

UW Oshkosh women repeat as NCAA indoor track and field champion

by Kennan Timm - Tuesday, March 18, 2014

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The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh won five events to defend its title at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III Women's Indoor Track and Field Championship held Friday and Saturday, March 14 and 15 in Lincoln, Neb.

The Titans scored 67 points to edge the 65 compiled by conference rival and second-place UW-La Crosse. Wartburg College (Iowa) finished third in the team standings with 46 points, while Wheaton College (Mass.) ranked fourth with 26 and both Williams College (Mass.) and UW-Whitewater fifth with 24. UW-Oshkosh won last year's meet with 56 points. The indoor victory is UW Oshkosh's ninth -- the most in NCAA Division III history. Overall, the national championship is the school's 46th, including the 31st in NCAA Division III competition. The Titans owned a pair of individual standouts on the track, including senior Christy Cazzola who won both the mile and 3,000-meter runs while anchoring UW Oshkosh's victorious distance medley relay team.

Cazzola became the first woman to win three straight mile runs when she crossed the finish line in a time of 4:51.47. Hours later during the 3,000-meter run, Cazzola advanced from fourth to first during the final lap to win with a school-record time of 9:38.72.

In the distance medley relay, Cazzola ran the final leg for a group that finished in 11:39.94. Other members of the winning quartet were Stephanie Jahn, Sonny Jenkins and Kylee Verhasselt. Last year, Cazzola, Jahn and Verhasselt helped UW-Oshkosh win the race with a national-record time of 11:32.24.

Cazzola now has six individual indoor national titles, to go with two relay crowns.

Verhasselt earned her first individual national title with a time of 2:08.67 in the 800-meter run. In addition to the distance medley relay, the junior also helped UW-Oshkosh finish third in the 1,600-meter relay with a school-record time of 3:49.21. Joining Verhasselt in the relay were Jahn, Caitlyn McCormick and Elizabeth Pospyhalla.

The Titans held a slim lead entering the 1,600-meter relay, the meet's final event. UW-Oshkosh needed to finish fifth or better to clinch the title, and the team delivered.

The remaining winner was Jecel (Gerner) Klotz in the shot put. The junior achieved her third All-America award in the event with a triumphant distance of 49-4 1/2. Klotz also placed fifth in the weight throw with a mark of 57-5.

Melanie Brickner and Abby Martin were the Titans' other All-Americans. Brickner placed third in the weight throw with a distance of 59-8 1/2, while Martin finished eighth in the shot put at 44-9 3/4.

Brickner also placed third in the weight throw at last year's championship.

Other UW Oshkosh competitors at the meet were Brickner in the shot put, Samantha Blue in the long jump and Kasey Ederer in the high jump.

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