

## **VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY CROSS COUNTRY / DISTANCE (Fall 2016 update)**

### **NCAA CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS...5<sup>th</sup> YEAR IN A ROW TO QUALIFY A TEAM!**

Thanks for your interest in Vanderbilt and our women's program. Here's a little information on our team and where we are heading. We've just finished up yet another very successful and historic year for Vanderbilt Cross Country! This past November (2015) we qualified for the FIFTH year in a row for the NCAA XC Championships and came away with a 19<sup>TH</sup> place finish! Top 3 at SEC and an automatic qualifying 1<sup>st</sup> place at the NCAA Regional were also significant team accomplishments this past fall. It has always been our goal to compete at this national level and the depth we have attained through years of recruiting will provide us with a great foundation for the future!

### **EMPHASIS ON SMALL (15) BUT HIGH QUALITY SQUAD**

Regarding our team, we are a medium sized mid-distance squad, with a roster of 15-16 runners (Mile/800 through 10,000). Previous seasons had seen 30+ runners in our group but we feel that we can give everyone more attention with a smaller number so we are going to try and stay with a squad of 15 each year. This means we only add 3-4 new runners each year and spots for walk-ons are very competitive. Our standards are not set in stone but usually we look for minimum times for walk-on consideration in the <2:14 (800) and <5:00 (1600) range. For the 3200 we'd like to see something below 11:00 and in cross country we look for performances close to 18:00 and faster for the 5k. Scholarship level consideration starts with performances in the low 4:50's for the 1600 and 10:40 and faster in the 3200.

### **1<sup>st</sup> PLACE-NCAA REGIONAL...3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE-SEC...PIETRZYK ALL-AMERICAN (32<sup>ND</sup>)**

As I mentioned, this past season (Fall of 2015), was a continuation of what we hope will be a very long streak of qualifying a team for the NCAA Cross Country Championships! In November, we won our second consecutive NCAA South Regional Title with an exciting 65-78 victory over Mississippi State. Our team 1-5 split was only 49" and runners 2-5 were just 29" apart. At the SEC meet we finished a strong third place with Freshman Caroline Pietrzyk earning SEC Freshman of the Year honors by finishing third overall. NCAA All-Region (top-25) awards were earned by all 5 scoring runners placing 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>! Finally, Caroline Pietrzyk capped off the season by becoming Vanderbilt's second All-American finishing in 32<sup>nd</sup> place at Nationals. We hope that this is the type of program and tradition that will attract you to Vanderbilt!

### **SEC SCORERS FROM 800-10,000...MILE AND 3000 SCHOOL RECORDS**

Over the past 6 years we have had 30 NCAA (Prelim) Qualifiers in every event from 800-10,000 meters. On the track in 2015 we scored in every distance event from 800-1500-Steeple-5,000-10,000 at the SEC Championships. Only Vanderbilt and Arkansas accomplished this feat. This past indoor track season (2016) we had season best performances of 4:39 (Mile...school record), 9:21 (3k) and 16:25 (5k). Outdoor best times were 2:06 (800), 4:17 (1500), 9:28 (3k) and 16:10 (5k). This was a great track season and a direct result of our continued cross country success these last couple of years! We take great pride in watching our runners develop over their four year career and it has not been uncommon to see a 5:00 miler or 11:00 2-miler improve to an All-SEC, NCAA Qualifying and even NCAA All-American level! Most recently we saw Claire Benjamin come in from HS at 10:57 (3200) and now graduated (Mechanical Engineering) running 16:29 for 5k and All-SEC / All-Region in Cross Country.

### **#10 PROGRAM OF THE YEAR NATIONAL RANKING 2015-16**

For the second year in a row our XC/T&F program has ranked in the USTFCCCA National Program of the Year Award. In 2014-15 we finished 15<sup>th</sup> and this year we finished 10<sup>th</sup>! To be eligible a program has to score at each of the three NCAA Championships (Cross Country, Indoor and Outdoor). We accomplished this by placing 19<sup>th</sup> at XC Nationals and 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> at the Indoor and Outdoor NCAA T&F Championships, respectively, during the 2015-16 academic year.

### **WOMEN'S TEAM GPA AT 3.40+ CUMULATIVE AVERAGE!**

Academically, our team has done very well and for the last few years we've had the highest team GPA for any program in the Vanderbilt Athletic Dept. The past six academic years our women's team has had a 3.40-3.57 cumulative average. We have a good mix of majors represented on the team from Arts & Science to Education to Engineering to Pre-Med. As you look at admissions standards for Vanderbilt (nationally ranked #15 in the latest US News & World Report) you will find that it is very competitive (31,000 applications and a 8.8 % acceptance rate) but there is also a wide range of academic accomplishment along with a community service component where individuals can distinguish themselves. AP classes are looked upon favorably by admissions but more importantly they want to see students who like to challenge themselves and who have a real intellectual curiosity along with a sincere interest in learning. One of Vanderbilt's more appealing stats to boast on is an 8:1 Student-to-faculty ratio. Vanderbilt University, and the city of Nashville, offers a great environment for you to grow as a student, an athlete and most importantly, as a person.

### **THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT...NEW 300 METER INDOOR TRACK FACILITY**

We are very excited about the coming years as each class of new student-athletes bring so much to our program. Additionally, during the winter months we are now practicing and competing on a brand new 300 meter (Mondo) Indoor Track Facility. In 2017 we will host the SEC Indoor Championships! The opportunity to have consistent, uninterrupted training and the chance to host multiple home competitions without having to travel will really help move our program forward!

That's a little about our team and Vanderbilt University. Hope this helps give you a better idea of what we look for in recruits and where we are heading! Best of luck in 2016 and keep us up to date with your future competitions!

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