission Bay Park.

Vaughn finished the men's open 12-kilometer race in 35 minutes, 46 seconds. Andrew Bumbalough was the second-place finisher, crossing the line in 35:52. With the win, Vaughn earned a trip to the IAAF World Cross Country Championships March 20 in Punta Umbria, Spain.

Jorge Torres, another former CU athlete, finished 10th in the men's race. He clocked a time of 36:36.

Blake Theroux led a trio of CU freshmen in the junior men's race. Theroux finished 18th overall, finishing the 8K loop in 25:50. Hugh Dowdy was 34th overall (26:22) and Michael Goodger placed 46th (26:52). Erik Olson was the junior men's champion, finishing the race in 24:48.

The Buffs also had some former women competing in the open race. Kara Goucher finished seventh with a time of 27:37. Rachel Giosca-Ryan placed 26th overall (29:42).

USA Cross Country

Championships At San Diego

First place and CU results

Men's junior 8K -- 1. Erik Olson, 24:48; 18. Blake Theroux, 25:50; 34. Hugh Dowdy, 26:22; 46. Michael Goodger, 26:52.

Women's open 8K -- 1. Shalane Flanagan, 25:47; 7. Kara Goucher, 27:37; 26. Rachel Gioscia-Ryan, 29:42.

Men's open 12K -- 1. Brent Vaughn, 35:46; 10. Jorge Torres, 36:36.

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Crosby family journeys to Super Bowl

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- Reporter: Justin Felder

DALLAS, Texas - One of the most tense moments of any football game can be watching your team line up to kick a game-deciding field goal. For the family of Packers kicker Mason Crosby, no amount of stress, pressure or anxiety can bring them down, simply because they've made it to this moment: every single one of them.

The Crosby family made the drive Thursday from Lubbock, where Mason's brother Rees goes to college. They were already anticipating Sunday's Super Bowl kickoff.

"[It will be a] feeling of pride, just a feeling of elation, that here we are at the Super Bowl and here's my son," said Mason's father Jim Crosby.

Especially proud was Mason's grandmother, Bessie Hayles, but everyone calls her Mimi. When Mason wasn't practicing kicking field goals, occasionally through various windows, he was telling Mimi about how one day he'd kick in the Super Bowl.

"Go for it, just go for it baby. That's all it takes is just go for it," Hayles would tell him.

Unfortunately, as it often does, life altered the Crosby family's trajectory.

"My mom, last spring, found out that she had terminal cancer," said Mason's mother Karen.

Mimi was given 6 months to live. The two most important items on her to do list were to see Mason's newborn son and see him play football at Lambeau Field one more time. She accomplished both when the Packers played the Colts in the preseason.

Mason, however, was not satisfied.

"Mason told her that weekend in august, he told her, 'Mimi, you hang in there, we're going to the Super Bowl,'" said Karen. "It's in Dallas. You hang in there, I'm going to take you there."

Getting Mimi to the Super Bowl became a rallying cry for the Crosbys, even as the Packers season hit its bumps along the way. After Green Bay beat Chicago in the NFC Championship game, Mason didn't grab the champagne.

"He got my cell phone, he said, 'Mimi, we made it, and so did you,' said Karen. "That is just incredible."

"I was so excited, I was crying," said Hayles. "He said, 'Mimi, we're going. He said Mimi, hang in there, we're going.' I said, 'I'll be there.'"

Mimi guarantees a Packers victory in the Super Bowl. Any member of the Crosby family will tell you that yes, they want a win, but having everyone together in Dallas is worth far more than any field goal or extra point.

"It's going to be so exciting," said Hayles. "I just can't hardly wait."

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Kicker Crosby takes dead aim

By Monique Walker and Shalise Manza Young

Globe Staff / February 6, 2011

DALLAS — Packers kicker Mason Crosby began his NFL career in a way that made league history back in 2007.

In his first game, Crosby kicked a 42-yard game-winning field goal with two seconds left for a 16-13 victory over the Eagles. That made him the first player in league history to kick a game-winner and a field goal of more than 50 yards in his first game, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Crosby hasn't kicked a game-winner in the final seconds since.

If Super Bowl XLV comes down to a field goal tonight, Crosby said, he is ready. He has missed three chances to clinch a victory for the Packers since his auspicious debut, but that doesn't mean the Packers aren't confident in him.

"I have a lot of faith in Mason Crosby, especially indoors," said coach Mike McCarthy. "He has kicked the football very well. The time off last week really helped both Mason and [punter] Tim [Masthay]. I have all the faith in the world in Mason Crosby."

Four of the last 10 Super Bowls have been decided by 3 points, and it wouldn't be surprising to see a similar result tonight.

This season, Crosby converted 22 of 28 field goal attempts, with two misses coming from more than 50 yards.

"I have been in positions of kicking game-winners," Crosby said. "I have talked to a couple guys, and everyone says the same thing: just embrace it. Enjoy it. Don't get sucked up in the moment that it's a game-winner.

"Just think that it's that next kick. It's a kick that you have done a hundred times and just go out and hit it."

Crosby, a native of Texas, said he has dreamed of opportunities to kick the winner in a Super Bowl.

"It's a special moment," he said. "I'm most looking forward to getting on the field and hitting that first kick, either getting the game started if it's a kickoff, or hitting a field goal to get some points on the board."

Them again

Packers general manager Ted Thompson doesn't have the fondest memories of facing the Steelers in the playoffs. Thompson was a linebacker with the Houston Oilers (1975-84) when they lost to the Steelers back-to-back years in the AFC Championship game in the late '70s.

Now Pittsburgh is in his way again.

"Those doggone Steelers," said Thompson. "It's not unusual, though. They're usually at the end of this thing, so it's a big challenge for us.

"We know the tradition, we know the kind of players they have, the kind of organization they have. But, we're trying to win a world championship — it's supposed to be hard."

Special incentive

The Lombardi name is respected throughout the NFL, but most of all in the land of the Packers. For Green Bay coach Mike McCarthy, bringing the Lombardi Trophy back to Wisconsin for the first time since 1997 is a feeling he would cherish.
