



The view from the bridge over the Snake River Canyon in Idaho gives you a good idea of where the XC teams had to run. The course is to the left of the river down in the canyon. Before the Nov. 12 race, BC runners pose for a group shot in the biting wind: left to right, front to back, Brad

Dodson, Jeff Pajak, Saul Laird, Marjorie Hawk, Shawn Young, Coach Dave Rinker, Jodi Higgins, Alice Gaines, Brandy Truitt, Kelli George, Geoff Moore, Scott Dvorak and Ted Fort. (BC News Bureau photos)

(spaces between runners) of any race this year. The men would have had to have run a great team race to have won" because this year's field was so tough, and because everybody was gunning for BC, he said.

"Mentally, it was really difficult for the men," Rinker said. "We had a lot of high expectations...there's no excuse of course, because we definitely got beat...but we didn't run as well as we could have."

Before the race Rinker said he told his women's team: "if we come back with a trophy, it'll be a successful trip." To that end, his women succeeded; it was only disappointed because the women came so close to winning it all, he said.

#### MEN'S RACE

Saturday dawned cold and drab, but mercifully without the wind of the previous day; fine weather for runners but poor for spectators. The course, laid out on a rolling golf course in the flood plain of the coiling Snake River, covered five miles of fairways, paths and sandy roads beneath the 500-foot-tall brooding canyon walls.

At the sound of the gun, 205 top junior college runners, spread across 50 yards at the starting line, lept forward over the wet grass and took off on the run of their life. Quickly, dominant runners from South Plains (of Texas) Central Arizona and Central Oregon established themselves in the lead at the one-mile mark.

Running in a cold drizzle to the finish line, it was Hussein in first with a 25:14 time, followed closely by teammate Bernardo Barrios with 25:15 and Lomnyaka Loiboku of Essex (N.J.) in third with a 25:16.

Runners from Central Arizona, Central Oregon and South Plains dominated the top 25, although BC placed three in that coveted All-American category: Scott Dvorak in sixth with 25:45, Geoff Moore in 18th with 26:09 and Brad Dodson in 22nd with 26:13.

BC runners Jeff Pajak (34th) and Shawn Young (35th) hit the line a second apart at 26:39 and 26:40 respectively. Saul Laird finished 88th with a 27:31; and the ailing Ted Fort finished 137th and a 28:18 time.

When the smoke cleared, Central Arizona's low score of 24 won it, followed by Central Oregon in second with 72 points, South Plains in third with 80, and BC fourth with 114. "Fourth place is an excellent job," Rinker said philosophically, "but it's not THE job. Central Arizona ran the race we ran last year" at nationals when the Tornados "gapped" the competition.

Scott Dvorak, praised by Rinker for running "an excellent race," said the course was deceptively difficult. "It beat up on me, he said. Shawn Moore agreed, "That last mile was pure hell."

#### WOMEN'S RACE

The women's lead pack took off quickly — too quickly, Rinker said, and that wore out many of the leaders. Alice Gaines of BC ran a smart race, holding back until about the one to two mile mark when she began picking off her competition, one by one.

"I kept thinking up there in that lead pack: I want this! I want this!" Alice said after the race.

By the two-mile mark, she was in the lead pack, and rounding the last turn and taking a "heartbreak hill," Gaines recalled "I was thinking about the hill at Strauss— we've done so many hills—I can do this!"

And then she heard competitor Lynn Ziegler of Hagerstown hit the wall. Said Gaines: "When I heard her say, 'I can't! I can't!' on that last hill, that's when I knew I could do it."

Gaines kicked past her opposition and blew in for the win 30 yards in front of runner-up Jennifer Mullen of Johnson County Community College.

When she crossed the finish line, she fell into the welcoming arms of many of the BC men's team members there to cheer her on. Receiving hugs and tears from teammates, men and women alike, she cried, "I can't believe it, I just can't believe it."

As her teammates finished behind her, they too learned of the victory and ran to embrace Gaines in the finish line throng.

Coach Dave Rinker, who also coached Gaines during her freshman year at Blacksburg High School, was especially

pleased. "I told her this summer don't concentrate on winning the national championship, but don't be surprised if in the last mile you're in the top five," he said beaming. "I knew she would be the best we've ever had."

Repeating as an All-American along with Gaines, Marjorie Hawk finished second for BC in 16th with a 19:12, followed by: Jodi Higgins in 37th with 19:52, Kelli George in 52nd with a 20:10 and Brandy Truitt in 75th with 20:41.

The women's team championship went to top-ranked Ricks (Idaho) with 105, followed by Central Oregon in second with 116, Johnson County Community College with 135, and BC in fourth — just one point out-with 136.

After flying out of fog-bound Asheville airport Wednesday morning, the BC harriers had traveled over the snowcapped Wasatch mountains of Utah, landing in

Salt Lake City and driving four hours north into the treeless, barren hills of Idaho.

"Boy!" exclaimed Brad Dodson, "and I thought I lived in the boonies."

Upon arriving after dark in Twin Falls, where they were greeted by the Holiday Inn roadside sign: "Welcome BC XC teams. \$1.00 margaritas" — the runners immediately took to the streets for a warm-up run.

For the next two days, the runners trained twice a day, took in some sightseeing, studied, went to a rodeo, and scouted the race course in the Snake River Canyon—the same place where Evel Knievel attempted his ill-fated motorcycle jump in 1984.

The BC teams arrived home Sunday night, Nov. 14, greeted by a welcoming crowd of fans, friends, family and college officials including President Greer.

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Coach Rinker tells Alice Gaines, "I knew you could do it."