

VIRGINIA TECH CROSS COUNTRY



THIS WEEK: Virginia Tech Cross Country Relays
Blacksburg, Va. • Friday, Sept. 3 • 5 p.m. • Tech Cross Country Course
www.hokiesports.com/cc/



TECH RELAYS

Virginia Tech's cross country team is set to open the season hosting the Virginia Tech Cross Country Relays on Friday, Sept. 3. Relay teams from Virginia Tech and Liberty will compete in two distance relays, with the women's 2x2.5k at 5 p.m. and the men's 2x3.5k at 6 p.m.

RELAY FORMAT

The Cross Country relays are run in teams of two. Runner A will run their first leg of the race, 2.5k for the women and 3.5k for the men. They will then tag in Runner B, who will complete their leg and tag back in Runner A for a second leg. The team is finished running after each individual has run two legs.

11 NEW FACES

The cross country programs bring in 11 newcomers this season, three on the men's side and eight for the women's squad. Here's how this year's class breaks down...

- All 11 newcomers are native Virginians, bringing the team's total to 28 home-grown athletes out of a total roster of 35.
- Springfield, Va. and Glenn Allen, Va. bring us two pairs of teammates. Courtney Dobbs and Madalyn Nuckols ran side-by-side at Deep Run High School in Glenn Allen, while Paige Kvartunas and Alex Watt earned their letters at Springfield High School.

Head Coach Ben Thomas
at Virginia Tech
(2001-present)

- Ten NCAA All-Americans (cross country, 2003, 2007, 2008, 2010; 1,500m, 2004; DMR, 2007; 5,000m, 2008; mile, 2009)
- 18th-place women's team finish at 2006 NCAA Cross Country Championships
- Eleven NCAA Championships cross country participants
- Nineteen NCAA All-Region cross country runners
- Eight All-ACC cross country runners
- One All-BIG EAST cross country runner
- Thirteen ACC Champions (track)
- One BIG EAST Champion (track)
- Twenty-three school records (track)

Contact Information

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2010 VIRGINIA TECH CROSS COUNTRY SCHEDULE

(all times eastern)

- Friday, Sept. 3: Virginia Tech Cross Country Relays - Blacksburg, Va. - 5 p.m.
- Friday Sept. 17: Virginia Tech Alumni Invitational - Blacksburg, Va. - 6 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 1: UNC Charlotte Invite - Charlotte, N.C. - 4 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 15: Appalachian State Invite - Boone, N.C. - 4 p.m.
- Saturday, Oct. 30: ACC Championships - Boston, Mass. - 11 a.m.
- Friday, Nov. 5: Hokie Open Race - Blacksburg, Va. - 5 p.m.
- Sat, Nov. 13: NCAA Southeast Region Championship - Louisville, Ky. - 11 a.m.
- Mon, Nov. 22: NCAA Championships - Terre Haute, Ind. - TBA

VIRGINIA TECH CROSS COUNTRY

MEN'S SEASON PREVIEW

Despite the loss of key seniors to graduation, a cross country squad that finished fifth at last year's ACC Championships will look to build upon their success with a good mix of proven veterans and raw talented newcomers.

Junior Michael Hammond will look to contend for a cross country title, after finishing 15th at the ACC Championships his freshman year and having to drop out of the conference meet this past season. Hammond will be riding on the momentum of earning an ACC title in the indoor mile this past season and qualifying for the NCAA East Regionals in the 1,500 meters.

Fellow junior Will Mulherin was All-ACC in cross country in 2009 and earned a fifth place finish in the 5,000 meters at the ACC Outdoor Championships during the spring. Head cross country coach Ben Thomas sees a lot of promise in his third year returner.

"He's an all-American now and three-time ACC Champion on the track and he has the ability to go after the ACC cross country title."

Other third year returners expected to step up and lead this season are Eddie Judge, Brian Welch, Chris Walas, and Jason Cusak.

Track standout Jared Berman will compete in his first cross country season after suffering an injury last fall. Berman is coming off of a good track season and a very productive summer, highlighted by a 10th place finish in the 3,000-meter steeplechase finals at the World Junior Championships.

Thomas knows success will only come from significant contributions from his freshmen as well as his experienced student-athletes.

"For us to contend for an ACC title or go to nationals as a team, it's going to take some new, young, rather inexperienced individuals to transition and step up right away."

Kevin Dowd comes to Virginia Tech as a National Foot Locker finalist out of Fairfax, Va. who was named the 2009 Gatorade 2009 Virginia Cross Country Runner of the Year. A consistent mile and two-mile runner, Dowd will have to adjust to the longer 6k and 8k distances of collegiate cross country, but has the potential to make an impact right away.

Yazid Zouaïmia is a indoor two-mile state champion out of Clifton, Va. who will also be adjusting to the jump in distance and looking to contribute immediately. Richmond, Va. native Grant Pollock is another key addition, building on a senior prep season where he earned AAA All-State honors in cross country and was a 2010 Virginia AAA Central Region Champion in track in the 1,000 meters.

WOMEN'S SEASON PREVIEW

A women's team that was relatively inexperienced last season comes back with more cross country experience under their belt in 2010.

"We had some young talented middle distance runners," said head cross country coach Ben Thomas.

