

# Chico State Cross Country 1998 Season Wrap-Up

Dear Wildcat Harrier Supporters,

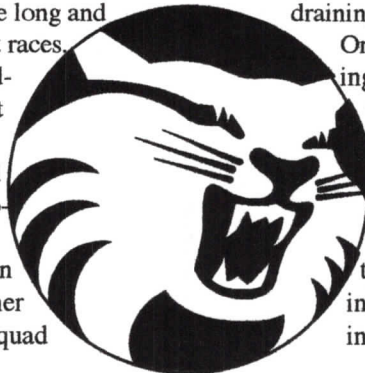
Well it's hard to believe but another great season of cross country has come and gone. It seems like yesterday that we were training at 8,000 ft. elevation on the Pacific Crest Trail near Mt. Shasta talking about running in the new CCAA championships and competing at the regional and national championships. Now it's all behind us and thankfully I can say that all those miles paid off and the season was an absolute success! Finishing the season with both our men's and women's teams nationally ranked (Men 23rd, and women 16th) is a first in the history of cross country at CSUC. Along the way the teams garnered top marks at many competitive invitationals and championship races all the while having a great time as our squads always do.

The women started the season off with a second place showing at the Chico Invitational where Senior returner Sarah Gibson (Rancho Cotate HS) led the team with her 18:52 clocking for the 5k course. Frosh Sarah Hallas (Ursuline HS) was a surprising #2 runner for us finishing 6th in 19:05 with Sac State transfer Carrie Russo (formerly Irwin) placing 10th overall in 19:25.

Only two weeks later the 'Cat lady-harriers tackled some tough competition at the Fresno Invitational where they finished 5th beating several DI programs including Cal Poly SLO, Fresno State, and Sacramento State. Once again Sarah Gibson led the squad with her 19:13 clocking on the Woodward Park course. Christina Peacock a transfer from New Mexico State and a member of the Central Valley High State Champion team from 1994 rolled to a 19:25 finish with frosh Sarah Hallas closing out the top 3 'Cats with her 19:41 performance.

Knowing that the season can be long and races as hard workouts instead of all out races.

7 runners for the first 2 miles while hold-women worked this plan to perfection at group at threshold pace yet still earning Wildcat top 4 all finished bet. 19:54 and back. This week was one of mixed emotion that frosh standout Sarah Hallas would suffer a severe muscle inflammation injury. But on from Azusa Pacific and all state performer wood, CA decided to come out for the squad planned.



draining, both squads were instructed to use some

On these weeks the team was to pack up the top ing a pace near Lactate Threshold intensity. The the Aggie Invitational running together as a 4th place honors as a team. On this day the 19:56 with #5 and #6 runners only 10 seconds tions for the squad though as it was learned miss the remainder of the season with a the brighter side Jenny Spoon a Sr. transfer in high school for West Valley High in Cotton- instead of red shirting as she had previously

After having tempo ran the Davis course with good results, it was off to Stanford where the team was to run their first competitive effort of the season. In a field of 29 teams the Chico State lady harriers ran extremely well taking 3rd overall losing only to BYU and Stanford's 'B' teams. On this day the 'Cats placed 6 runners under 20 minutes with Sarah Gibson again leading the way. Her 18:55 effort served as her fastest time ever over the hilly Palo Alto course, placing her 12th overall! Jenny Spoon in her first true race in a Wildcat uniform placed 23rd in 19:13 and Christina Peacock followed closely with a 19:22 performance. Carie Russo, Amy Crislip, Emily McPhee and Laura Dockery closed out the top 7 for the 'Cats with times of 19:28, :31, :54, and 20:04. Only 35 seconds seperated the top 5 'Cat women!

Next up for the lady harriers was a trip North to Eugene, OR where both teams enjoyed viewing the newest Prefontaine movie "Without Limits" with Dan Olmstead a Chico XC Alumni who's now living and training in Eugene.

