



2012 BIG WEST CROSS COUNTRY

Big West Conference - 2 Corporate Park, Suite 206, Irvine, Calif. 92606

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Big West Cross Country Awards Filled With Green and Gold

Irvine, Calif. - Cal Poly's domination at the 2012 Big West Conference Cross Country Championship last week, taking both the men's and women's title, carried through to the cross country annual awards. The Mustangs claimed five of the six awards handed out by the Big West Conference, including men's athlete of the year Chris Frias, women's athlete of the year and women's freshman of the year Laura Hollander and men's and women's coach of the year Mark Conover. Blocking the Cal Poly sweep was UC Santa Barbara's Bryan Gujjarro, who nabbed the men's freshman of the year award.

Frias guided the Mustangs men's team to its second straight league title and 12th in the past 15 seasons after claiming the individual title with a time 24:10.0. Over the course of the season Frias captured two Big West Men's Athlete of the Week honors following quality finishes at the UC Santa Barbara Lagoon Open and Pac 12 Preview. The junior from Ventura, Calif., earns Cal Poly's first Big West Men's Athlete of the Year honor since collecting four straight from 2006-09.

A record-breaking performance at the conference championship put an exclamation point on Hollander's first season competing at the collegiate level and earned her both Big West Women's Athlete of the Year and Big West Women's Freshman of the Year. The Huntington Beach, Calif., native ran a top time of 19:12.6, shattering both the course and conference record by forty-five seconds, to garner the women's individual crown. She also became just the second female athlete to post a sub 20-minute time in the 6K since the championship moved to the new distance in 2003. Hollander has been stellar all season as she paced the Mustangs at every meet she competed in, set three course records, claimed four individual titles and nabbed three Big West Women's Athlete of the Week honors. She becomes the first Cal Poly woman to earn Big West Women's Athlete of the Year honors and the fifth Mustang in seven years to grab the Big West Women's Freshman of the Year award. It was also announced today that she was named USA Track & Field's Athlete of the Week for her efforts at the Big West Championship.

At this year's Big West Cross Country Championship, Gujjarro guided the UC Santa Barbara men's program to a second place finish after crossing the finish line with a time of 24:22.50, placing fifth. Hailing from Lancaster, Calif., Gujjarro also had an impressive showing at the Stanford Invitational where he finished 41st among an elite field. He becomes the first Gaucho to be tabbed Big West Men's Freshman of the Year.

Conover guided the Cal Poly Mustangs to a sweep of the 2012 Big West Cross Country Championship as the men's team collected its second straight title and 12th in the past 15 seasons and the women's program nabbed its first conference crown since 2001. The men's squad placed five runners in the top 10 while the women's program landed three runners in the top 10 to secure the team titles. This impressive feat earned him his 10th Big West Men's Coach of the Year honor and his first Big West Women's Coach of the Year accolade. It also marks the first time the women's program has claimed the coach of the year award since Terry Crawford received such honors in 2000 and 2001.

Men's Athlete of the Year - Chris Frias, Cal Poly

Men's Freshman of the Year - Bryan Gujjarro, UC Santa Barbara

Men's Coach of the Year - Mark Conover, Cal Poly

Women's Athlete of the Year - Laura Hollander, Cal Poly

Women's Freshman of the Year - Laura Hollander, Cal Poly

Women's Coach of the Year - Mark Conover, Cal Poly

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