

## **GEORGIA BULLDOG MEN**

Jeff Pigg's excited optimism about this year's youthful team is warranted after a glance at who will be lining up for the Bulldogs.

His team features 14 returners to a squad that was fifth at the NCAA South Regionals and sixth at the Southeastern Conference Championships. The Georgia men lose only one consistent scorer from their 2010 squad with Caleb Vogt graduating and have plenty of potential firepower joining them.

After redshirting the 2010 season, Matt Cleaver is returning to run for his third season on the trails and will be an immediate boost for the Bulldogs. The school record holder in the steeplechase (8:45.01), the Marietta, Ga., native sprinted away from the field at the SEC Championships in his featured event and captured the first title of this sort for the Bulldogs. Cleaver also clocked a 5000 time of 14:04 during the 2011 outdoor season to shoot to fourth in the Georgia record books.

After winning four steeplechase races during the year, Cleaver completed the season with Honorable Mention All-America honors in his first trip to the NCAA Championships. Cleaver is no stranger to cross country. He was a Bulldog scorer in all six meets during the 2009 cross season, including a runner-up finish in the Georgia Tech dual meet.

"Matt Cleaver should be our top runner," Pigg said. "After redshirting 2010, he is ready to roll. He is coming off of an SEC championship and his 5000 time outdoors is a great sign of where he should be this fall."

Brett Richardson is back for his junior campaign after recording the top finish for the Bulldogs in three races as a sophomore. The Lilburn, Ga., native won the 2010 Georgia Invitational and was the runner-up in the dual meet with Georgia Tech last fall.

Richardson is coming off of an outdoor track season where he clocked the sixth fastest 10,000 meters time in school history (29:57.54) to take fourth at the Drake Relays before scoring at the SEC Championships with a sixth-place finish.

Georgia had a pair of runners earn All-SEC Freshman honors last season and both are back for their sophomore campaigns. Brandon Lord led his team at the Greater Louisville Classic with a season-best time of 24:38.65 (44<sup>th</sup> place). He followed up his cross season by registering the No. 5 time on the Bulldog all-time list in the 5000 to finish fourth at the Drake Relays.

Indoors, Lord was an SEC scorer with his 3000 time of 8:14.04, which is fourth in the Georgia record books.

"Brandon had a strong freshman campaign and was an SEC scorer so we know his potential for the future," said Pigg. "With Matt, Brett and J.P. (Hackney) all returning and returning with SEC scoring experience, we should have a solid core for our men's team."

Freshman Charlie Sparks, who hails from Columbus, Ga., was also included on the All-SEC Freshman squad after his 39<sup>th</sup>-place finish at the league meet. Sparks was a scorer for Georgia in five of six meets during his first season in red and black.

Another group of regular scorers and potential future scorers will also be geared up to keep Georgia in the upper half of the SEC in 2011. Hackney, an SEC scorer in track and leader of the distance corps, Miles Svoboda and Nick Long, all seniors, along with juniors Brian Detweiler, Fraser Reade, Daniel Grass and Kyle James all have racing experience and are set to give the Bulldogs additional depth.

“I’m expecting Brian Detweiler to have a break-through year during his junior season,” Pigg said about the Lilburn native who demonstrated some of his potential during his freshman year in 2009.

Trevor Sprague will also be getting his first official action for Georgia, although he well-versed on Georgia’s distance program. Sprague transferred in from the College of Charleston and practiced with the Bulldogs during the 2010-11 school year while redshirting. He set the Cougars’ 8k record and was twice named the Most Valuable Runner for his former program.

A freshman in 2010, Luke Baker, who broke into the top five last year for the Bulldogs, is also gunning to improve on his performance from last season.

Incoming freshmen Sean Brennan, Michael Guilliano, Brendan Hoban, Zack Simms, Steven Spevacek, Austin Ulich, Wade Voyles, Jackson Wearn, Shane Wilson and Ian Wraga will be starting their first seasons in Athens and will be looked on to contribute as well.

“The freshman class is a very solid group and there is a great opportunity for one of them to step up and make an immediate impact,” said Pigg. “I am sure someone will out of those guys, I just don’t know who that guy will be. There are a lot of promising possibilities. Hoban, Ulich, Simms and Brennan recently ran very well during their senior track season so we are excited about adding them to our roster.”

### **GEORGIA LADY BULLDOGS**

Led by All-American Kristie Krueger, the Lady Bulldogs finished fourth at both the 2010 SEC Championships and the NCAA South Regionals. The team lost only one regular scorer from last year’s squad in Taylor Adams so there are aspirations of climbing even higher in the national ranks in 2011.

Krueger, a senior in 2011, returns as one of the country’s top distance threats. The Argyle, Texas, native posted arguably one of the best seasons in Georgia cross country history in 2010. She became only the second league champion for the Lady Bulldogs and followed that up with an NCAA South Regional title.