The next day it was back to business at the Oregon Invitational, a high caliber event with many tough DI schools. With conference the following week the team was instructed to use this as a workout and to run as a pack. Swallowing their pride a bit the instructions were followed and all 7 finished within 3 seconds placing 19th in the 24 school field. After a brief stop at Pre's rock it was time to head home with thoughts of the upcoming Conference Championships in our minds. This would be our first encounter with the Cal State Dominguez Hills team that was ranked #16 in the nation and 3rd in the region. Only 3 teams from our region gain a spot to the NCAA's in Kansas so everyone was eager to

see this Dominguez team,



Approximately 2 hours before the first race was to start a very hard rain began to fall, soaking the course and creating very muddy conditions thus ending any hope of huge PR's. Having spent 2 years running in the Pacific Northwest for Mt. Hood JC Jenny Spoon had become very accustomed to running in rainy, muddy, slow conditions, so it was no surprise to see her appear out of the muck as the top 'Cat finisher. Her 18:39 was good enough for 8th overall and earned her All Conference Honors. Also earning honors was Christina Peacock who clocked 18:45 for 10th in the 92 runner field. Sarah Gibson also cracking the 19 min. barrier for the muddy 5k course finished 13th, with Amy Crislip and Carrie Russo both close to follow as each broke 19:30. The strong performances of each, earned the lady harriers second place overall behind only UC Davis (Ranked 3rd Nationally) and well ahead of Dominguez Hills who's #5 runner finished over 30 seconds behind our #10 runner Denise Rummelhart (20:48). Now with the win over Dominguez in hand, it was off to the Regional Championships for a chance to qualify for the NCAA championships to be held in Lawrence, Kansas. Unfortunately Amy Crislip fell ill in the week following the CCAA championships and would miss nearly a week of running, thus making the stretch drive even tougher.

Arriving in Bellingham, WA on the Thurs. before competition the beautiful course at Lake Padden Park was inspected with high approval as each athlete was excited about running in such a beautiful setting. The next day was spent running the course again with a quick trip to Vancouver, BC included (since we were so close). Waking up to abnormally normal conditions on race morning (clear skies) the stage was set for a run at the NCAA's. Knowing that UC Davis and Seattle Pacific were probably a bit too much to handle under the circumstances it was up to the 'Cat harriers to make sure that they again would defeat the Dominguez squad as well as a tough Montana, Billings team, several tough Washington schools, and of course the rest of the conference schools whom they had faced 2 weeks before. Bouyed by the incredible performances of the top 3 runners, all of whom earned All West Region honors, the 'Cat squad met it's goal of qualifying for the NCAA's (for the second year in a row) placing third behind Davis and Seattle Pacific. Jenny Spoon, having the best race of her season claimed 5th overall after having taken only 8th in the conference championships 2 weeks prior. Finishing 13th and 14th overall were Sarah Gibson and Christina Peacock each running extremely well. Carrie Russo and Amy Crislip once again closed out the scoring five, placing 42nd and 46th respectively. Adding a twist to the women's race was the NCAA's vote to approve a new distance for the women's regional and national championships races (6 kilometers). Priding ourselves on two a day workouts and hard work ethic the distance didn't seem to faze the 'Cat harriers. Now it was time to prepare for the NCAA's which were two weeks away. With 3 returners on the squad that finished 17th in the 1997 NCAA's it was decided that we would improve on this in Kansas.

