



Time for another exciting addition of

## The Month That Was!

In this month's article, we focus on the college ranks: NCAA Division I and III Regional and National Championships, DII Regionals, NAIA Nationals. Plus one local representing the United States of America.



**2010 Division 1 NCAA XC Championships**

[http://www.gocrimson.com/sports/xc/2010-11/photos/2010\\_Men-NCAA\\_XC\\_Championship.jpg?max\\_width=619&max\\_height=371&crop=true](http://www.gocrimson.com/sports/xc/2010-11/photos/2010_Men-NCAA_XC_Championship.jpg?max_width=619&max_height=371&crop=true)

First off, since it's my article and I can write what I want: Props to former Maria Carrillo stud **Calvin Thigpen** of UC Davis for earning All-Region honors at the NCAA DI West Regionals. Despite being injured on and off throughout his collegiate campaign, he showed what hard work, dedication, and a disgusting amount of cross-training can do as he placed 20<sup>th</sup> in the stacked race.

In that race (in which the top-two auto qualify for the NCAA DI Champs), **Oregon** took down #1 **Stanford** in a



**Women's NCAA Western Regional Championships**

<http://image.cdn13.xosnetwork.com/pics32/640/WV/WVYPKNNZMBKRKCT.2010113233937.jpg>

reverse of the PAC-10 Champs. But Stanford was, by all accounts, holding back (their 1-2-3 ran within 0.1 seconds of each other, as did their 4-5), so this really didn't tell us too much going into the national championships. **Oklahoma State**, the home of the famed **German Fernandez**, lost in their regional championships to **Oklahoma**, but in a similar fashion to Stanford's loss; they just didn't care. So, going into the Big Dance, the USTFCCCA as well as the fans at Letsrun.com were expecting a duel between OK State and Stanford.

Before we get to the women's side of the West Regionals, we gotta look back at the PAC-10 Champs. There, four of the top teams in the nation mixed it up in a conference as good as any region across the country: **Arizona, Oregon, Stanford, and**

**Washington**. And the race was just as thrilling as one would hope. Stanford managed the win with a whopping 62 points (the highest winning score since 1989!), to outdistance Arizona (65) by three points. Oregon and Washington actually tied (they don't go to a sixth-runner tie-breaker in the NCAA) at 68 points. That's right, 6



points separated the top four teams. Awesome! At one runner past the post, Oregon was in the lead (**Jordan Hasay** got the win), at two runners Oregon was at 5 to Stanford's 7 but by three runners it was 15 for Stanford to 21 for Oregon; no one could compete with three in the top 10 by Stanford. Clearly, the West Regionals was going to be an amazing rematch between these teams.

And, o yes, it was.

While it wasn't another 6 point spread 1-4, there was a mere 17 points between the top four teams at the West Regionals. And, again, the teams were Stanford, Arizona, Oregon, and Washington. But quite a different order this time. First across the tape was, again, Jordan Hasay of Oregon. Next was a runner from **UC Berkeley**, then Oregon's number two. Their third just managed a top-10 finish as well. Stanford managed a fifth place individual finish, while Washington got a 6th and 7th. Arizona was slightly off the pace, with their first girl in 9th.

At three runners in it was Oregon 14 with no one else under 30. But Washington's fourth got 20 points, Arizona's 23, Stanford's 25, with Oregon's back at 27 points. Still, Oregon had the lead at four runners. But the nail in the coffin came with Washington's fifth right behind their fourth, notching 21 points for a total of 73 and the win. Oregon held on to second overall with a 36-point fifth runner for 77 overall, Stanford came third in 86, with Arizona back at 90. Tying for fifth was UC Berkeley and **UC Santa Barbara** with 159 points. That's right, over double what the top two teams scored.

Poor Arizona; third and fourth at the first of two post-season meets. But they made sure to make up for it. At the NCAA DI National Championships, they made their way to the top of the PAC-10 pile. 372 for Arizona to 378 for Oregon to 402 Stanford to 413 for Washington. O, but that put them 11, 12, 13, and 16th at Nationals.



The real battle for the national title came with... o wait, no, there was no battle. **Villanova** dominated, just like they did last year. **Sheila Reid** took the individual win, with teammate **Amanda Marino** in 10th (8th scorer). Two more runners earned All-American honors (**Alison Smith** and **Bodana Mimic**), and their fifth runner came in with just 69 points for a total of 120. Florida State came second with 154, and the surprise for third was **Texas Tech** with 165. The final podium spot (they go 4-deep at NCAA's) went to **Georgetown** at 167.

Villanova 2010 D1 Women's XC National Champs

<http://www.bigeast.org/Portals/5/DigArticle/215005/women%27s-champions--Villanova.jpg>





Sam Chelanga

<http://www2.timesdispatch.com/mgmedia/image/0/354/117452/samuel-chelanga/>

Back to the men: Individually, the race went roughly as expected: **Sam Chelanga** of **Liberty** took it from the gun for the wire-to-wire win. The only unexpected bit was that Arizona's **Stephen Sambu** actually went with him, finishing second by just four seconds. The third individual qualifier (not on a team) was junior **Jonathan Peterson** of **UC Davis**, who finished 14<sup>th</sup> overall. Peterson made UC Davis history (they've only been D1 for four years) as the first Aggie to qualify for the NCAA DI XC Champs as well as the first to earn All American honors.



