

Northeast Conference

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For Immediate Release

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Central Conn. St. Claims First-Ever NEC Men's Cross Country Title

Hamden, CT - With three runners in the top-10, Central Connecticut State captured its first-ever Northeast Conference (NEC) Men's Cross Country Championship title with a team total of 46 points. Individually, Long Island rookie **Rogers Kipruto (Rift Valley, Kenya)** bested the field of 100 competitors to garner both NEC Outstanding Performer and NEC Freshman of the Year honors, marking the second year in a row a freshman took home dual honors. Kipruto navigated the five-mile Quinnipiac University course in 25:55.9, winning the event by just over 19 seconds. Placing second was the reigning NEC champion, QU's **Richard Klauber (Thomaston, CT/Thomaston)** as the sophomore clocked in at 26:14.8, while Saint Francis (PA) junior **Timothy Wertner (Chambersburg, PA/Greencastle-Antrim)** took the third spot in 26:22.2 to each earn all-Conference merit. CCSU sophomore **Sam Alexander (Waterford, CT/Waterford)** and QU rookie **Mike Levene (Redding, CT/Joel Barrow)** rounded out the top-five with times of 26:23.9 and 26:29.2, respectively.

While the Blue Devils sat atop the team leaderboard, Quinnipiac was the runner-up with 82 points. Saint Francis (PA) sat in third totaling 97 points, while Sacred Heart (98) and Wagner (154) rounded out the top-five. Monmouth accumulated 155 points, good for a sixth-place standing, as Mount St. Mary's turned in a seventh-place effort with a score of 187. Long Island's 196 took eighth, while Robert Morris (222), Bryant (258), Fairleigh Dickinson (271) and St. Francis (NY) (343) completed the 12-team field.

A trio of Blue Devils earned all-NEC distinction as sophomore **Jeremy Schmid (Litchfield, CT/Litchfield)** and freshman **Craig Hunt (New Milford, CT/New Milford)** placed sixth (26:38.6) and seventh (26:39.5), respectively, while rookie **Mohamed Hrezi's (Naugatuck, CT/Naugatuck)** time of 26:59.9 was good for the 13th slot. CCSU's **Eric Blake** was awarded with his first NEC Coach of the Year honors, as voted on by his peers.

Wagner sophomore **Zachary Spector (Yaphank, NY/Longwood)** put forth his second consecutive all-NEC performance, crossing the line in 26:44.4 to take eighth place, while Mount St. Mary's sophomore **Dylan Bernard (Frederick, MD/Urbana)** also earned his second all-league honor in as many years after clocking in at 26:49.4 and taking ninth. Spector and Bernard were the lone all-NEC representatives on their respective squads.

Joining teammate Kipruto - who became the first NEC cross country individual champion in Blackbird history - on the all-conference list was LIU graduate student **Jason Lakritz (Newburgh, NY)**, who rounded out the top-10 with a 26:50.2 clip. QU junior **John Greenlaw (Hampstead, NY/Pinkerton Academy)** was the final Bobcat to make the all-NEC list, running to an 11th-place finish in 26:55.5, for his second all-league honor in as many years.

A pair of Sacred Heart harriers complete the all-NEC list as junior **Andrew Houghtalen (West Charlton, NY/Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake)** became a two-time honoree with a 12th-place time of 26:59.8 and sophomore **Jeffrey Lusignan (East Montpelier, VT)** ranked 14th, posting a time of 27:07.5.

Bryant University (2012-13) • Central Connecticut State University • Fairleigh Dickinson University
Long Island University • Monmouth University • Mount St. Mary's University • Quinnipiac University
Robert Morris University • Sacred Heart University • St. Francis (NY) College
Saint Francis (PA) University • Wagner College