We arrived in Lawrence on Friday evening thus allowing 2 full days to adjust to the climate, view the course, and to do a little site-seeing. After previewing the course on Sat. it was decided that it was one of the greatest courses we had ever seen, but it deserved a lot of respect as there were very few flat areas and some very steep inclines. Once again the weather gods were on our side as we awoke to warm temps and sunny skies on raceday. Christina Peacock would use the perfect Calif. type weather and the awesome competition around her to run arguably the greatest race of her life. Working through the field of 130+ runners Peacock would finish 51st overall (only :30 seconds from All America status). All region runner Sarah Gibson followed closely finishing 60th (a major improvement over her 85th place finish at the NCAA's the year before). Jenny Spoon, having a self described "off day" still managed to finish 72nd overall. Amy Crislip and Carrie Irwin assured the 'Cats of a strong showing closing out the top 5 with their inspired performances. After all places were tallied the 'Cats had scored 330 points (a huge improvement over the 468 scored the previous year at the NCAA's) earning themselves a 16th place finish. With Crislip and Hallas returning from this year's top 7, as well as the addition of JC standouts Lisa Renteria (West Valley), and Marrie Argentine (ARC) the 'Cats plan to make a third consecutive trip to the NCAA's in '99. Joplin, Missouri here we come!!!

**1998 Final NCAA DII Men's X-Country Rankings**

1. Adams State (CO)
2. Western State (CO)
3. University of South Dakota
4. Edinboro (PA)
5. Abilene Christian (TX)
6. Mankato State (MN)
7. Ashland (OH)
8. North Dakota State
9. Shippensburg (PA)
10. New Mexico Highlands
11. U.C. Davis
12. Humboldt State
13. Northwest Missouri State
14. Lewis University (IL)
15. Pittsburg State (PA)
16. West Georgia State
17. Central Missouri State
18. Bentley College (MA)
19. Nebraska Kearney
20. Fort Hays State (KS)
21. Indiana (PA)
22. South Dakota State
23. *California State University, Chico*
24. Kennesaw State (GA)
25. Mourhouse State (GA)

**1998 Final NCAA DII Women's Cross Country Rankings**

1. Adams State (CO)
2. Western State (CO)
3. Shippensburg State (PA)
4. U.C. Davis (CA)
5. Edinboro (PA)
6. University of South Dakota
7. Seattle Pacific (WA)
8. Southern Indiana
9. Indiana (PA)
10. Kennesaw State (GA)
11. Hillsdale (MI)
12. Wisconsin-Parkside
13. University of North Dakota
14. Northern Colorado
15. North Dakota State
16. *California State University, Chico*
17. Fort Lewis College (CO)
18. Minnesota Duluth
19. Pittsburg State (PA)
20. Cal State Dominguez Hills
21. Florida Southern
22. Missouri Southern State
23. East Stroudsburg State (PA)
24. Angelo State (TX)
25. Colorado Springs

For the men's team the season held much of the same success as the women's had. Even without the services of several talented redshirts: '97 all conference runners Nicholas Jacques, and Miguel Ibarra, and newcomers Miguel Galindo (2nd at CA JC State championships '96), All Conference steepler Tony Munch, George Jenson (32 min 10k), top 7 runner in '97 Morgan Harrelson, and several others... the Chico State harriers blazed their way to a banner season capping it off with a runner-up spot at the new CCAA Championships and a third place showing at the West Region Championships.

Giving the home crowd a glimpse of the future Dan Cline a local product from Durham, CA, used a late race surge to take the individual title at the Chico Invitational. Cline, only a frosh had spent the previous year red shirting his first year of college, collecting experience and upping his mileage, so that he might maximize his talents for his final 4 years of school. Finishing the race 2nd overall was Kevin White a Eureka High graduate who donned the Chico Maroon jersey for the first time with great results. Packing 12 runners of Chico affiliation in the top 20 proved too much for the opposition as the 'Cat men won their invitational with a very low 19 points.

After a bye week and some hard workout weeks it was off to Fresno for the Fresno Invit where we would have the opportunity to compete against some top teams in the nation, both DI and DII. Led again by the strong running of Cline the Wildcat men placed 4th here behind only Stanford, Cal, and Cal Poly SLO while beating DI squads, Fresno State (5th), Sacramento State (6th), and San Jose State (9th). Kevin White again was a solid #2 man for the 'Cats running 27:07 with Israel Rivero (Pasadena City College), Josh Federspiel (Corvallis, OR), and Mike Bradley (Pleasant Valley HS, Chico CA) closing out the top five scorers for the 'Cats. Running in a uniform for the first time ever Bradley a 3rd year soph ran with unmatched intensity scoring a top 40 finish in the 84 runner field.

