



2014 BIG WEST CROSS COUNTRY

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

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Six Cross Country Awards Split Among Four Schools

IRVINE, CALIF. – The 2014 edition of the Big West cross country awards were split among four schools, three of which earned multiple honors.

Men's team champion UC Santa Barbara earned two of the awards as Bryan Guijarro was named Men's Athlete of the Year and head coach Pete Dolan took home the Men's Coach of the Year. League championship host UC Riverside also earned a pair of honors in the Women's Athlete of the Year Raquel Hefflin and Women's Freshman of the Year Faith Makau. The Men's Freshman of the Year was won by Sam Garcia of Cal State Fullerton, while women's champion UC Davis had the Women's Coach of the Year in Devin Elizondo.

Guijarro, a junior from Lancaster, Calif., is the first men's Gaucho runner to be named Athlete of the Year since Chris Ashley won the honor in 2005. Among his highlights this season are a fifth place (23:39) finish at the Stanford Invitational and a 16th place (24:31) showing in the Pre-National blue race. This past weekend, Guijarro led UCSB to its first men's title in 13 years, winning the 8K men's race at the league meet in 23:47.

Hefflin, a senior from Compton, Calif., broke through in her final season in a Highlander uniform, earning the first Women's Athlete of the Year award in program history. Hefflin has competed in five races this season, winning three of them while finishing second in the other two. She won the season-opening Nevada Twilight Classic in a 4K course record time of 14:06, won the Highlander Invitational in a program 5K and personal best 16:46.6 and won the Big West Championship 6K run in 20:12.6. Hefflin was the first UCR runner to win the Big West individual title, earned league Athlete of the Week accolades on three occasions and was named USTFCCA Division I Athlete of the Week after her performance at the Nevada Twilight Classic.

Garcia, who hails from from El Monte, Calif., is the first Titan to claim Men's Freshman of the Year honors. Garcia had an impressive progression over the course of the season, shaving over two minutes from his first race at the Mustang Challenge (26:49.2) to the league meet (24:48.0). Garcia carded an impressive 18:20.3 at the Highlander Invitational in his only 6K race of the season and was the only freshman in the league to post a top-20 finish at the Big West Championships.

Makau, a native of Modesto, Calif., was the #2 runner for UC Riverside all season long, posting five top 20 finishes three of which were in the top 10. She ran 15:27 in the 4K at the Nevada Twilight Classic, 17:13.9 at the Highlander Invitational and 20:48.8 at the Big West Championships. Her effort at the league meet was good for fifth place, making her the highest placing freshman in the meet.

Dolan led the UC Santa Barbara men's team to its first Big West title since the 2001 season, posting a school-record low of 25 points at the league championships thanks to four runners in the top five finishers. Prior to the conference meet, Dolan's team was just as impressive as it opened the year with a win at the Lagoon Race, second at the Stanford Invitational and an impressive 11th place finish in the blue race at Pre-Nationals.

Elizondo took over the program this fall and led the women's squad to its first Big West title since 2011, placing four runners in the top 10 of the competition. UCD's 36 points was the lowest score the program had posted at the league meet as well. Elizondo also coached the team to sixth at the WCC Preview Race and second at the Stanford Invitational behind only the nationally-ranked and homestanding Cardinal.

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2014 Men's Athlete of the Year - Bryan Guijarro, UC Santa Barbara

2014 Men's Freshman of the Year - Sam Garcia, Cal State Fullerton

2014 Men's Coach of the Year - Pete Dolan, UC Santa Barbara

2014 Women's Athlete of the Year - Raquel Hefflin, UC Riverside

2014 Women's Freshman of the Year - Faith Makau, UC Riverside

2014 Women's Coach of the Year - Devin Elizondo, UC Davis