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CU cross country spotlight: Laura Tremblay

Sophomore standout holds her own at World Cross Country Championships

By Caryn Maconi on September 24, 2010

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Colorado cross country runner Laura Tremblay enjoys running, but not just in Boulder.

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After finishing off the 2009 NCAA cross-country season in November, with strong finishes at regionals and nationals, Buffs runner Laura Tremblay went on to race at the USA Cross Country Championships in Spokane, Wash.

Tremblay began the 2009 season as a freshman and the No.4 runner on the Buffs' varsity squad. Wasting no time, she received her first all-conference honor in October with a 15th place finish at the Big 12 Championships. Two weeks later, at the NCAA Regional Championship, she had moved up to the No.3 position behind former CU-runner Jenny Barringer and sophomore Allie McLaughlin, earning ninth overall.

Due to an injury to her Achilles tendon towards the end of the regular season, Tremblay said she did not do as well as she had hoped at the NCAA National Championship where she got 199th place. At the USA Cross Country Championships though, her fourth place finish qualified her for Worlds.

For Tremblay, the World Championships were a new experience in several different ways. It was the first time she had been out of the country, the longest plane ride she had ever been on and it was her first time competing at a world-class level. Representing Team USA, Tremblay raced against 95 of the top junior women from around the world.

She finished in 51st place.

"I do well when I race with good competition," Tremblay said. "I draft off of someone, let them lead for a little, and then use my competitive edge to kick it at the end."

The magnitude of her success did not hit her until she returned to the United States after the race.

"The whole experience was surreal," she said.

After so much success as a freshman, what will she try to accomplish in the 2010 cross country season?

Mark Wetmore, head coach of the Buffs cross country team, said he and assistant coach Heather Burroughs will help Tremblay make the next step.

"We will carefully and patiently shepherd her natural talent," Wetmore said.

Looking ahead to the upcoming season, which kicks off Oct. 2 at the 25th annual Rocky Mountain Shootout, Tremblay said the team as a whole is looking strong.

“[We’ll benefit from] being a little older and having gained a little more experience,” she said.

She will also compete on the track for the first time this year as a redshirt freshman, and she said she expects to have success there as well.

“I like track a little better,” she said. “I’m more of a flat and fast runner.”

According to her twin and teammate, sophomore Liz Tremblay, Laura brings much more to the team than just speed.

“She doesn’t like to back down,” Liz Tremblay said. “She likes to get the full workout done to perfection.”

About having a sister on the team, Laura said that she and Liz are “compassionately competitive.” Because Laura is a longer-distance runner (800 meters and up) and Liz’s focus is middle distance (400-800 meters), the two push each other but do not compete in the same races or have the same training schedules.

Though just a sophomore, Laura will likely be a motivation to her sister and the rest of her team this season.

“She’s always in a good mood, personable, and hardworking,” Wetmore said. “Combine those with a rare, natural talent, and you’re a large way to success.”

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