A week later the 'Cat harriers found themselves in Davis for a Conference course preview at the Aggie Invit. With the main goal being to run on the course that the upcoming CCAA championships would be held on the team was instructed to run as a pack at threshold pace. The pack tactics were run to perfection with a large group of 9 maroon clad 'Cat harriers running as a pack passing runners throughout the 8 kilometer race. At the finish it was Josh Federspiel and Dan Cline leading a :22 second 1-9 gap as the pair clocked impressive 26:46 times at threshold pace. This depth earned the men 4th place in the 17 team field which was a pleasant surprise for everyone involved. Now it was time to focus on the upcoming Stanford Invitational where the goal was to run the first intense effort of the season.

After having taken a down week for mileage and having tempo-ran the course in Davis everyone was anxious to run a solid effort at Stanford. Knowing the teams entered in the Collegiate Section of the invitational (21 total) we felt that we could put the majority of our top runners into the top third of the 175 athlete field. Positioning themselves very well early and working together the men packed the top 5 into the top 27 runners overall! An amazing 1-5 split of :15 seconds was recorded for the top 'Cats. Showing impressive depth the # 8 runner Matt Ames (A frosh from Nevada Union HS) was only 45 seconds behind Cline who led the team with his 17th place finish (26:27). Josh Federspiel, the only senior on the squad finished only a second behind Cline taking 18th, and Kevin White, Israel Rivero, and David Oleachea finished out the top 5 scorers for the 'Cats helping them to a 3rd place team finish with a very low 103 points. Only Stanford's B team and a solid UC San Diego squad finished ahead of the quickly improving Wildcat team. Losing to UC San Diego by a mere point left the men "hungry" for another shot at beating the Toreros, and as luck would have it they would have this opportunity as UCSD is in the CCAA (our new conference) also. Having been unranked nationally all season this Stanford race opened the eyes of the coaches nationwide and earned the men a top 15 national ranking.

Next, it was off to San Francisco where we would run in the San Francisco State Invitational. Using this as an opportunity to rest our top 5 runners, our #6-#14 runners scored an impressive and unexpected victory, beating Fresno Pacific, Humboldt State, Stanislaus St. and San Francisco St. With the top 4 runners finishing within a 16 second span taking 8th-17th places, the Chico men rolled over the competition. Brent Edson led the charge with a 27:43 time, followed closely by Mike Bradley (27:47), Noah Balgooyen (27:50), and Matt Ames (27:59). Chris Zapeda, Ulises Tellechea, and Caleb Casey closed out the top 7 'Cat performances finishing 30th, 36th, and 42nd.



## Cross Country Review Continued (Men)

Some disheartening news was learned earlier in the week as Israel Rivero, a solid top 5 performer for the 'Cats and former standout for Pasadena City College was lost for the season with a nagging soft tissue injury near his shin. This would be a tough loss to swallow as an already strong UCSD squad had recently added another standout runner to their squad that had defeated the 'Cats by a point at Stanford. Now each runner would have to step up their performances to a higher level to make up for the absence of Rivero.

Going into the season I knew I had a decision to make when it was realized that the Oregon Invitational, a meet that used to precede our old conference championship event by two weeks was now scheduled only a week before our new CCAA championship event. Wanting to keep the annual trip to Eugene on the schedule but not wanting the athletes to waste their best performance on a non championship event, it was decided that they would approach the Oregon Invitational race as a hard workout effort, once again running as a pack somewhere around threshold pace. Running only 5 athletes in the Invitational event Dave Oleachea, Dan Cline, Josh Federspiel, and Brent Edson all finished between 26:51 and 26:52. Mike Bradley followed :30 seconds behind not wanting to push too hard the week before conference. Earlier in the day in an all-comers style 5k event that featured athletes from all schools and open/alumni types Noah Balgooyen gave us a preview of things to come in following weeks. Using negative split tactics to perfection Balgooyen won the event with a final mile that may have been under 5 min. clocking a 16:30 on the slow muddy surface.

