



Lindenstein: Commitment to CU drives Barringer

By Joshua Lindenstein
Tuesday, November 20, 2007

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. — The true spirit of college athletics was thriving at the NCAA cross country championships on Monday, and in no one was it more apparent than the University of Colorado's Jenny Barringer.

Her second consecutive runner-up finish was an achievement to be celebrated in and of itself. But it was a performance that Barringer very easily — and in most respects understandably — could have written off long before the starter fired the gun Monday.

Barringer, after all, was the United States champion in the steeplechase last June, qualifying her for the world meet. Few would have blamed her for gearing all of her training efforts toward the shorter 3,000-meter distance in an effort to get ready for the Osaka race, which was in late August. Such strategy would have compromised her prospects of another top finish in Terre Haute and possibly meant a redshirt season this fall. But elite careers in athletics can be fleeting, and the opportunities to represent your country on the world stage aren't to be taken for granted.

Barringer, however, reminded everyone present Monday the opportunity to run for one's school — and alongside the teammates to whom you've pledged your commitment and persevered with through endless workouts — is no less of a privilege.

After winning the U.S. steeple title, Barringer sat down with CU head coach Mark Wetmore and assistant Heather Burroughs to determine what her training regimen would be like leading up to her August steeplechase races at the world championships, as well as another big race in Paris.

The decision was made that Barringer would tailor her training for the 6K distance with the aim of peaking on Monday.

"The Osaka-Japan plans had to fit into the Terre Haute plan," Wetmore said last week.

Barringer won the September DecaNation steeple race in Paris in school-record time but failed to make finals at worlds. The main goal still remained ahead, however.

Although she lost once again to nemesis Sally Kipyego of Texas Tech, it wasn't without a personal-best performance. Barringer said she went for the victory against Kipyego like she never had before and was proud of her own effort.

Barringer said last week that she had embraced the training plan to focus on cross country season rather than the steeplechase. It was a sentiment she echoed Monday.

"I know some people were really critical of my comment early on after I won USAs about how it was going to be a decision whether I was going to go to worlds or not," Barringer said. "But I stick by that, and I think that I'm first and foremost a collegiate athlete, and I run for the University of Colorado. I'm very, very proud to wear this uniform. And so I want to race for them the best that I possibly can."

Kudos to Barringer for having the guts to put her commitment to her team above her own personal ambitions. It's such actions and sentiments — one star's true appreciation for the opportunity to be a student-athlete — that give Buff fans plenty of reasons to hope Barringer gets many more chances to take on the world.



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Vaughns both earn All-America honors

By Joshua Lindenstein

Tuesday, November 20, 2007

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. — Last year Sara Vaughn held her eight-week-old baby and watched from the sidelines as husband Brent ran to an All-American 12th-place finish at the NCAA cross country championships. On Monday, the Colorado Buffalo junior made All-American finishes a family affair.

Just 14 months after giving birth, Sara Vaughn raced to a 31st-place finish at the LaVern Gibson Cross Country Course, which was good enough to put her among the top 30 Americans in the race. Brent, meanwhile, took fifth place in the men's race and grabbed his third All-American honor.

"I just never really expected to be an All-American in cross country," Sara Vaughn said while holding grinning daughter Ciara. "I'm more of a miler. The track is my domain. This 6K cross country race is really intimidating so I'm just really excited."

Seeking some last-minute advice on Sunday evening for her first crack at the NCAAs, Sara went to Brent, whom she calls her "third or fourth coach." She raced conservatively early, sitting around 60th at the midway point, before mowing down competitors in the second half of the race — not coincidentally much like Brent did in going from 11th to fifth in the final 3K of the men's race.

"Her being an All-American is pretty incredible," Brent, a senior, said. "It says a lot about her as a person and an athlete and a mother as well. I knew that she had a lot of talent and (coach Mark Wetmore) did a great job training her. I knew she was going to come along."

"We both got All-American today. That's a good day for our us, I'd say."

Full of youth

Erin Marston (134th place) was the only senior to run for the Buffalo women on Monday.

With a lineup loaded with young runners, coach Mark Wetmore put the blame on himself for the women's squad not performing better as a whole this season. The women placed 23rd Monday after three straight years of finishing in the top two.

"We had some injuries, which are most likely to be my fault," Wetmore said. "We knew that we were going to be relying on some new people, and I may have pushed them too hard, trying to bring them around to NCAA-caliber running."

Taking a pass

Former Fairview High standout Sarah Cocco, a USC freshman who had qualified for Monday's meet, opted against making the trip to Terre Haute. Cocco went to USC with more of a focus on shorter track races, and runs cross country mainly to prepare for track.