In the team battle, **Luke Puskedra** earned the low stick for Oregon, with **Matt Centrowitz** placing 10th for 8



Oklahoma State 2010 D1 Men's XC National Champs

<http://image.cdn13.xosnetwork.com/pics21/400/JQ/JQYSNDMPIDPEOOG.20091123203837.jpg>

points. Stanford's first two went 5-6 (3 and 4 points), but OK State placed three in the top 10: **Girma Mecheso**, Fernandez, and **Colby Lowe**. That was enough to give Oklahoma State the repeat win, as they scored 73 points. Second went to Florida State with 193. Florida State's top runner: **Claran O'Lionaird** in 18th. Quite a bit back, but when your fifth man scores only 64 points (better than all but OK State's 4th man), it doesn't matter if you don't have a top-10 finisher. Wisconsin scored 223 points (led by three in the top 20) to place third, with Stanford fourth at 237. Oregon faltered to fifth, as they only had 5 finishers, with their 4<sup>th</sup> scoring 99 points and their 5<sup>th</sup> scoring 132, both of which were more than OK State scored as a team.

Alright, now to **DII**.

While the national champions will be crowned in December, there was some big noise made in the DII ranks at

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the West Regional Champs. Perennial Power **Chico State**, always a favorite to win anything, got upset. Twice. Both **Alaska Anchorage** and **Western Washington** have started closing the gap of late, and it really showed at regionals.

On the men's side, **Marko Cheseto** of Alaska took the convincing win over the Washington duo of **Jordan Welling** and **Bennet Grimes**. Chico's top two of **Isaac Chavez** and **Brent Handa** followed, but with **Micah Chelimo** and **Jacob Parisien** of Alaska in the next two spots (and separated by less than half a second!), it looked like it was their race to lose. Chico responded with their 3-4 men in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, but Alaska got a fourth across the line in 15<sup>th</sup>, then closed the door with a 20<sup>th</sup> place for their fifth man, with their 6<sup>th</sup> one place back for good measure. The next two spots were Chico's 5-6. In the end, Western Washington was a solid 3<sup>rd</sup> at 93, but couldn't challenge Chico (54) or Alaska Anchorage (49).

The women's race had a similar feel. First across the line was Washington's **Sarah Porter**, who won by nearly 40 seconds! But Alaska Anchorage almost ended the race just a minute later, by notching 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> in the race, though Washington did get a 6<sup>th</sup> place finisher. Chico's first didn't come in until 7<sup>th</sup>, though they also got 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup>. Alaska got their fourth in just after at 14<sup>th</sup>, as Chico closed the door with a 15<sup>th</sup> place finish, with their sixth runner, **Shannon Rich** of **Rancho Cotate**, one place back in 16<sup>th</sup>. Alaska Anchorage's front pack turned out to be too much, as they handily won 40 to Chico's 55. Western Washington was a ways back at 111, but over 70 points ahead of fourth. Should be very interesting to see these three teams at Nationals in December.

On a local night, the **Sonoma State** finished 20<sup>th</sup>, led by **Katie Bolce** in 35<sup>th</sup>. The rest of the Lady Seawolves were **Sabile Scheppman** (100<sup>th</sup>), **Carly McCready** (104<sup>th</sup>), **Rachel Borg** (124<sup>th</sup>), **Ashley Holtze** (132<sup>nd</sup>), **Hayley Sa** (134<sup>th</sup>), and **Lyndsi Riley** (150<sup>th</sup>).

## DIII and NAIA

Not gonna lie, I don't know much about DIII. Here's what I do know: At the National Champs, the **Middlebury** women won a close one over **Washington (Mo)**, 185 to 193. Middlebury's first was only 24<sup>th</sup>, but just goes to show how important pack running is. Fifth place at 230 points (214 points got 3<sup>rd</sup>) went to **Williams**, home of club member **Celeste Berg (Montgomery HS)**. Celeste placed 92<sup>nd</sup> to notch 60 points for Williams, key to their top-5 finish. Especially impressive given that she's been competing on injury the entire season!

On the men's side, **Haverford** was the easy winner over North **Central** (Illinois), led by individual champion **Andera Hulleberg**.



Jeff Jackson (#557)

<http://www.masters.edu/w/GetHostedFile.ashx?XCGsacChamps2010.JPG&Id=722>

About NAIA, I know even less. On the women's side **Cal St. San Marcos** took the win over **Biola**, with **Justyna Mudy** of **Shorter** taking the individual title.