"It was tough for them to come in as freshmen and sophomores, lead the team, and transition to 6k and 8k distances at the ACC level when they thought of themselves as 800-meter runners. The team has gotten better and they certainly know what they're into by now."

Junior Sammy Dow will be one key veteran that Thomas' squad will be counting on. During the 2009 cross season, Dow set a Tech Cross Country Course Record with her win at the Hokie Open in the 4,000-meters (14:24.3), earning ACC performer of the week honors. This past spring, Dow placed fourth at the ACC Outdoor Championships in the 3k steeplechase.

Senior Jessica Trapeni will be looking to build on her 2009 success, as she was the Hokies' top finisher in five meets. She earned an individual win at the Dual at the Elk and as part of the winning 10k relay at the Tech Relays.

There is plenty of incoming talent that will be expected to contribute immediately as well. Thomas believes the transition might be a little easier for this year's class than last year's.

"This incoming freshman class is a more cross country oriented group. They've had a lot of cross country success in high school. I think they'll help us out right away to be a much better cross country team."

Paige Kwartunas, a Springfield, Va. native, was a National Foot Locker finalist this past fall, earning All-State indoor honors in the mile and two-mile. A pair of runners from Glen Allen, Va. also highlight the incoming class.

Madalyn Nuckols notched 2009 All-South Region recognition at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships and is a three-time All-State honoree. Courtney Dobbs earned All-South Region honors as well and placed third in the two-mile competition at the 2009 Virginia State AAA outdoor meet.

2010 ROSTER

MEN'S

| Name | Class | Hometown | High School | Major |
|--------------------|-------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Jared Berman | So. | Fairfax, Va. | James Robinson | Engineering |
| Jason Cusack | So. | Griswold, Conn. | Griswold | Industrial Design |
| Tihut Degfae | So. | Yirgalem, Ethiopia | Thomas A. Edison | University Studies |
| Kevin Dowd | Fr. | Fairfax, Va. | Fairfax | Business |
| Doug Fenstermacher | So. | Gloucester, Va. | Gloucester | University Studies |
| Ryan Hagen | So. | Sterlin, Va. | Potomac Falls | Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise |
| Michael Hammond | Jr. | Midlothian, Va. | Midlothian | Economics |
| Eddie Judge | Sr. | Virginia Beach, Va. | F.W. Cox | Business |
| Kieran Lee | So. | Richmond, Va. | Hermitage | Engineering |
| Will Mulherin | Jr. | Yorktown, Va. | Tabb | Engineering |
| Grant Pollock | Fr. | Richmond, Va. | Mills Godwin | Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise |
| Chris Walizer | Jr. | Hershey, Pa. | Hershey | Finance |
| Brian Welch | Jr. | Richmond, Va. | Mills Godwin | University Studies |
| Ryan Witt | Sr. | Winchester, Va. | Sherando | Engineering |
| Yazid Zouaimia | Fr. | Clifton, Va. | Centreville | Computer Science |

WOMEN'S

| Name | Class | Hometown | High School | Major |
|------------------------|-------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Julianne Bigler | Fr. | Alexandria, Va. | West Potomac | Biological Sciences |
| Stephanie Cario | Fr. | Mechanicsville, Va. | Lee Davis | Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise |
| Taylor Crosson | Fr. | Fairfax Station, Va. | James W. Robinson | Business |
| Courtney Dobbs | Fr. | Glen Allen, Va. | Deep Run | Finance |
| Sammy Dow | Jr. | Midlothian, Va. | Midlothian | Biology |
| Frances Dowd | So. | Fairfax, Va. | Fairfax | Business Management |
| Casey Gresham | So. | Chesapeake, Va. | Western Branch | History |
| Paige Kwartunas | Fr. | Springfield, Va. | West Springfield | Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise |
| Lauren Lemieux | So. | Huntsville, Ala. | Virgil I. Grissom | Engineering Science and Mechanics |
| Jackie Merrick | Sr. | West Chester, Pa. | Henderson | Engineering |
| Madalyn Nuckols | Fr. | Glen Allen, Va. | Deep Run | Undecided |
| Katelyn Oldham | So. | Wilmington, Del. | The Tatnall School | University Studies |
| Lauren Pinkston | Jr. | Herndon, Va. | Herndon | Accounting and Information Systems |
| Taryn Schrader | So. | Virginia Beach, Va. | Bishop Sullivan Catholic | Biological Sciences |
| Mary Catherine Sowder | Fr. | Roanoke, Va. | Hidden Valley | University Studies |
| Erin Stehle | Jr. | Midlothian, Va. | Midlothian | Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise |
| Jessica Trapeni | Sr. | Fairfax, Va. | Fairfax | Biochemistry |
| Jennifer van der Sloot | So. | Morgantown, W. Va. | University | Architecture |
| Alex Watt | Fr. | Springfield, Va. | West Springfield | Architecture |
| Erika Weidman | So. | Alexandria, Va. | T.C. Williams | Biochemistry |
| Natalie Woodford | So. | Roanoke, Va. | Patrick Henry | Psychology |

Head Coach: Ben Thomas (10th season)

Director of Track and Field and Cross Country: Dave Cianelli (10th season)