



# 2009 Big West Track & Field

2 Corporate Park, Suite 206, Irvine, CA 92606 • Phone: (949) 261-2525 • Fax: (949) 261-2528 • email: [chargraves@bigwest.org](mailto:chargraves@bigwest.org)

**Information Director:** Mike Villamor • **Assistant Information Director (T&F Contact):** Chris Hargraves

*May 20, 2009 - Big West Track & Field Athletes of the Year*

## Cal State Northridge Nabs Five Track & Field Honors

Irvine, Calif. — After winning the team titles at the Big West Track & Field Championships last weekend, Cal State Northridge continued to rein in the awards as the squad took home a total of five of the eight individual awards doled out in a vote of the league's eight head coaches.

The Matador awards haul saw DeShawn Waters named Men's Track Athlete of the Year and Rolando Felizola garner Men's Field Athlete of the Year accolades, while Precious Watkins was honored as the Women's Freshman of the Year. Head coach Don Strametz rounded out the CSUN awards by being named the Men's and Women's Coach of the Year.

Cal Poly claimed the next highest number of awards as two Mustangs were honored with individual accolades. Julie Dufresne notched Women's Field Athlete of the Year and Derek Thomas was awarded the Men's Freshman of the Year honor. The final award handed out was a historic achievement as Brenda Martinez was named Women's Track Athlete of the Year. She is the first Highlander in their DI history to claim the Track Athlete of the Year honor.

Waters (Hercules, Calif.) has continued the CSUN tradition of a strong sprinting program with an outstanding season. The junior won the Big West title in both the 100 (10.53) and 200 (21.44), the first Matador to win the 100 crown since 2004 and the first to win the 200 since 2003. He is also a regional qualifier in each event, having posted top five regional times of 10.44 in the 100 and 21.20 in the 200. He also is a member of CSUN's Big West title-winning and NCAA Regional qualifying 4x100 relay contingent.

Martinez (Ontario, Calif.) is having a truly remarkable reason on the track for UCR. Prior to the Big West Championships, the junior broke the conference record in the 1500, torching the track in 4:13.66. Her time is fourth in the NCAA, seventh in the United States and in the top 20 in the world. Once Martinez got to the conference meet, she won the 1500 and set a meet record in the 800 with a time of 2:03.05. Her 800 time is the fourth-fastest in the NCAA, sixth-best in the USA and in the top 15 in the world. Martinez also anchored UCR's 4x400 relay team to a second place finish and her top 800 and 1500 times are USA Championships "A" standards.

Felizola (Downey, Calif.) shook off a shoulder injury in January to establish himself as one of the top jumpers in the league and region. He won the Big West crown in both the long jump (7.47) and triple jump (15.73), the first two conference championships of his career. He is an NCAA Regional qualifier in both events and won the long jump at the conference meet in just his second long jump competition of the season. Felizola is also the first CSUN athlete to claim Men's Field Athlete of the Year honors since former teammate and NCAA long jump champion DaShalle Andrews won the honor in 2007.

Dufresne (Santa Cruz, Calif.) is the second consecutive Mustang to earn Women's Field Athlete of the Year accolades, following former teammate Sharon Day. The senior swept the two events at the Big West Championships, posting a mark of 16.07 meters (52-8.75) in the shot and 49.14 meters (161-3) in the discus. Her shot put effort was a PR and the second-best mark in program history, while the discus effort was ninth all-time at Cal Poly. Dufresne also became the first Mustang to win both events at the conference Championships since Olympic gold medalist and former Cal Poly athlete Stephanie Brown Trafton accomplished the feat in 2003.

Thomas (San Leandro, Calif.) is Cal Poly's second Men's Freshman of the Year recipient, making the Mustangs the first school with two freshman award winners since the honor began in 2005. Thomas' specialty was the 1500-meter race, an event he won at the Big West Championships in 3:46.19. He had an even better time in the event earlier in the season, a 3:43.92 which is fourth all-time at Cal Poly and the U.S. Junior-leading mark.

Watkins (Moreno Valley, Calif.) had an outstanding debut season after redshirting a year ago in becoming the first CSUN athlete to win Women's Freshman of the Year honors. She wrapped up her first go-round at the Big West Championships in style, finishing second in the 100 (11.74), fourth in the 200 (24.30) and running the leadoff leg of the first place 4x100 relay team. Watkins peaked at the right time for the conference champion Matadors, setting PR's in the 100 and 200 finals.

Strametz is one of the most successful coaches in Big West history as he has now led the women's Matador squad to four straight conference titles and six overall, while leading the men's contingent to their fourth title overall and third in the past five years. This season, Strametz coached the Men's Track Athlete of the Year and the Men's Field Athlete of the Year, the first time in conference history that one school has taken both awards. In all, Strametz' athletes won 13 Big West individual championships during this year's meet, an even dispersal with seven by the women and six by the men.

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## 2009 Big West Track & Field Honors

### **Men's Track Athlete of the Year**

DeShawn Waters, Cal State Northridge

### **Men's Field Athlete of the Year**

Rolando Felizola, Cal State Northridge

### **Men's Freshman of the Year**

Derek Thomas, Cal Poly

### **Men's Coach of the Year**

Don Strametz, Cal State Northridge

### **Women's Track Athlete of the Year**

Brenda Martinez, UC Riverside

### **Women's Field Athlete of the Year**

Julie Dufresne, Cal Poly

### **Women's Freshman of the Year**

Precious Watkins, Cal State Northridge

### **Women's Coach of the Year**

Don Strametz, Cal State Northridge