



2016 BIG WEST CROSS COUNTRY

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

Information Staff: Chris Hargraves (Asst. Director of Championships & Communications)

For more information - Phone: (949) 261-2525 Fax: (949) 261-2528 email: chargraves@bigwest.org

Awards Release - Thursday, November 3, 2016

Cal Poly Sweeps Cross Country Awards

IRVINE, CALIF. – For the first time in Big West history, a school swept all six cross country awards as Cal Poly took home all the hardware after an outstanding 2016 regular season.

On the men's side, junior Clayton Hutchins was named Athlete of the Year, Justin Robison claimed the Freshman of the Year and Mark Conover earned the Coach of the Year nod. The women's awards were headlined by sophomore Peyton Bilo as she claimed the Athlete of the Year. Her teammate Cate Ratliff garnered Freshman of the Year honors and Conover also claimed the Coach of the Year honor.

Hutchins, native of San Anselmo, had a dominant season as the top runner for the Mustangs. The three-time Big West Men's Athlete of the Week finished atop the lineup in four of the five races he ran in this season, recording a top 8K time of 23:30.9 at the Stanford Invitational. He also won the UCSB Lagoon Open to start the season in 24:30.74 and ran a 24:24.6 to finish 22nd at the prestigious Pre-Nationals Blue Race, a competition that included all clubs that were either regionally or nationally ranked. Hutchins started his postseason with a time of 21:04.1 at the Big West Championships, winning the event and leading the club to its first title since 2013 with an eye-opening score of 18.

Bilo, who hails from El Dorado Hills, finished atop the Cal Poly scoring column in every race she competed in this season. The four-time Big West Athlete of the Week finished no lower than third in every race this season, winning three individual titles including last weekend's Big West Championship (21:04.1). Bilo's best 6K time was an event-winning time of 20:08.8 at the Stanford Invitational, which was the second-best time in a 6K in the Big West this season. Bilo also put up an impressive 20:11.5 at the Pre-Nationals Blue Race two weeks before the Conference Championships, finishing third in a talented field of 285 competitors.

Robison, a native of Saratoga, was a consistent performer in his first year of competition at the DI level. He started his career with a time of 25:41.4 in the 8K at the UCSB Lagoon Open, then followed that up with a PR of 23:50.8 at the Stanford Invitational two weeks later. Robison's next race was the Pre-Nationals where he finished in 25:15.8 in the 8K to record a top 100 finish (96th) in a race of 268 competitors. Most recently, Robison was a key member of Cal Poly's Big West Championship club, recording the top finish of any freshman in fifth at 25:07.0 in the 8K race.

Ratliff, hailing from Santa Cruz, only ran in three races this season but showed the future is bright for the Mustang program. She started her season at the Stanford Invitational, running a 21:39.3 which placed her 26th in the 6K field. She then ran at the Pre-Nationals meet, crossing the finish line in 21:49.5 in another 6K event. Then at the Big West Championship, Ratliff ran a 21:56.4 to finish eighth in the 6K field. Her finish was the best among all first-year runners at the league meet.

Conover led the Cal Poly program to a sweep of the Big West titles, the third time since 2012 that the Mustangs have won both titles at the Championships. Under Conover's stewardship, the Mustangs recorded a string of impressive performances during the regular season. The teams recorded top two finishes at the Stanford Invitational, UCSB Lagoon Open and the UC Riverside Invitational. Cal Poly was also the lone Big West club to compete in the prestigious Blue Race at the Pre-Nationals Invite, as the women finished in 11th and men in 12th. The nation has taken notice of the Cal Poly program as both have been ranked in the top 10 in the regional rankings and the women's squad has been receiving votes in the USTFCCA national poll.

- 30 -

2016 Men's Athlete of the Year - Clayton Hutchins, Cal Poly

2016 Men's Freshman of the Year - Justin Robison, Cal Poly

2016 Men's Coach of the Year - Mark Conover, Cal Poly

2016 Women's Athlete of the Year - Peyton Bilo, Cal Poly

2016 Women's Freshman of the Year - Cate Ratliff, Cal Poly

2016 Women's Coach of the Year - Mark Conover, Cal Poly