

BC men win 3rd, women 7th in XC nationals

by Jock Lauterer
 BC News Bureau

Brevard College's men's cross country team placed third and the women seventh at the National Junior College Athletic Association Cross Country Championships Saturday.

Last year, both BC teams placed fourth, so Coach Dave Rinker called this year's results a split decision: the men did better, and women didn't. But then, the women are all freshman, he pointed out.

As a whole, the BC cross country program won runner-up honors at this weekend's nationals.

Running at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas, the Tornadoes of Coach Dave Rinker amassed a combined score that was second only to Central Oregon, who placed their men's and women's teams one-two, just as BC had done in 1987, the last time Brevard's men won the nationals.

Coach Rinker observed, "The men did a really nice job; it was the best we could have done," he said, explaining that Central Arizona and Central Oregon were so tough that had they raced the BC team that won the national championship two years ago "we would have gotten killed."

Men's Race

The top five finishers in the men's five mile race were Central Oregon, 38; Central Arizona, 62; BC, 111; Blinn (of Texas), 129; and South Plains (Tex.), 202.

Low score wins in cross country. 210 runners from 25 schools coast to coast competed.

The top five individual scorers were: Micah Boinett of Blinn, 24:19; Willy Songok of Blinn, 24:35; Mbarak Hussein of South Plains, 24:46; John Doherty of Central Arizona, 24:49; and Ken Antles of Central Oregon, 24:54.

Brevard's men were led by three All-American finishers: Jeff Campbell, Bill Mantooth and Craig Goodroe.

Campbell, a Marriottville, Md., freshman, placed 10th overall with a 25:16. He was followed by Bill Mantooth, a transfer student from the University of South Florida, in 19th with a 25:36. Third for BC was Craig Goodroe, a Jacksonville, Fla., freshman, in 24th with 25:42.

Then came Chris Dunn (red-shirted in '87) of Fredericksburg, Va. in 28th with 25:52; Chris Griggs, a Greensboro, N.C., sophomore, in 34th with 26:02; Brad Smith (red-shirted last year) of Lake Mary, Fla., in 63rd with 26:46; and Taisto Pitkonen, a Clewiston, Fla., sophomore, in 83rd with 27:12.

Talking about the race, BC's top



Pictured in front of the BC van just before leaving for the XC Nationals in Kansas last week, the Brevard College men's and women's cross country teams include: front row, left to right, Tina Wiegerink, Jennifer Mallett, Heather Weldon, Hope Pickett, Holly Higgins, Allyson Cottrell; back row: John Massie, Chris Griggs, Taisto Pitkonen, Chris Dunn, Brad Smith, Jeff Campbell, Craig Goodroe, Bill Mantooth, and Coach Dave Rinker.

man, Jeff Campbell, described how they all went out together, but that Pitkonen stumbled and fell in the start and had to start his race almost dead last. (Afterward, Pitkonen, who was injured, was to say of the fall, "It was terrible, that's all I could say.") Campbell went on to run most of his race trailing Bill Mantooth closely as they both moved up gradually.

"At about the three-mile point, we began surging," Campbell said. "At three and half miles I caught Bill and told him I was going ahead. From then on, we both held on, trying to pick people off. I guess I passed 10 to 15 — and at the end I didn't even know I'd finished 10th because me and another guy fell right at the finish and couldn't get back up and had to be carried away," Jeff, who had a PR, added, "it was a tough course, a lot of long grades... there was one bad hill at the finish."

Coach Dave Rinker observed that the two men's teams — Central Oregon and Central Arizona, who finished one-two in reverse order last year, returned all but one of their runners, and that they were ranked to win the nationals. BC could have beaten them only if those teams had had bad days and BC had had a great day, he explained.

Rinker went on to call it the toughest field of junior college run-

ners in terms of talent he'd seen in ten years, and that he was pleased overall with the Brevard performances.

Women's Race

The Brevard College women's team, made up entirely of freshmen, all boasted Personal Records at the Nationals.

Ricks (of Idaho), a perennial women's XC powerhouse, won the team championship with a low score of 67, followed by Central Oregon, 84; Barton County (Kansas), 122; Northeastern Oklahoma, 158; Southwestern Michigan, 182; and BC, 191.

The individual champion was Sylvia Sanchez of Florida Junior College with a winning time of 17:12. Last year's individual national champion was Brevard College's Alice Gaines, now a runner for Virginia Tech. Gaines paced the Lady Tornadoes last year to a fourth place finish.

This year, the BC women finished in the following order: Heather Weldon of Marietta, Ga., in 30th with 18:56; Holly Higgins of Gainesville, Fla., in 39th with 19:11; Hope Pickett of Dale City, Va., in 45th with 19:26; Allyson Cottrell of Charleston, S.C., in 57th with 19:44; Tina Wiegerink of Chapel Hill, N.C. in 77th with 20:13; and Jennifer Mallett of Ft. Myers, Fla., in 95th with 20:39.

Fifteen teams competed, with 136 women runners finishing the 5K course. Again this year, Brevard College President Billy Greer hired a place to tow a banner over the cross country course reading: "Good Luck Brevard College Tornadoes — Go! Go!"

Coach Rinker observed, "the front girls ran fair and the back girls ran well. And we had the closest gaps ever for the women."

And how does all this bode for next year?

Upon returning Sunday night, Coach Rinker said, "Six of our top eight men could return next year, shoot, yeah! It could look good."

Another stat worth noting: In the '80s, BC had the only men's team in the nation to finish in the top five every year.

The Brevard College running program has won national honors regularly, the men winning the national championship five times in the '80s.

Coach Dave Rinker, in his third year as men's and women's cross country coach, hopes to host next year's NJCAA Cross Country Championships at Brevard College. That decision is "almost definite," according to both Rinker and President Greer.