

Irish Cross Country Hosts National Catholic Invitational On Campus This Weekend

2001 Schedule

SEPTEMBER

7 Sat. Valparaiso Invitational M-1st
Valparaiso, Ind. W-2nd

21 Fri. National Catholic 4:15 p.m.
Notre Dame, Ind.

29 Sat. Central Collegiates TBA
Kalamazoo, MI

OCTOBER

5 Fri. Notre Dame Invitational 4:15 pm
Notre Dame, Ind.

.13 Sat. Pre-National Meet TBA
Greenville, SC

26 Fri. BIG EAST Championships TBA
Van Cortland Park, NY

NOVEMBER

10 Sat. NCAA Great Lakes Region TBA
Terre Haute, Ind.

19 Mon. NCAA Championships TBA
Greenville, SC

All home meets run at the N.D. Golf Course
All times local to site

2001 MONDO

Men's Cross Country Poll

Sept. 5, 2001

Rank	Team	Region	Points	Prev.
1.	Colorado (13)	MT	397	1
2.	Stanford (3)	W	379	2
3.	Arkansas	SC	342	3
4.	Providence	NE	334	4
5.	Notre Dame	GL	327	6
6.	Wisconsin	GL	315	8
7.	Villanova	NE	289	7
8.	Northern Arizona	W	253	12
9.	Arizona	MT	237	5
	Georgetown	NE	237	9
11.	N.C. State	SE	216	13
12.	William & Mary	W	200	21
13.	Oregon	W	194	18
14.	Iona College	NE	148	19
15.	BYU	W	145	16
16.	Indiana	GL	138	14
17.	Portland	W	128	24
18.	Weber State	MA	115	20
19.	Michigan	GL	107	11
20.	Minnesota	GL	100	10
21.	Arizona State	W	94	22
22.	Alabama	S	92	15
23.	Wake Forest	SE	68	--
24.	Air Force	W	59	--
25.	Oklahoma State	MA	56	25

National Catholic Preview: Irish fans will get a chance to see the full strength of the fifth-ranked Notre Dame men's cross country team this weekend when the Irish host the 22nd annual National Catholic Cross Country Invitational at the Notre Dame golf course (located on the west side of campus next to SR 933).

All-Americans **Luke Watson**, **Pat Conway** and **Ryan Shay** will return to competition on Friday, and for one harrier it has been a longer wait to return to the course than his teammates.

Shay missed the 2000 cross country season, but Watson, Conway and **Marc Striowski** stepped up to lead Notre Dame to a top-10 finish at the NCAA Championship. Add Shay to the mix (who earned All-America status in 1999) and the Irish boast one of the most talented and experienced rosters in the nation.

Shay and Watson will also be looking to keep a Notre Dame individual champion streak alive. Since Jason Rexing crossed the finish line first in 1996, Shay has posted three consecutive National Catholic titles ('97-'99) and Watson earned the crown last year. Notre Dame has won the last six team titles.

The road to Greenville, SC, and the NCAA Championship meet will not be an easy one. Four BIG EAST teams are ranked in the top 10 (Notre Dame, Providence, Georgetown and Villanova), which sets up an outstanding BIG EAST Championship meet on Friday, Oct. 26, in New York City.

Shay, Watson and Conway did not run in Notre Dame's first meet of the season at Valparaiso two weeks ago. In the trio's absence, sophomore **Todd Mobley** took first place in the meet just ahead of classmate Brian Kerwin. Striowski finished third to complete a sweep of the top three spots for the Irish.

The women's team, which finished second at the Valparaiso meet, will be bolstered by the return of 2000 National Catholic Champion **Megan Johnson**. Notre Dame's top runner from 2000, **Jen Handley**, will also run in this weekend's meet.

Johnson, Handley and their teammates, in similar fashion to the men's team, will be looking to keep a couple Irish winning streaks alive. The Notre Dame women have claimed the National Catholic team title each of the last five years and eight out of the last nine seasons.

Freshman **Christi Arnerich** will be looking to continue a strong showing early in her rookie year. After finishing second at the Valparaiso Invitational, Arnerich should combine with Handley and Johnson to form a solid top-three running combination for the Irish women. Classmate **Lauren King**, who finished 26th at the 2000 World Cross Country Championships, will not see any action this season until the Notre Dame Invitational on Oct. 5.

A number of national Catholic universities and colleges will be making the trip to Notre Dame, Ind., on Friday including: Marquette, St. Bonaventure, Saint Louis, Xavier, Dayton, DePaul,

Canisius and Detroit-Mercy.

The women's race will begin at 4:15 p.m., with the men's race set for 5 p.m.. Admission is free to the public.

Youth the key to Irish performances: The Notre Dame men's and women's cross country teams opened their seasons with strong performances at the Valparaiso Invitational on Sept. 7.

In a recent Mondo poll, the Irish men received a fifth place ranking, and the team validated the high seat in its first meet of the year. The Irish, running without their two top runners (**Luke Watson** and **Ryan Shay**) were still able to take five of the top eight finishing spots to earn the team title. Notre Dame ended with a team score of 21, easily distancing second place Valparaiso's 57-point total.

Sophomore **Todd Mobley** led the Irish to the overall victory in first place (25:17.0), finishing just ahead of teammate and classmate **Brian Kerwin**, who finished in 25:28.0. The Irish were able to claim third place as well when senior **Marc Striowski** crossed the line in 25:29.

Placing seventh was sophomore **Mario Bird** (25:41) and freshman **Ryan Johnson** came in two seconds behind Bird to finish eighth in his first collegiate race. Rounding out the top ten were two more Irish runners, juniors **Nathan Shay** (25:58) in ninth and **Tom Lennon** (26:24) in 10th.

Five other Irish runners placed in the top 20, although their finishes did not contribute to the overall team score. Sophomore **Kevin Somok** and freshman **Sean O'Donnell** were 12th and 13th across the line in 26:31 and 26:40, respectively.

Freshman **Eric Morrison** was 16th (26:49), and juniors **Kevin Avenius** (27:11) and **John Keane** (27:17) came across in 18th and 19th.

In the women's race, Notre Dame was edged out by Western Michigan, as the Irish posted 41 points to WMU's 27.

Freshman **Christi Arnerich** was the team's top finisher, as she was the second runner to cross the line at 22:55 in her first collegiate race. Arnerich was followed by junior teammate **Melissa Schmidt**, who finished sixth in 23:05.

Junior **Emily Showman** was next for the Irish in ninth place (23:23), followed five seconds later by senior **Hilary Burn**, who placed 10th. Sophomore **Julie Schmidt** was next in 14th place in 23:32.

The Irish's sixth and seventh runners ran in together, crossing the line just three seconds apart. **Megan Peterson** led the duo across the line in 17th place (23:42), with **Beth Androski** on her heels in 18th (23:45).

Next across as the eighth and ninth runners for the Notre Dame team were sophomore **Katie Walbs** (24:16) and junior **Keri McCarthy** (24:22) who finished 26th and 27th, respectively, but whose finishes did not add to the team score.

The men's and women's teams will now look ahead to the National Catholic Championships to be held Friday, Sept. 22, on the University of Notre Dame campus.