The CCAA championship race was next on the slate for the 'Cat crew and would be contested in Davis, CA. As if we could afford another loss with Israel's injury, Kevin White another consistent scorer came down with his second case of the flu this season the week of CCAA's, but would still run despite being weekend significantly. As in past years the night before the conference race both teams met in the coaches room and we spoke of our plans for the next day. A story was told of a young frosh, Sean Gettman who had been the team's #7- #8 runner for the '93 Chico State squad (the last time the conference championships were held in Davis) and how he had stepped up and taken 9th overall at the conference championships, not thinking twice about where he was in the field. This and other stories circulated around the room and by the end of the meeting everyone involved was ready to run fast.

With Dan Cline running the race of his life (up to this point), and with Balgooyen doing his best impression of Sean Gettman the Chico State men would step up to race their best performance of the season on the mudd slowed Davis course. Cline put himself with the lead pack that eventually dwindled down to 5 runners (All sub 15 5k guys on the oval last spring except him) and didn't look back. Only a poor tactical decision coming around the final corner kept him from passing Davis' #2 runner (a 14:43 5k runner) for 3rd place. Not far behind and also racing sub 15 min. types true frosh Noah Balgooyen closed the final miles of the race in amazing fashion placing 12th overall as the 'Cats #2 runner and only 4 seconds out of All-Conference position. Josh Federspiel and David Oleachea soon followed placing 14th and 15th respectively. Flu plagued Kevin White running above and beyond the expectations of his teammates came through in the clutch with a gutty 20th place performance. Despite running without Rivero, and with a less than healthy White the Wildcat men still managed to beat the UCSD team that had beaten them at Stanford earlier in the season. Only UC Davis (ranked 6th nationally) beat the 'Oats.

Now it was off to Bellingham, WA to face the best in the West Region. Going into these championships ranked 5th in the region each runner wanted to prove those who made the rankings wrong while taking a shot at the NCAA championships (top two teams). Running strong the entire race the 7 Wildcat men snaked their way through the field, fighting for each place taken. Dan Cline once again led the way for the 'Cats with his 17th place effort (33:07) missing all region honors by only 3 seconds. Josh Federspiel 21st (33:18), Kevin White 25th (33:30), Noah Balgooyen 28th (33:41), David Oleachea 29th (33:41), Brent Edson 35th (34:02), and Mike Bradley (34:09) closed out the top 7 for the 'Cats. Showing the depth of the squad, Mike Bradley's 38th place finish in the field of 100 runners placed him as the top #7 runner across the line (not bad for a 4:55 HS miler). The team result, a bitter sweet one to swallow for the 'Cats, was a third place (out of 15 teams competing) finish behind annual rivals UC Davis and Humboldt State.

Having been a part of Chico State Distance running for each of the past 10 seasons, first as an athlete, then as an assistant coach, and most recently (3yrs) as the head coach I can definitely say that the program is on the rise and things have not looked this good for our squads (men's and women's) in many years. We finish this season with both squads ranked in the top 25 in the nation (a first since my stay began in '88). With only one top 7 runner graduating from the men's squad and with the return of several top redshirts the men will definitely contend for a top spot in the region and the nation in '98. The women return several top runners and welcome the return of standout Sarah Hallas as she becomes healthy again. Overall the season offered many great experiences and I am extremely proud of both our men's and women's squads for all that they accomplished. Thank you for your interest in our program and we hope to supply you with fast times from the track this Spring. -Coach Towne.- P.S. For more info./results from our season check out our website at: [www.csuchico.edu/athletics](http://www.csuchico.edu/athletics)