

KM's Pearson earns spot on USA cross country team

Freshman Chad Pearson of Kings Mountain became the first ever UNC Asheville athlete to make a US national team and earn the chance to compete in the IAAF World Cross Country Championships March 19 in Vilamoura, Portugal. He will compete against future Olympians, as well as the best distance runners in the world race, over the 5-mile course.

In Greensboro recently, Pearson raced over 5 miles of muddy race course at the Bryan Park Golf Course. The course was flooded from 12 inches of melted snow, followed by over an inch of rain. Eight races had turned the grass into a sea of mud, making the race a test of strength as well as speed. Only the top six earned a place on the USA team.

Pearson started the race in the top 20 and slowly worked his way into the top 10 at the halfway mark. With one mile left he pulled into the top five. There the racing really began as there were still eight runners left in the pack. With a half-mile to go, Pearson moved into third place and broke the pack apart. Over the last several hundred yards, two runners out-sprinted Pearson as he crossed the finish line in fifth place to capture his ticket to Portugal.

Also earning places were two runners from NCAA powerhouse Stanford, an All-American from the University of Oregon, a runner from Manhattan University, and the top high school runner in the U.S. The six will comprise the USA team that will take on the defending world champion, Kenya.

This marks the second time for UNCA's head coach Stan Rosenthal to have a runner make the world cross country team. "I am really thrilled for Chad," he said. "He has trained very hard this year. He was not one of the top six on paper, but he proved today that he can race with anyone. He will represent the USA very well in Portugal."

"I stayed with the race plan Coach Rosenthal laid out for me before the race," Pearson said. "During the race I stayed patient and waited until the last half of the race to make my move. I wanted to do my best and hoped that would be good enough to place in the top six. I am very excited and can't wait for the world championships. There I am just going to race hard and try to do my best again."

Pearson was named the Big South Rookie of the Year, and last weekend won the 5000 meters in the Big South Indoor Meet at Virginia Tech.



STATE QUALIFIERS - Kings Mountain swimmers competing in the State Championship Meet last week in Raleigh were, front row, left to right, Daniel Jones, Trent Goforth, Wendy Neisler, Naoki Nishiyama, Ben Sabetti and Daniel Miller. Back, Sarah Propst, Mollie Patterson, Abby Haynes, Ame Mauney, Laura Propst, and Jessica Branham.

KMHS women's soccer team opens Monday at East Gaston

Kings Mountain High's girls soccer team, Southwestern 3A

Conference champion in its inaugural season last year, opens its 2000 season Monday at 7 p.m. at East Gaston.

Coach Dan Potter hopes his team can repeat as SWC champions, but at present he's trying to stress the

importance of scoring when they get the opportunity

In two scrimmages during the past week, the Lady Mountaineers had numerous scoring opportunities but couldn't put the ball in the goal.

In a match with Crest last Wednesday, freshman Stephanie Edwards scored the only goal for the Mountaineers in varsity play. In JV action, KM outscored Crest 3-1 as Shena Owens scored two goals off an assist by her sister, Stephanie, and Edwards scored the other. "In the varsity match, we

played extremely well against a team that had beaten us 2-0 and 4-0 last year," Potter said. "We controlled much of the game and out-shot them at least by a three to one margin. But we just couldn't score."

The Mountaineers traveled to Charlotte Garinger Monday, and in a combined varsity/JV match defeated the Lady Wildcats 2-1.

"We outshot them about 21 to 2," Potter said. "We dominated most of the game, but we couldn't score."

Both Kings Mountain goals were scored by first-year player Brittany Platt, who came on the field late in the game.

"That was one of my most memorable moments in coaching," Potter said. "She has never played soccer before. I've been around a lot of teams and have seen a lot of jealousy among players, and it was so neat to see all the girls rally around her and be truly excited for her. It was a very special evening for her. Her feet haven't hit the ground yet."

The Lady Mountaineers will play at Hunter Huss next Wednesday at 6 p.m., and will face Crest in their first home match on Friday, March 3 at 6:30.

"The Crest match should be a lot of fun," Potter said. "One of our goals this spring is to defeat all of the Cleveland County teams. That will be a real chore with Shelby and Crest both being very good."



POTTER



REGIONAL QUALIFIERS - Kings Mountain men swimmers qualifying for the Western Regional Championship this season were, front row, left to right, Daniel Miller, Ben Sabetti and Trent Goforth. Back, Naoki Nishiyama and Daniel Jones. Not pictured, Isaac Marinho and Derek Wilson.



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REGIONAL QUALIFIERS - Kings Mountain women swimmers qualifying for the Western Regional Championship this season were, front row, left to right, Jordan Wollak, Meghan Potter, Wendy Neisler and Ame Mauney. Back, Sarah Propst, Mollie Patterson, Abby Haynes, Laura Propst and Jessica Branham. Not pictured, Pam Randall.

KM swimmers place in state meet

Kings Mountain High placed five individuals and three relay teams in the stat 3A swimming and diving meet Thursday and Friday at N.C. State University.

East Chapel Hill repeated as state champion in both the boys and girls divisions.

The highest place for the KM swimmers was Abby Haynes' eighth place finish in 1 meter

diving.

Wendy Neisler placed 22nd in the 200 individual medley, Naoki Nishiyama was 14th in the 200 individual medley and 10th in the 100 butterfly; Daniel Miller was 19th in the 200 free and 18th in the 500 free; and Isaac Marinho was 19th in the 100 breaststroke. Mollie Patterson, Sarah

Propst, Laura Propst and Wendy Neisler finished 23rd in the 400 free relay.

Ben Sabetti, Isaac Marinho, Naoki Nishiyama and Trent Goforth were 16th in the boys 200 medley relay, and Sabetti, Daniel Miller, Goforth and Nishiyama were 13th in the 400 free relay.



SENIOR SWIMMERS - Senior members of the Kings Mountain High School swim teams this year were, front row, Ashley Hinson, Mollie Patterson, Ame Mauney and Jessica Branham. Back, Abby Haynes, Trent Goforth, Naoki Nishiyama, and Wendy Neisler.

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