

Track and Field & Cross Country

by Matt Williams



2009-2010 Athletic Spotlight

The Dallas Baptist University Patriot Cross Country and Track and Field teams recorded two more historic seasons this year. In the fall, the Lady Patriot Cross Country team became the first program in DBU athletics history to compete at the NCAA Division II National Championships. After being ranked as high as 13th in the country, DBU finished 22nd at the National Meet—earning their third consecutive Top 25 National Ranking.

Starting off the season strong, the Lady Patriots continued their success with a first place title at the NCAA Pre-Regional Cross Country Invitational. DBU scored 18 points and placed senior Hannah Steffan (1st), senior Laura Mucho (2nd), junior Tabitha Ashford (4th), senior Lacey Morrison (5th), and junior Rachel Oncken (7th).

The Lady Patriots went on to win their third consecutive Heartland Conference Championship, hosted on the DBU campus. Scoring 21 points, the Lady Patriots placed six athletes in the top 10, including Steffan (1st), Mucho (2nd), Ashford (4th), Morrison (5th), Oncken (9th), and sophomore Linet Kibet (10th).

Seven Lady Patriots were recognized with Heartland All-Conference honors for their performances during the season. Steffan was chosen as the Heartland Conference MVP, and Mucho, Ashford, Morrison, Oncken, and Kibet all garnered All-Conference honors. Freshman Lindsay Sanders was recognized as Honorable Mention for her 13th place finish.

“This season was really about four years of work for these ladies. Four of our top seven were seniors, and two others were juniors,” commented Head Coach Jacob Phillips. “This was just a special group of ladies who worked hard and dreamed big.”

While the Lady Patriots’ season was one for the history books, the Men’s Cross Country team faced a tough season due to numerous injuries. After losing their number two runner to injury, the Patriots fought hard throughout the year and earned valuable experience that will pay off in the 2010 season.

Heading into the Heartland Conference Championships, the short-handed Patriots earned a third place finish, with senior Felix Rodriguez and freshman Jesse Benes earning All-Conference honors.

Likewise, the Patriot Track and Field teams had another very successful season in the spring, winning their fourth consecutive National Championship in the Women’s Distance Medley Relay. Steffan, Mucho, Ashford, and senior Ashley Alford made up the quartet that finished in 12:24.23, setting a new Doden Fieldhouse record at the NCCAA Indoor National Championships.

Steffan also won her first individual NCCAA National Championship by winning the Women’s 3000 meters, finishing with a time of 10:23.14, eight seconds faster than the second place finisher.

The quartet of Alford, Ashford, Mucho, and Steffan concluded their season with another victory at the

2010 NCCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships. The women competed in the 4x800 meters relay and came within five seconds of breaking the national record with a time of 9:05.67 to win the distance relay by 18 seconds.

Mucho also won an individual NCCAA National Championship in the Women's 3000 meters Steeplechase. En route to the championship, Mucho set a national record in the steeplechase with her time of 10:52.30. Steffan joined Mucho later in the day, winning a title of her own after defeating the field in the Women's 5000 meters.

Steffan lowered her own school record and hit an automatic qualifying time for the NCAA Division II Outdoor National Track and Field Championships in April. Steffan bettered her previous school record by one second as she ran 16:55.53 in the championship segment of the Women's 5000 meters, and she became the only individual athlete to qualify for the NCAA Division II Championships in the history of the program.

Alford also posted an impressive number in the classroom with her 3.79 GPA, earning her a spot on the College Sports Information Directors of America Academic All-District 2009-2010 Women's Track and Field/Cross Country team.

Leading the men and collecting All-American honors at the NCCAA Indoor Championships was Rodriguez, who finished third in the 5000 meters with a time of 15:06.80, a top five All-Time NCCAA mark. Following closely behind Rodriguez and just missing out on All-American honors was sophomore John Millsap, who ran a personal best of 15:09.26. Both Rodriguez and Millsap doubled back to race the Men's 3000 meters later in the day, with Rodriguez placing fourth in 8:55.61 and Millsap finishing eighth in 9:03.95.

Also scoring for the Patriots was sophomore Jordan Koser, who placed eighth in the Men's Mile, and freshman Tommy Parker who placed eighth in the Men's 800 meters.

At the NCCAA Outdoor Championships, the Patriots were led by Millsap in the Men's 10000 meters, who garnered All-American honors and set a school record with his time of 31:57.03 to finish third overall. Millsap pulled double duty, placing fifth overall in the Men's 5000 meters. Also scoring in the Men's 5000 meters was Rodriguez, who finished fourth overall.

2009-2010 Patriots Cross Country, Track and Field Team:

Front Row (L-R): Nicole Thiessen, Lindsay Saunders, Monica Zuniga, Felix Rodriguez, Laura Mucho, Elizabeth Byrd, Jordan Eudy, Lacey Morrison, Dovanta Colflesh. **Second Row:** Assistant Coach Jodi Hulett, Ashley Alford, Ashley Spivey, Laura Shaffner, Tabbitha Ashford, Hannah Steffan, Linet Kibet, Rachel Phillips, Melanie Mahoney, Apryl Newkirk, Caleb Collins. **Back Row:** Assistant Coach Matt Hansen, Ryan Clift, Jordan Koser, Jesse Benes, John Millsap, Kyler Lofton, Josh Hughes, Kurt Lindsey, Patrick Mirani, Nic White, Zach Morgan, Head Coach Jacob Phillips.