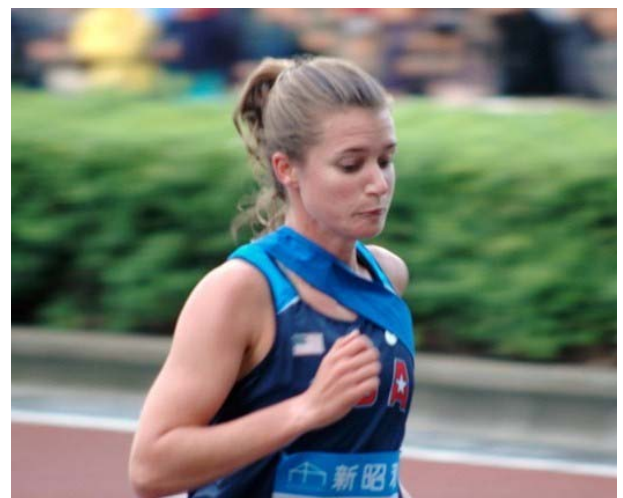
On the men's side, reigning NAIA Marathon National Champion and former **Santa Rosa Christian** standout **Jeff Jackson** [PHOTO] notched a 15<sup>th</sup> place finish to help **The Masters College** to an 11<sup>th</sup> place finish. They were actually second through three runners (**Anthony Pizzo** was 9<sup>th</sup> with **John Gilbertson** at 12<sup>th</sup>), but had over two minutes from Jeff

at 3<sup>rd</sup> to their fourth runner. **Nick Spector**, formerly of

**Sonoma**, took 226<sup>th</sup> as an individual qualifier for **Soka**. The individual win went to **Kennedy Kitchuka** of **Wayland Baptist**, as they took second to **Southern Oregon**.

Alright, time for a little pro action.

There is a freakin' awesome event that I bet you've never heard of, but o man you should: the **International Chiba Ekiden Relay**. This race is a road relay, in which a team of six runners covers the marathon distance (42.195 kilometers). The legs are 5k, 5k, 10k, 5k, 10k, and 7.195k. Events like this are huge in Japan, so each year since 1988 they've hosted this international event. In 2007, it took an awesome change: it's now co-ed. Yes, the relay now alternates men and women, from countries all over the world.



Kim Conley

[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/\\_jzv2ZSZAdyU/TOuBPT1nTul/AAAAAAAAABgY/XkAPYtCk3Vo/s1600/chiba4usa.jpeg](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_jzv2ZSZAdyU/TOuBPT1nTul/AAAAAAAAABgY/XkAPYtCk3Vo/s1600/chiba4usa.jpeg)

This year, **Montgomery HS** grad **Kim Conley** earned the





right to represent **The United State of America** at in Chiba, Japan, as part of the Ekiden Relay team, running leg four. Getting the baton 14 seconds behind 4<sup>th</sup>-place Russia, but nearly a minute ahead of 6<sup>th</sup>-place, Conley ran a gutsy solo leg to close within three seconds of Russia, and clock the second fastest time for the leg out of all 12 teams.



**Craig Mottram**

[http://www.geelongadvertiser.com.au/images/uploadedfiles/editorial/pictures/2008/02/21/Craig\\_Mottram.jpg](http://www.geelongadvertiser.com.au/images/uploadedfiles/editorial/pictures/2008/02/21/Craig_Mottram.jpg)

One of those teams behind the USA was Australia, led off by **Craig Mottram**. Though coming back from injury he only ran the 5<sup>th</sup> best time on his stage, Mottram is the focus of this month's *Spotlight on the Stars!*

The **Big Mzungu** (or big white man) has done much in his career, but may be (or should be!) best known for the following quote: "It comes down to the size of your balls really." Yea, that's right. And he said it on national TV. Hear it yourself:

<http://www.letsrun.com/2007/mottramballs1234.php>.

This quote came after he took down **Tariku Bekele, Matt Tegenkamp, Dathan Ritzenheim, Zersenay Tadesse, Alan Webb, Adam Goucher**, and others at the **Prefontaine Classic** in the 2-mile. Tegenkamp smashed the American Record by running 8:07.07, little Bekele went 8:04.83, but the Big Mzungu won by over a second in 8:03.50, a new Australian record, and the fastest time ever run on US soil.

The honors: In 2005 Mottram made his mark on the international scene, earning the bronze medal at the

**10<sup>th</sup> IAAF World Championships in Athletics** in Helsinki. He won the 2002 and 2006 3,000m at the **IAAF World Cup** (an even held once every four years), contested the

5,000m at three Olympics, and has two top-ten World Cross Country Championships showings.

The times: The big news came in 2004, when he set a personal best of 12:55.76 in the 5,000m at the Crystal Palace in London. A year later he returned there, and clocked 12:56.13, and in 2006 he had a season-best of 12:58.19 to go three straight years under the elusive 13 minute barrier. Other personal bests include the aforementioned 8:03.50 2-mile, 4:50.76 2,000m, and 3:48.98 mile.

He is just getting back, but look for Mottram to do some big things if he can stay healthy through 2011 and 2012.

# The Empire Runner

Well that's it for this month. I know there's a ton of high school action to cover, but someone else should tackle that. And there should be an article on the Pacific Association XC circuit. If there's not, well, it was fun. Check out the PA website for info.

Hope you enjoyed this as much, or more, than I did. In fact, I hope you enjoyed it so much that you'll pay me to continue. Or at least buy my pizza at the next club meeting. Yea, that'll do.

Till next time

**-Your Friendly Neighborhood Wolfman**