



2011 Big West Track & Field

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

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

May 18, 2011 - Big West Track & Field Athletes of the Year

Parity Reigns As Six Clubs Represented in Track & Field Major Awards

Irvine, Calif. — The depth of the Big West track & field clubs is on display in the major awards as six different clubs claimed an award with three schools picking up a pair of honors.

On the men's side, the Track Athlete of the Year was split between UC Irvine's Charles Jock and UC Santa Barbara's Ryan Martin, the 800-meter rivals. The Field Athlete of the Year went to Colin Dunbar of Long Beach State, with his coach Andy Sythe winning the Coach of the Year award. The Freshman of the Year went to Cal State Northridge as Carl Horsley was voted as the winner.

The women's awards saw UC Riverside as the big winner as Ashley Gatewood won the Field Athlete of the Year and Danielle Littleton won the Freshman of the Year. Cal State Fullerton's Ciara Short claimed her second consecutive Track Athlete of the Year honor, while the top coach went to Cal State Northridge's Don Strametz who is retiring at the end of the season.

Jock (San Diego, Calif.) is the first UCI athlete to claim back-to-back Athlete of the Year honors since Eddie Carey did the same in the 1981-82 seasons. His junior season has been full of high water marks as he again broke his school record in the 800 with a time of 1:45.19 at the Mt. SAC Relays. That time is the best in the NCAA, second-best in the United States and in the top 10 in the world this season. Jock was also named the Athlete of the Meet at the Cal/Nevada Championships in March after winning the 800 in 1:47.18. He's also been a top 400 runner for UCI, posting a 46.30 in a winning race at the Asics/Steve Scott Invitational and running the anchor leg of the 4x400 in 45.10 for the Anteaters' Big West championship relay.

Martin (Lake Forest, Calif.) is the first UCSB athlete to win the Athlete of the Year in the history of the league. Martin has been a consistent runner in the 400, 800 and 1500 for the Gauchos this season. He was the league champion in the 800, edging UCI's Charles Jock with a time of 1:45.34, which set a school record, a personal best and the second best time in the NCAA this season. Martin also posted times of 4:01.81 in the 1500 at the Ben Brown Invitational and 47.35 in the 400 at the Cal Poly/UCSB dual meet.

Short (San Diego, Calif.) remains the only Titan to win the Women's Track Athlete of the Year and is the league's first back-to-back winner since UC Santa Barbara's Stephanie Rothstein did the same in the 2006 and '07 seasons. Short proved once again to be the league's top sprinter as she holds the top times in the 100 (11.58), 200 (23.29) and 400 (52.31), set school records in each of those events and won the 200 and 400 races at the Big West Championships. Short showed she belongs among the nation's best as she was the top collegiate finisher in the 400 at the Florida Relays and the 400 champion at the Cal/Nevada Championships.

Dunbar (Santa Barbara, Calif.) is the first LBSU Field Athlete of the Year since Chris Richardson in 2008. The senior has headlined the 49er squad all season as he posted marks of 223-06 (68.12m) in the hammer, 177-05 (54.09m) in the discus, 55-02.75 (16.83m) in the shot put and 181-05 (55.31m) in the javelin. Dunbar led the team to the Big West men's title and to its first Cal/Nevada Championships title after second place finishes in the hammer, shot and discus. Dunbar is also just the second thrower in Big West history to score in all four throwing events at the league championship meet, personally accounting for 28 of LBSU's points. Dunbar won all but one hammer competition in April and May, finishing second at the prestigious Drake Relays with a then-personal best toss of 219-01.

Gatewood (Montclair, Calif.) is the first Highlander to win the Women's Field Athlete of the Year award. She posted seasonal best marks of 44-0 (13.41m) in the shot, 175-05 (53.48m) in the hammer and 161-03 (49.16m) in the javelin. Gatewood was dominating at the Big West Championships, accounting for 20 of UCR's 97 points. She recorded a first place finish in the javelin after throwing it 160-07 (48.96), a second place showing in the hammer with an effort of 175-05 (53.48m) and a seventh place effort in the shot put after a toss of 41-08 (12.70m).

Horsley (Oakland, Calif.) had an immediate impact in the Big West in his first season with the Matadors. The true freshman posted season-highs of 10.55 in the 100 and 21.11 in the 200. At his first Big West Championship meet, Horsley became the second CSUN athlete in three years to sweep the 100 and 200. His season-best in the 100 came in the final at the league meet, while he clocked a 21.17 to win the 200. Horsley is also a part of the 4x100 relay contingent that was conference champion.

Littleton (Oceanside, Calif.) was strong for UCR in her freshman season and becomes the first Women's Freshman of the Year for the program since 2007. Her importance to the Highlanders was evident at the Big West meet as she scored in the long jump (fourth) 100m hurdles (fourth), the 4x100m relay (fourth) and the 4x400m relay (seventh) helping account for 17 of the Highlanders 97 points. Littleton broke her school record in the hurdles with a mark of 13.90 and set a personal high in the long jump with an effort of 19-5.50 (5.93m).

Sythe won his third Coach of the Year award and first since 2008. He led the 49ers to the program's sixth Big West men's title and the third under his leadership. The 49ers won five individual titles at the league meet and the decathlon on its way to the most points by a winning club at the Big West Championships since the LBSU title team of 2008. Sythe also led the team to its first Cal/Nevada Championship title in March.

Strametz added to his championship legacy by leading the Matador women to a record eighth title, passing former member Utah State for the most in league history. The squad won its sixth straight crown thanks to a heptathlon win and three more titles during the league meet. Strametz' win also gives him eight Coach of the Year awards which is the most honors in Big West history.

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2011 Big West Track & Field Honors

Men's Track Athlete of the Year

Charles Jock, UC Irvine
Ryan Martin, UC Santa Barbara

Men's Field Athlete of the Year

Colin Dunbar, Long Beach State

Men's Freshman of the Year

Carl Horsley, Cal State Northridge

Men's Coach of the Year

Andy Sythe, Long Beach State

Women's Track Athlete of the Year

Ciara Short, Cal State Fullerton

Women's Field Athlete of the Year

Ashley Gatewood, UC Riverside

Women's Freshman of the Year

Danielle Littleton, UC Riverside

Women's Coach of the Year

Don Strametz, Cal State Northridge