

CU harriers aim for Big 12 title

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There is a good chance the Buffs could leave the state of Oklahoma with a historic victory on Saturday.

In Stillwater that is.

Colorado's cross country teams are focused on winning Big 12 championships before running west to the Pac-12.

The CU men won the first 12 Big 12 titles before Oklahoma State, the host team this year, won the 2008 and 2009 championships.

"I definitely think there is a little extra emphasis to go out as champions," junior Christian Thompson said. "Okie State has been our big rivals the past two years and they're the only ones besides us that have won the Big 12s. ...

"Winning on their home course, that would be the second-best place to win it with Boulder being the best."

The CU women have won 11 Big 12 titles, but Texas Tech has captured the last two championships.

"I think we're all really excited going into this," senior Laura Thweatt said. "We've been training well the last couple weeks and we're all fit. We're trying not to put a lot of pressure on ourselves, we just want to run to our ability and have fun."

At the NCAA Pre-Nationals two weeks ago, Joe Bosshard was seventh overall to lead ninth-ranked CU to a third-place finish. Oklahoma won the event and BYU was second.

"The NCAA (Championships) are always our focus each year, but the Big 12's definitely mean something," Bosshard said. "We had a long winning streak until a couple years ago and we don't want to go out on a losing note."

Laura Tremblay was second individually at the NCAA Pre-Nationals to lead the seventh-ranked Buffs to a second-place team finish.

At the Big 12 Championships on Saturday, the women's race will begin at 9 a.m. with the men's race to follow at 10 a.m. The CU football team will take the field in Norman to take on the Sooners at 7:15 p.m.

"I think there's a little bit more emphasis on team as a whole this year and I think everyone is a little tired of getting second," Thompson said. "We definitely have a lot of experience. We've been a young team for a while and now the majority of the team are veterans. Everything is starting to fall into place."

Brent Vaughn was the last CU male to win an individual Big 12 championship in 2007. Jenny Barringer won the conference championship in 2009.

All-Academic team

CU cross country has proven been just as successful in the classroom over the years under head coach Mark Wetmore. That is the case again this fall.

Thweatt earned her third selection to the Academic All-Big 12 cross country team on Wednesday. In total, 21 Buffs were honored with the academic award to lead the conference.

CU placed nine women and five men on the Academic All-Big 12 first team, while the men had four on the second team and the women placed three on the second team. Members of the first team have a grade point average of 3.20 or better, while those named to the second team have between a 3.0-3.19 grade point average.

Matt Biegner, Megan Burrell, Katie Cumming and Stephen Kasica earned their second mention on the first team, while Emma Coburn earned her second mention on the second team.

Soccer in spotlight

The CU soccer team will host rival Nebraska for the final time as conference rivals in the regular-season finale on Friday at Prentup Field (3 p.m., FSN).

The Buffs, coming off a 2-1 overtime win over Kansas on Monday, can advance to the Big 12 Tournament with a victory.

"Now that we have something concrete to play for it makes it 10 times more special," freshman Anne Stuller said moments after scoring the golden goal against the Jayhawks. "We already have something to play for because it's senior night and we play for our seniors and love our seniors. It's going to be a real special game."

CU will honor seniors Amanda Foulk, Mel Hicks, Kym Lowry and Taryn Vitacca after the game. If the home team loses its season will likely be over.

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