

# LOCALS MAKING THEIR MARK IN COLLEGIATE XC

By DON SIKORSKI  
*Special to the Bulletin*

With more and more road race fields being dominated by the over 40 crowd, it was good to see many Connecticut runners produce outstanding collegiate cross-country seasons this fall. At the November 20<sup>th</sup> NCAA Championships hosted by Indian State University, Yale's Lindsay Donaldson, who had quailed at the East Regional as an individual, finished 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in the 253 runner field. Now a junior, Donaldson was 6<sup>th</sup> as a freshman. UConn senior Jillian Sullivan, also running as an individual, earned an impressive 24<sup>th</sup> place finish. The heavily favored Stanford Cardinals ladies team, paced by Massachusetts native Arienna Lambie's 4<sup>th</sup> place finish, claimed the team title with 195 points. Providence College posted a strong 7<sup>th</sup> place team finish, with Killingy's Meghan Owen running in the #5 slot to finish 112<sup>th</sup> overall. The Friars race a strong team race, with their 2-3-4-5-6 runners all finishing within a 21 second range. Texas Tech sophomore Sally Kipyego, the overall race winner, ran virtually unchallenged from the opening kilometer to win in 20:11 over the 6,000 meter course.

The Men's race was much more hotly contested, with BYU's Josh Rohatinsky breaking away on the soggy 10K course to win in 30:44. Mark Wetmore's Colorado's team upset pre-race favorite Wisconsin to win with 94 points, bettering the Badger's 142 point total. Big East champion and East Regional winner Martin Fagan of Providence finished 5<sup>th</sup> overall in 31:01. Maine's Ben True, now competing for Dartmouth, was 59<sup>th</sup>. West Hartford's Ahmed Hajji, a former New England Cross-Country Champion while at Conard High School, finished 72<sup>nd</sup> overall, running 2<sup>nd</sup> man behind Fagan and finishing one spot in front of former Footlocker National XC champion Chris Solinsky of Wisconsin. Danbury's Andre Laboy, now a senior at Georgetown University, finished 116<sup>th</sup> to lead the Hoyas. UConn's Max Feldman, the New England XC champion from Joel Barlow High School (Redding, CT), was 135<sup>th</sup> overall competing as an individual, while former Griswold High standout and state champion Gavin Coombs of North Carolina State, a former high school rival of Hajji, was right behind Feldman in 138<sup>th</sup> place. Coombs had earlier posted a 9<sup>th</sup> place finish at the A.C.C. championships, ahead of former high school teammate Tradelle Ward, who was 38<sup>th</sup> in the conference meet and posted a strong freshman season running for Duke University.

The Division I Nationals wasn't the only race with a local presence. Lisbon's Chris Croff, a former teammate of both Coombs and Ward on Gerry Chester's powerhouse Griswold teams now competing at Southern Connecticut State, earned Division II All-American honors as a freshman this fall by virtue of his 37<sup>th</sup> place finish in Pensacola, FL. He became just the 9<sup>th</sup> Owl runner to achieve All-American status in cross country. Croff's teammate Jacob Edwards, the grandson of 1957 Boston Marathon winner Johnny J. Kelley, finished 10<sup>th</sup> in the New England Championships and 26<sup>th</sup> in the Division II Regional qualifier in his sophomore season. Edwards competed at Wheeler High School. Boston University senior Abbey Sadowski of Voluntown, another former standout at Griswold, finished 30<sup>th</sup> in the East Regional for the Terriers. Griswold's Mike Charron, East Lyme's Matt Warren, and Ledyard's Nick Rezendes all ran top 7 at Quinnipiac College and helped lead their team to conference championship at Van Courtlandt Park. Norwich's Kyle Friedman posted a strong varsity season at Central Connecticut State as a freshman. And two former Fitch High School standouts have done a terrific job combining the rigors of academic studies and distance running, with Yale University junior Betsy Boucher finishing 32<sup>nd</sup> in the East Regional race and Mark Olivier an All Ivy-League selection at Columbia University this fall.

With many of Connecticut's best runners creeping up in age, let's hope that some of these young distance runners will continue to train and race in Connecticut after their collegiate years are behind them.

## Masters Only

Even at the age of 58, Norwich's Tim Smith knows how to win road races. At last week's Pearl Harbor Memorial Race in Waterford, Smith edged Mystic's Jim Roy by 1 second to win in 31:20 over the 5.1 mile layout. Mystic's Crystal Park was the top female finisher in 39:54, good enough for 24<sup>th</sup> overall. The Pearl Harbor race is open only to runners age 40 and over and continues to be one of the better races on the local circuit.

## Marathon Training 101

Have you ever wondered what type of training commitment is required to compete in a marathon? Maybe you've contemplated running in the 26.2 mile footrace sometime in the future. And those who can boast of having a marathon finish under their belts may look to give it another go in hopes of an improved finishing time. Beginning in January, this column will follow the structured program of a runner training to compete in April's Boston Marathon. A 15 week training plan will be devised, with evaluation and feedback offered from local coaches. Stay tuned to learn more about the basis of marathon training.

**Don Sikorski writes a twice-monthly running column for the Norwich Bulletin. His "Coach's Corner" column can be accessed at [www.moheganstriders.org](http://www.moheganstriders.org). He can also be reached by e-mail at [kdcsikorski@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kdcsikorski@sbcglobal.net).**