

2017 BIG WEST CROSS COUNTRY



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

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Big West Unveils Cross Country Major Awards

IRVINE, CALIF. – The Central Coast schools was well represented in the cross country major awards as five of the six winners came from either Cal Poly or UC Santa Barbara.

The men's awards saw Yousef Baddour of UC Santa Barbara win the Freshman of the Year, while Cal Poly's Mark Conover claimed Coach of the Year accolades. UC Davis' Thomas Madden broke the Central Coast stranglehold as he claimed the Athlete of the Year honor. The women's awards were led by UC Santa Barbara's Jenna Hinkle who claimed the Athlete of the Year award. Freshman of the Year belongs to Cal Poly's Sierra Brill, while Pete Dolan of UCSB won the Coach of the Year.

Madden, a native of Front Royal, Va., made an immediate impact for the Aggies after coming in from the University of Virginia as a graduate transfer. Madden's first race of the season was the UCR Invitational, finishing in fifth overall with a time of 24:09.0. He didn't race again until the Big West Championship six weeks later, winning the overall title in the 8K with a time of 24:13.7. Madden smashed the competition as he won the race by nearly eight seconds. He is the first men's UCD runner to win Athlete of the Year since Jon Peterson claimed the honor back in 2010. Madden is also the first Aggie male to win the Big West 8K since Peterson also won the race in 2010.

Baddour, a native of Torrance, continually improved his times all season long for the Gauchos. Baddour started his season with a 26:12 in the 8K at the UCSB Gaucho Invitational, then dropped his time to a 25:18.9 at the UCR invitational. He then ran a 25:00.1 at the Bill Dellinger Invitational and posted a solid 18:45.0 at the UCR Highlander Invitational 6K race. That led to a fifth place finish in 24:43.1 in the 8K at the Big West Championship, the top showing for a freshman in the race. Baddour is the first UCSB men's runner to win Freshman of the Year since Bryan Guijarro in 2012 and just the second winner in program history.

Hinkle, a native of Cottonwood, broke through to the top of the Big West after a steady three-year climb. The senior was the top runner for the Gauchos all season, highlighted by a 17:41.8 effort in the 5K at the UCSB Gaucho Invitational, a 19:59 in the 6K at the UCR Invitational and a 19:17.9 at the Bill Dellinger Invitational. That all led to a Big West 6K Championship winning time of 20:17.1, a year after she finished second at the league meet. Hinkle's Athlete of the Year honor is the first for the Gaucho program since Amanda Moreno won the crown in 2010. That same year is also the last time a women's Gaucho runner won the 6K at the league meet (Moreno).

Brill, a native of San Francisco, was a consistent runner at the top of the lineup for the Mustangs. She started her collegiate career with a time of 18:15.3 at the UCSB Gaucho Invitational, good for fourth place. Her next race was an impressive one as she crossed the finish in 38th at the prestigious Bill Dellinger Invitational, putting up a time of 20:10.4 over the 6K race. Brill carried that momentum to the Big West Championships as she finished in 6th at 20:49., the only freshman to finish in the top 10 in the 6K women's race. Brill is the third straight Mustang to win the Freshman of the Year and the ninth recipient from the program in the 13-year history of the award.

Conover led the Cal Poly men's program to its second consecutive Big West title and 15th crown since 1998. The Mustangs have had a solid season heading into the NCAA Regionals, finishing first at the UCSB Gaucho Invitational and the Fresno Cross Country Invitational to go along with the league crown. The team also put together a seventh place showing at the Bill Dellinger Invitational and won three of the six men's Athlete of the Week awards this season. Conover is now a 13-time Coach of the Year recipient, the most in league history.

Dolan earned the Coach of the Year honor on the women's side for the first time since 2010, which was also the last time the Gauchos won the league meet. The now 10-time Coach of the Year led UCSB to its 10th championship all-time, while this year leading the squad to eighth at the Bill Dellinger Invitational, fifth at the UCR Invitational and first at the Highlander Invitational.

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2017 Men's Athlete of the Year - Thomas Madden, UC Davis
2017 Men's Freshman of the Year - Yousef Baddour, UC Santa Barbara
2017 Men's Coach of the Year - Mark Conover, Cal Poly
2017 Women's Athlete of the Year - Jenna Hinkle, UC Santa Barbara
2017 Women's Freshman of the Year - Sierra Brill, Cal Poly
2017 Women's Coach of the Year - Pete Dolan, UC Santa Barbara