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Notre Dame Cross Country Opens Season With Inaugural adidas Invitational

2002 Schedule

September

6 Fri. adidas Invitational 5:15 p.m.
 Notre Dame, Ind.

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

28 Sat. Central Collegiates
 Ypsilanti, Mich. TBA

October

4 Fri. Notre Dame Invit. 4:15 p.m.
 Notre Dame, Ind.

19 Sat. Pre-National Meet
 Terre Haute, Ind. TBA

November

2 Sat. BIG EAST Championship
 Boston, Mass. TBA

16 Sat. NCAA Great Lakes Reg.
 West Lafayette, Ind. TBA

23 Sat. IC4A Championship
 New York, N.Y. TBA

25 Mon. NCAA Championship
 Terre Haute, Ind. TBA

Home meets in **bold**. All home meets are run at the Burke Memorial Golf Course on the west side of campus (enter at Dorr Road).

All times indicated are local to site.

The University of Notre Dame men's and women's cross country teams begin the 2002 season early this year, hosting the inaugural adidas Invitational at the Burke Memorial Golf Course on Friday, Sept. 6. This will be the earliest cross country meet the Irish have hosted on campus and it gives Notre Dame three home meets on this season (in addition to the traditional National Catholic and Notre Dame Invitationals).

The 2002 adidas Invitational may be a small meet, as only four teams will be competing in the men's race and three in the women's, but it will be a competitive event. Traditional cross country powers North Carolina State, Arizona State, Tennessee and Notre Dame will make up the field in the men's race (6:00 p.m., local time), while North Carolina State, Arizona State and Notre Dame will take to the course in the women's race at 5:15 p.m..

In the men's MONDO preseason cross country poll (the women's FinishLynx poll was not available at the time of this release) North Carolina State was ranked seventh, Arizona State was 13th and Notre Dame ended up 25th. Tennessee was in the 'also receiving votes' category.

Both Irish teams will use this weekend's meet as a first step: Even though the meet will be highly competitive this weekend, both Notre Dame cross country teams will be using their first time together on the course this season as just a first step toward their ultimate goals of making the NCAA Championship.

The men will have their top runners together for the race this weekend, but the youthfulness of the Irish team will be readily apparent. John Keane is the only senior in the 15-runner entry list for the Notre Dame men's team, while seven freshmen and sophomores will be in the field. Here is the complete list of men's team entries in alphabetical order: David Alber, Ryan Johnson, John Keane, Brian Kerwin, Tom Longo, Todd Mobley, Tim Moore, Eric Morrison, Sean O'Donnell, Bucky Schaffer, Kevin Somok, Kaleb Van Ort, Austin Weaver and Tom Weiler.

The women's team will enter all of their talented veteran runners, but head coach Tim Connelly will keep his freshman class off the course on Friday. The women will enter Susan Creary, Rachel Endress, Jennifer Fibuch, Jennifer Handley, Megan Johnson, Lauren King, Margaret Martin, Keri McCarthy, Muffy Schmidt, Emily Showman, Katie Wales and Melissa Webb.

Who to keep an 'Irish Eye' on: A number of talented Irish runners will get a chance to measure themselves against some of the best in the nation early in the season on Friday. On the women's side, returning All-American Lauren King is coming off one of the best freshman seasons in school history last year. King finished 27th at the national meet a year ago, then moved on to qualify for the NCAA track and field indoor meet in the mile run and earn All-America honors in the 1,500 meters at the NCAA outdoor meet later in the year. King was not able to compete early in the 2001 cross country season due to some late Canadian track and field competitions, so the Toronto, Ontario, native did not compete until the Notre Dame Invitational. This summer, King has been getting into cross country shape and should be among the race leaders on Friday.

Jennifer Handley also will be among the contenders in Friday's women's race. Handley was in the running for the BIG EAST Championship last year, ending up seventh in the field to earn all-BIG EAST honors. Unfortunately, Handley came down with a chest cold that affected her performance at the national meet. Fully healthy, she is ready to return to form on Friday.

On the men's side, All-American Todd Mobley should be among the race leaders. Mobley finished 38th at the NCAA Championship last year and had a great off season of training, ready to take over the leadership of a team that lost three runners to graduation who earned All-America honors during their careers. Rookie Tim Moore, the 2001 FootLocker Cross Country Champion, will also make his debut for the Irish on Friday.

Meet results: A full recap of the meet will be available on www.und.com.