



## Buff men will make run at another title

By Joshua Lindenstein  
Sunday, November 18, 2007

There are two main common threads linking Colorado's 2004 and 2006 national champion men's cross country teams to this fall's squad — Brent Vaughn and Stephen Pifer.

They're the only two runners who will have raced at the NCAA championships as members of all three squads when the Buffs toe the line for the event in Terre Haute, Ind., on Monday.

The two fifth-year seniors hope their winning trend together continues as they take to the LaVern Gibson Cross Country Course one last time.

The two runners came in together as freshmen at CU in 2003, but Pifer redshirted that season. After they were part of the 2004 title squad together, an injury caused Vaughn to redshirt in 2005, and the Buffs finished a disappointing fifth at nationals. With both back on the course last season, CU claimed the crown once again.

"We've definitely thought about it," Vaughn said. "Everyone wants to go out on top, so that would be incredible."

The championships begin with the men's race at 10:08 a.m. Monday, with the women's race following at 10:58 (television on CSTV, 10 a.m.).

Although they lost three scorers from last year's NCAA meet, the second-ranked Buffs have rolled lately, winning titles at the Big 12 and Mountain Region meets. Sophomore Kenyon Neuman has stepped in and become part of a triumvirate of CU frontrunners along with Vaughn and Pifer.

CU will field one of a handful of men's squads powerful enough to win the title. Oregon is ranked No. 1, while Iona, UTEP and perennial power Wisconsin round out the top 5.

"Any one of those five teams that has a particularly good day is going to win it," Buffs coach Mark Wetmore said.

For Vaughn, who won the Big 12 championship three weeks ago, the race is one last chance at an individual title. After a promising fourth-place finish at the NAACs as a sophomore in 2004, a stress reaction in his pelvis caused him to sit out the 2005 season. As a redshirt junior last year, Vaughn led the Buffs with a 12th-place finish as the team rolled to victory past second-place Wisconsin.

Still, Vaughn said he wouldn't go out too fast and risk hurting the team's score by going for his own victory.

Liberty's Josh McDougal and Northern Arizona's Lopez Lomong, both of whom broke the Terre Haute 8K course record earlier this fall, are the likely favorites on the men's side. Monday's race is a 10K on

the rolling, winding grass course.

"This year my goal is to get right up in it and hopefully be in the top five again," Vaughn said. "I'd like to be there at the end, but we'll see what happens the last few kilometers. I'm not going to be stupid the first 5K, but I'm going to try to be in the race."

While notching another podium finish might take a perfect day from the 22nd-ranked CU women — who have followed a national title in 2004 with two straight runner-up performances — junior Jenny Barringer will certainly be in the hunt for the women's individual title.

Barringer placed second last year behind Texas Tech's Sally Kipyego, who also beat Barringer at the Big 12 championships and the Mountain Region race this season.

"I'm incredibly motivated to beat Sally, but it's not because she's this ominous, huge character in my running career," Barringer said. "But the NCAA championship is a really coveted prize in cross country."

### **Wetmore snags award**

Wetmore has been named the NCAA Mountain Region Men's Coach of the Year by the USTFCCCA.

This marks the 13th time he's won the award — nine times for men and four for women.

### **Take a look**

The NCAA cross country championships will be broadcast live for the first time ever on CSTV.

The broadcast will start at 10 a.m. and will finish at 1:30 p.m. It will include interviews with athletes, including CU's Jenny Barringer, and will also be streamed live on the internet at [www.ustfccca.org](http://www.ustfccca.org).



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## Elite level in senior's sight

CU's Marston looks to go from walk-on to All-American

*By Patrick Ridgell*

*Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — Erin Marston concludes her college eligibility Monday when she and the Colorado cross country teams compete at the NCAA Championships (10 a.m., CSTV). Count coach Mark Wetmore among those who'll miss her contributions.

"I wish she had seven younger sisters, each two years apart," Wetmore said.

CU's powerhouse cross country programs are regulars at the NCAA championships. This year in Terre Haute, Ind., its men's team will compete in its 25th championship in 26 years. The women have made it there 16 of the past 17. CU has won at least one title in six of the past seven years.

With 74 previous all-Americans and 22 conference championships, including the men's Big 12 title in 2007, CU seeks more hardware Monday to add to an already crowded trophy case. Brent Vaughn, Stephen Pifer and Kenyon Neuman have top three finishes this season. Among the women, potential-Olympian Jenny Barringer was the NCAA runner-up a year ago. All are living up to the expectations they carried upon arriving in Boulder.

While Marston has established herself as the women's No. 3 runner, she didn't come to Boulder quite so celebrated.

She was a walk-on who didn't earn a scholarship until this semester. She finished in the top eight at the Big 12 track championships last spring to land one.

Marston, who'll graduate next month with degrees in integrated physiology and Spanish, has exceeded any expectation she had before enrolling at CU. As a senior at Chaparral High in Parker, she wrestled with whether to try to be someone at one of the top programs in the country, or go elsewhere and star. Her choice worked out well.

"When I made my decision to come here, it was like, 'I can either run at an OK school and be No. 1, or run at the best running school and be the last one on the team,'" Marston said. "That's how I made my decision. So I kind of knew it was going to be tough at first.

"I've gone, actually, a lot further than I thought I would. My original goal was always just to get to the varsity squad, to be able to travel with the team, and last year I surpassed my expectations ... to be able to score for the team at all the meets, which is so exciting, and being able to take another step up this year is beyond my expectations."

Said Wetmore: "Of course a program needs blue-chip, national-caliber, expensive recruits. But as much as they need that, they need hard working, patient, blue-collar people like Erin, who also happens to be as nice and cooperative and coachable a person as we've had here.

"I've never seen her in a bad mood about anything. Who goes through five years without some disappointment?"



A former walk-on, senior Erin Marston will compete with the University of Colorado women's cross country team Monday in the NCAA Championships. **Courtesy University of Colorado**

In 2006, Marston was 23rd at the Big 12 championships, and 24th at the NCAA Mountain Regionals. This fall, Marston took sixth at the Big 12 meet, and 13th at regionals to earn her second all-region honor.

Marston took the fall semester of 2005 and studied abroad in Buenos Aires. During her six months there, she focused on base training, immersing herself in running and no other workouts by racking up miles each week. She had bumped her total to 60 miles a week by the summer of 2006, and 80 per week last summer.

Marston credited base training with her improvement. Wetmore noticed something about Marston right after she returned from Argentina.

"She came back a very different runner, and what she did she did entirely by herself without any instruction from our staff here," Wetmore said.

If Marston's improvement continues, she could earn an all-American nod Monday. That would require her best race ever, an opinion she and Wetmore share. There are 31 teams of seven runners apiece, but selected individuals from other programs around the nation. The top 30 American women in Monday's 6K race are named all-American.

Marston said good health, patience and coaching are what can turn a walk-on into a potential all-American. Wetmore said it's patience, self confidence and hard work. She has one more race to go.

"It's huge," Marston said. "This is what we've been training for since May. We focus on nationals, and it's my last race, so I'm really excited about it. I think it's going to be good."

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