

Alfred University cross country coach encouraged by teams' progress

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ALFRED The Alfred University men's and women's cross country teams recently completed one of the most successful seasons in recent years. Both teams were consistently listed in the New York State Collegiate Track Conference (NYSCTC) top-10 rankings. But what has first-year head coach Shane Grandusky most excited was the progress his runners made throughout the year, culminating with the NCAA Regional meet Nov. 11 in Rochester. The men finished 13th of 29 teams competing at the NCAA Regionals, a marked improvement from last year's 29th place finish, while the women came in 16th of 29, the same place they finished in 1999. "Both the men and women ran outstanding races," Grandusky said, noting that every runner ran a personal best time at the meet, with the exception of senior men's runner Rob Winkky (Elmira Heights/Thomas A. Edison), who ran the race while suffering from a herniated diaphragm. Despite the injury, Winkky's 26:25 finish was his fastest this year. "Every single person on the teams had major time improvements from the first meet (Sept. 16 at the Hobart Invitational) to this past weekend (NCAA Regionals)," Grandusky commented. Junior Andy Corman (Rochester/Greece Athena), who finished 19th at the NCAA Regionals and just missed moving on to the NCAA meet, ran the 8K course in 26:01, more than a minute-and-a-half faster than his time at Hobart and easily his fastest time of the year. Freshman Logan Quist-Chaffee (Allegany/Allegany-Limestone) ran the NCAA Regionals course in 27:18, nearly 90 second better than his Hobart time. Senior Chad Davey (Selkirk/Bethlehem) improved his time by about a minute over the Hobart meet, while senior Bill Hammond (Macedon/Gananda) and freshman Mike Look (Auburn/Auburn) each cut their times by about three minutes. Making the most significant improvement was senior Todd Zeitler (Beavercreek, OH/Beavercreek), who at the NCAA Regionals shaved a whopping 5:25 from his Hobart time. The women runners showed similar progress. Senior Anne Gutmann (Lake Placid/Lake Placid), the team's top runner, finished the NCAA Regional meet in 18:51, 44 seconds faster than her Hobart time and a mere two seconds slower than her time at the state meet the previous weekend. Like Corman, Gutmann also just missed moving on to the NCAA meet. Senior Jen Bonner (Cumberland, RI/Cumberland) ran slightly slower than at states, but her 20:20 time at NCAA Regionals was a five-second improvement over her time at the Hobart meet. Other women's runners showed significant improvement over the course of the season. Junior Tyeisha Pugh (Queens/Campus Magnet), sophomore Danielle Evans (Portland, OR/Cleveland) and freshmen Chrissy Campanelli (Williamsport, PA/Williamsport) and Gina Vezzola (Suffield/Suffield) each posted times at the NCAA Regional meet at least a minute faster than at the season-opening meet. The improvement by both teams has Grandusky excited about the winter indoor track and spring outdoor track seasons. Many cross country runners compete in the distance events in track. "I feel they will continue with those improvements through the track and field season," he said. "I think there will be some quality performances (in track), based on the fitness of the individuals just finishing up with cross country." The indoor track season opens Dec. 3 at the Cornell Relays, which serves as a tune-up for distance runners coming off their cross country seasons. Despite the loss of some key seniors - most notably Winkky and Gutmann - Grandusky is confident the cross country teams will show continued improvement and success next fall. Key returnees next year include Corman and Quiste-Chaffe for the men, and junior Millicent Boadi (New Rochelle/New Rochelle), the number three runner the women, who was hampered by injuries during the 2000 season and missed the NCAA Regional meet.