

Cross country stories

Syracuse failed to win the NCAA Northeast Regional men's cross country championship for the first time in seven years.

Both the men's and women's teams stumbled at the regional after **poor course conditions** caused a course change the day before the race. Instead of racing at the Audubon Golf Course, the meet took place on a road course at the host University of Buffalo's campus. This was the only road race the Orange ran this season.

On the men's side, redshirt junior Joe Dragon (~~28:59.6~~) took ~~led the group with a sixth place finish in 28 minutes, 59.6 seconds,~~ **with followed by** redshirt sophomore Nathan Henderson (29:03.6) ~~close behind~~ in 10th **across the hilly 10K course**. Redshirt freshman Nathan Lawler (29:21.1), redshirt senior Kevin James (29:21.6), redshirt junior Dominic Hockenbury (29:32.4), and sophomore Matthew Scrape (29:52.2) all finished in the top 50. The team finished second with 86 points, 27 points behind first place Harvard.

Although they didn't win outright, the No. 18 men topped No. 8 Iona to receive the second automatic bid to the NCAA championships. Iona placed third.

The women fell short once again and failed to finish in the top two, which would secure an automatic bid to the NCAA championships next weekend.

Graduate student Jordan Jacob (19:42.9) led the Orange and finished 10th overall. Junior Amanda Vestri (19:51.1) led the race for the first 4k of the 6k race, before falling to 13th. Six of the seven Syracuse runners placed in the top 100. The team finished fifth overall with 203 points and will have to wait until Saturday to find out if they received an at large bid. The men head to Terre Haute, Indiana next Saturday to compete at the NCAA championships.

Commented [1]: How poor? For a runner from Maine, that could be temps in the upper 80s and, conversely, a Florida runner might find temps in the mid-30s to be terrible.

Commented [2]: Spell out times in first reference, and include the distance for races.

Commented [3]: avoid 'with'

Poor lead

The best cross-country teams in the nation descended on Madison, Wisconsin, to contest the 2018 Division I NCAA Cross-Country Championships on Saturday. With a fresh snowfall covering the course, the races were highlighted by stunning kicks to the finish line and heroic performances from top teams to end an exciting fall season.

Commented [4]: Arriving at an event is not the most exciting aspect of this, nor nearly every single other, sports event.

Commented [5]: Could describe a kick in the lead.

Dani Jones led the Colorado women to an individual and team title, while the men's race saw Wisconsin's Morgan McDonald kick to win on his home course before Northern Arizona claimed a historic three-peat in the team race.

Commented [6]: Description of this race in the lead or even here would elevate this story.

The teams woke to find fresh snow on the ground, and temperatures were in the low 30s to start as the women's race kicked off the competition at the Zimmer Championship Course.

Commented [7]: This could work if told partially though the perspective of a runner. What was he/she thinking, expecting later in the race or fearing based upon the snow fall?

In the women's race, the Colorado Buffaloes embraced the challenging conditions with aggressive tactics from the gun. At the first 2K split, led by Jones in the front pack, the Buffaloes controlled the field by being 40 points ahead of defending champions New Mexico. Colorado's top five scorers continued to gain momentum through 4K, steadily increasing speed and passing competitors.

Commented [8]: Good insights. But the story also needs to include comments about this. meaning the writer should have interviewed runners and the coach - or even an opposing coach or runner.

While the final 2K saw the top individuals—Allie Ostrander (Boise State), Weini Kelati (New Mexico), Ednah Kurgat (New Mexico), Anna Rohrer (Notre Dame)—jockey for position up front, Jones remained poised when Kelati finally broke free of the group. Heading into the final homestretch, Kelati remained in the lead until Jones used her famous closing speed to make the pass just moments before the finish line.

Commented [9]: Via observation, could describe how close they were to one another -- side by side, a step or four behind one another? Paint a picture for the reader.

Commented [10]: By how much? A few steps, or more?

The NCAA 3,000-meter champion sprinted into the line and claimed her first ever cross-country crown with a winning time of 19:42.8, three seconds ahead of her New Mexico rival.

Commented [11]: Exciting moment that needs to be fully developed through more acute observations and interviews. This could easily be the lead angle.

Commented [12]: Lead elements.