



2013 BIG WEST CROSS COUNTRY

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

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Cal Poly Nabs Five Cross Country Major Awards

IRVINE, CALIF. – The year end Big West cross country awards have a distinct green and gold hue as Cal Poly claimed a majority of the major hardware.

The Mustangs claimed the Men's Athlete of the Year in Chris Frias, the Women's Athlete of the Year in Laura Hollander and the Women's Freshman of the Year in Ashley Windsor. Cal Poly also secured the Men's and Women's Coach of the Year as head man Mark Conover swept the awards. UC Irvine's Isaiah Thompson broke the stranglehold on the Cal Poly winners with the Men's Freshman of the Year award.

Frias, a senior from Ventura, Calif., won his second consecutive Athlete of the Year award, the first runner to accomplish this feat on the men's since former Mustang Phillip Reid did it from 2006-07. Frias was the top finisher for the Mustangs in three races this season, the UCSB Lagoon Open (24:25 - 8K), the Fresno State Invitational (19:15 - 4 mile) and the Big West Championships (25:19 - 8K). Frias was Cal Poly's second finisher in two other races and was named the Big West Athlete of the Week on September 3.

Hollander, a sophomore from Huntington Beach, Calif., also claimed her second consecutive Women's Athlete of the Year honor. She became just the third athlete to win back-to-back Athlete of the Year awards on the women's side and the first since Utah State's Alisa Nicodemus from 1992-93. Hollander won both races she ran in this season, setting a course record at the UCSB Lagoon Open (16:36 - 5K) and a course record at the Big West Championships (20:43 - 6K). Hollander's Big West Championship performance also saw her finish 1:06 in front of second place.

Windsor, a native of Langley, British Columbia, was solid in her first season in San Luis Obispo. She posted a sixth place finish at the Fresno State Invitational (18:26 - 5K), 14th at the NCAA West Regional Pre-View (17:13 - 5K) and 105th in a field of 340 at the NCAA Pre-National Invitational (21:30.02 - 6K). Windsor's improvement extended to the Big West Championships with a 10th place finish in 22:22, the first freshman to cross the finish line.

Thompson, who hails from Riverside, Calif., had an impressive first-year run as an Ant eater. Among his highlights were a 15th place finish at the Highlander Invitational (18:24.6) and a 21st place showing at the Mustang Challenge (26:11.37 - 8K). He also had an exceptional showing at the Big West Championships, finishing in 13th as UCI's top runner in 26:23.9. Thompson is UCI's first Freshman of the Year on the men's side and only the second Freshman of the Year (men's and women's) in school history.

Conover guided the Cal Poly running program to team titles for both the men and women this season. The men won their 13th title in 16 seasons, while the women won their second straight title. The back-to-back titles by the women are the first for the program since 2000-01 and the fourth all-time. Conover also led both teams to impressive showings all season long. The men finished second at the NCAA West Regional Preview and 12th at Pre-Nationals, while the women were also second at the West Regional Preview and 17th at the Pre-National race.

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2013 Men's Athlete of the Year - Chris Frias, Cal Poly
2013 Men's Freshman of the Year - Isaiah Thompson, UC Irvine
2013 Men's Coach of the Year - Mark Conover, Cal Poly
2013 Women's Athlete of the Year - Laura Hollander, Cal Poly
2013 Women's Freshman of the Year - Ashley Windsor, Cal Poly
2013 Women's Coach of the Year - Mark Conover, Cal Poly