To top off last season, Krueger shot across the finish line in 28<sup>th</sup> place for All-America honors at the NCAA Championships, becoming only the third Georgia woman in history to claim that honor.

Krueger was then forced to sit out the indoor and outdoor track seasons while recovering from a knee injury. But after eight months removed from competition, she is prepared to defend her titles and add another All-America certificate to her resume.

“We are very excited to have Kristie lining up for us in cross country,” said distance coach Jeff Pigg. “We missed her on the track. She has continued to improve and this should be a very good year for her. For our team she is a great leader. Kristie leads the way with her work ethic and fierce competitive spirit. Defending the SEC title is a goal of her goals and our goals, but all we can control is what she does, not others. So the goal is just be ready to roll the last weekend in October through the Monday before Thanksgiving. The places and honors will follow.”

Ashley Shiver, Krueger’s partner as an All-Region competitor in 2010, scored in four meets last year and was 22<sup>nd</sup> at the NCAA South Regionals. Her success rolled into the track season as she finished seventh in the steeplechase (10:43.63) at the SEC Championships while also nailing down a time of 4:27.07 in the 1500 to take third at the Florida Relays.

Pigg tapped another senior, Morgan VanGorder, as one of his traveling team members in 2010. She responded by scoring at the NCAA Pre-Nationals and being one of the leaders out of the upperclassmen last season. During the outdoor track season, VanGorder upped her distance and scored for the first time at the SEC Championships after taking eighth in the 10,000.

After battling injury for several seasons, senior Emily Houston will also be wrapping up her cross career and hopes to again have the success she experienced during her early UGA years. Houston was All-Region as a freshman in 2007 with a 21<sup>st</sup> place finish to help lead the Lady Bulldogs to runner-up honors.

Senior Hadley Ferguson should also provide leadership and depth for the Lady Bulldogs.

Junior Leslie Boozer is banking her success on the track in 2011 will carry over into the fall. Boozer, who was a top-five finisher at cross regionals in 2010, had a trio of second-place finishes in the steeplechase and then wrapped up the year with the fastest time of her career (10:24.84), which is third best in UGA history, at the NCAA East Prelims.

Pigg will now look to see who will be the next runners whose careers pattern that of recently graduated Bridget Lyons, who joined UGA as a walk-on and left an SEC champion and school record holder.

“To get to the NCAA championships and contend for an SEC title, some of the talented girls on this roster will have to develop into front runners, similar to what Bridget Lyons did in the past,” Pigg said. “It is an exciting challenge and opportunity. I am very anxious to get rolling with this crew.”

Junior Nicole DiMercurio ran a sub-17:00 time in the 5000 during this year’s track season and should also figure into the scoring for UGA.

Perhaps the deepest class for Georgia is its second-year group. Sydney Marshall scored in three meets in 2010, including a team-best runner-up finish versus Georgia Tech.

Stella Christoforou led her teammates at the Furman Invitational after taking fourth overall last year, but her most impressive performances came on the track in the spring. The native of Greece won the Spec Towns Invitational in the 800 with the fastest time of her career (2:09.28).

Allyson McGinty, Savannah Kirk, who joins Christoforou and Megan Malasarte (redshirting cross country) as what Pigg calls “three of our stronger middle-distance runners”, Greer Gafford, Emily McNutt, Shelby Robison, Kiara McCue-Woods and Kathleen LaPorte have all had a year to adjust and will be called on to be contributors in 2011.

Kirk has run a mile faster than 5:00 and was a scorer in just the second collegiate cross meet of her life after clocking an 18:22 versus rival Georgia Tech last season. In addition, she won her only steeplechase race of the year with a 10:59.

Georgia’s incoming class will also be expected to contribute as the season progresses. Carly Hamilton headlines a crew of 10 freshmen. Hamilton clocked a personal-best 4:48.10 to win an Ohio state title in the 1600 meters after taking second at the 2010 OHSAA Cross Country Championships. The Springboro, Ohio, native was also 27<sup>th</sup> at the Nike Cross Nationals in December 2010.

Anna Bowles, Brooke Koblitz, Mara Canning, Sheila Donovan, Gabby Fulton, Rose Howell, Bret McDaniel, Sarah Perry and Erika Ramsey are the other newcomers on Pigg’s roster who will be gunning to make their mark.

Bowles arrives in Athens with a resume boasting a 10:42 in the 3200 and a state cross country meet to her name. Koblitz, who is also in the sub-5:00 mile club, was the runner-up in her division of the state cross meet.

“We return a strong group of women who are continually improving,” said Pigg. “With the addition of Carly Hamilton, Anna Bowles and Brooke Koblitz, who should all make significant impacts, we will have a solid group.”