"We were pleasantly surprised with my success but decided not to bite off more than we could chew," Cocco said by telephone. "I wanted to rest up and get ready for track."



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Barringer's bid falls short at NCAA cross country

CU runner finishes second

By Joshua Lindenstein
Tuesday, November 20, 2007

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. — Jenny Barringer keeps closing the gap on Sally Kipyego. So far, Kipyego keeps winning.

As they have in races for the past two years, Texas Tech's Kipyego and Colorado's Barringer ran at the front of the pack Monday at the NCAA cross country championships. Just as she did at the same meet last year, Kipyego beat Barringer for the title.

Barringer's second straight national runner-up finish on the LaVern Gibson Cross Country Course was the highlight of the day for the perennial powerhouse Buffs, who have made plenty of memories in Terre Haute the last few years.

CU's rebuilding women's squad finished 23rd as a team, and the men, ranked second in the nation coming into the event, ended up a disappointing seventh.

Running with Florida State's Susan Kuijken and Iowa's Diane Nukuri in a battle for second place, Barringer had a decision to make about halfway through the race: hang safely where she was at, knowing she could out-kick Kuijken and Nukuri to the finish; or go for broke trying to catch Kipyego — who had begun gapping the trailing trio — and risk a much lower finish if she ran out of steam before the end.

Barringer went for it all. And though she didn't catch Kipyego, her choice had her holding her head high afterward.

Kipyego covered the winding, rolling 6K grass course in a time of 19 minutes, 30.9 seconds. Barringer finished in 19:47.8. Kuijken placed third in 19:57.3, and Nukuri was fourth in 20:07.0.

"I wanted to risk it more than I ever had before, because second isn't good enough for me," Barringer said. "I moved earlier than I ever have. I had a little less in the last 500 meters than I ever have. So coming out of this I'm really proud of all the hard work I've put in."

Although she acknowledged some frustration incontinually finishing second to her Big 12 Conference rival Kipyego, Barringer said she's seeing progress.

"Last year it was 45 seconds, then 26 seconds," Barringer said. "Then this year it was 14 seconds and six seconds and then today I'm not sure how much. But I'm closing the gap. I don't think I'd be as good as I

am if I didn't have such good competition."

Buff's head coach Mark Wetmore was equally proud of Barringer, the reigning U.S. steeplechase champion.

"A great race from Jen, what we hoped for," Wetmore said.

Sara Vaughn joined Barringer in earning All-American status with a 31st-place finish.

Stanford won the women's title for the third year in a row. Oregon placed second. Florida State was third.

Vaughn's husband, Brent, placed fifth to pace a CU men's squad that otherwise never really got rolling.

Fellow senior Stephen Pifer also became an All-American with a 34th-place finish, but he was among multiple Buff men disappointed that he didn't make his move soon enough.

"It was just poor execution on my part," Pifer said. "The pace was slow up front. I should have been up near it and responding to the race. Instead I was too far back whenever the move was made, and I was just playing catch-up."

Liberty's Josh McDougal won in a time of 29:22.4, out-sprinting Oregon's Galen Rupp to the finish by one second. Vaughn crossed in 29:47.4.

Rupp's Ducks took their first team crown since 1977. Iona, Oklahoma State, Northern Arizona and Wisconsin rounded out the top five. Alabama also beat the CU men, who had finished outside the top five only two other times since 1993 and certainly didn't expect to do so on Monday.

"If we're not on the podium it's a bad year for us," Wetmore said.



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cross country

Bufs' Barringer in runner-up role again

By John Meyer
The Denver Post

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Colorado's Jenny Barringer finished second Monday at the NCAA cross country championships in Terre Haute, Ind., her second consecutive runner-up finish to Kenyan Sally Kipyego of Texas Tech.

Colorado's Brent Vaughn was fifth in the men's race.

Kipyego beat Barringer in the 6-kilometer race by 17 seconds. The margin last year was 28 seconds.

"I am closing the gap, and that is because she is getting better, and I am getting better," said Barringer, who represented the U.S. at the world track and field championships last summer.

Oregon won the men's team competition and Stanford took the women's race. The CU men were seventh. The Colorado State women finished 15th and CU was 23rd.

"The women's team in general struggled this year," CU coach Mark Wetmore said. "We had some injuries, which are most likely my fault. We knew that we would be relying on some new people, and I may have pushed them too hard to bring them around to NCAA- caliber running.

"We had some people we had to sit out. We just have to go back to work and start from ground zero in a couple of weeks."

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