

Williams College Women's Cross Country Team Named USATF – New England's Athlete of the Month for November 2015



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BOSTON – The **Williams College Women's Cross Country Team** is USA Track & Field – New England's Athlete of the Month for November 2015. On November 21, at the NCAA Division III National Cross Country Championships, hosted by the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, the Williams College women's team won the national team title with an astonishing 81 points over runner up SUNY Geneseo who scored 179 points.

Williams junior **Hannah Cole** led the way with a 4th place finish in 21:30.3 over the 6K course, just 7 seconds behind the winner, Abrah Masterson of Cornell. **Victoria Kingham** (11th place, 21:35.1) and co-captain **Lacey Serletti** (22nd, 21:39.2) joined Cole as All-Americans. Rounding out the top five for Williams were sophomores **Anna Harleen** (39th, 21:49.3) and **Emily Sundquist** (51st, 21:57.6). **Rebecca Delacruz-Gunderson** was 67th in

22:07.4 and **Michelle Buncke** was 133rd in 22:33.8.

Coach Pete Farwell said his top three were the key to the national team title, noting that each had won individual races this season and that during the championship race "they got in perfect position and fed off each other's energy." He said "Hannah Cole had the best kick and really came flying in," adding that "she has always come up big in big moments."

Shortly after the women's race, the Williams College Men's Team finished in 2nd place in the men's 8K championship race, making this the best ever combined finish for the Ephs and the first time since 1990 that a team has placed both genders in the top two at an NCAA Cross Country Championship race. The Williams men's team, which lost in a close finish 144 to 135 to the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, was led by senior **Bijan Mazaheri**, who finished in 3rd place, winning the bronze medal in 24:21. This was Mazaheri's second national championship medal and fourth All-American honor. Also achieving All-American status was junior **Peter Hale** who finished 16th in 24:42.

Following the championships, Pete Farwell was named DIII Women's Cross Country Coach of the Year by the United States Track & Field Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCA). Earlier in November, he was selected as the USTFCCA New England Region Men's Cross Country Coach of the Year. Now in his 37th year as head coach of men's cross country at his alma mater, Pete Farwell '73 has won five NCAA titles at Williams: the women's team in 2002, 2004 and 2015 and the men's team in 1994 and 1995. Farwell offers high praise to his assistant coaches, Sarah Lagasse and Nick Lehman, citing an increasingly collaborative approach this year.

Asked about his coaching philosophy, Farwell emphasized that the Ephs have a team first philosophy and try not to over-accentuate individual performance. The men and women train together which is rare for a college team - underscoring the totality of the team concept. He said they generate "lots of fun, energy and mutual support." In practice, they do "lots of *pack training* to facilitate *packing up* in races." They simulate various race scenarios and call on team members with specific strengths - such as hill running - to lead the way so that they "learn and gain from each other's strengths." Finally, Pete Farwell said that he coaches his runners to value putting out their best effort in each race more than the time or place they achieve – a perfect example of focusing on intrinsic rather than extrinsic rewards.