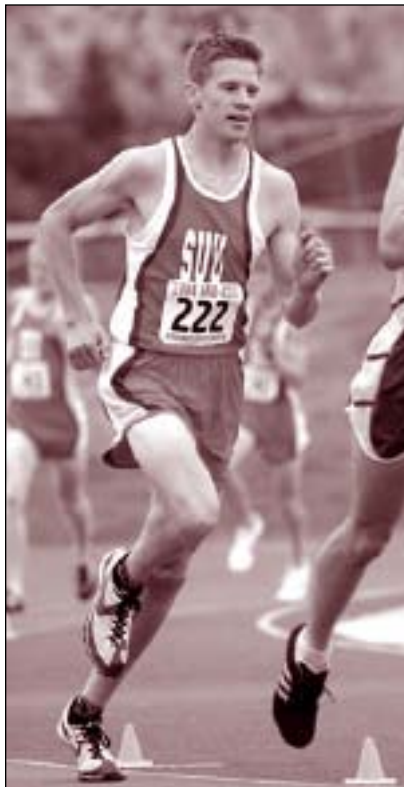


SUU men break their own scoring record; women sitting in “seventh” heaven

Southern Utah men’s and women’s cross country teams continued their dominance of the Mid-Continent Conference by sweeping both conference titles at the 2004 Mid-Con Championships on the hilly, wet and muddy Oakland University Katke-Cousins Golf Course in Rochester, Mich. The Thunderbird men broke their own conference team scoring record for the second-straight season in winning their seventh title in eight years, while the women claimed their unprecedented seventh-consecutive Mid-Con crown as SUU notched a title-sweep for the sixth time in the last seven seasons overall.

SUU’s men ran a near-perfect race in taking five of the top-six overall places for a championship record score of 18 points, led by red-shirt freshman Jess Baumgartner who won the



Jess Baumgartner

conference individual title and Athlete of the Year honors with an 8-kilometer time of 26:01.3.

Meanwhile, the Thunderbird women placed three runners in the top-10 in holding off second-place Western Illinois 58-69, in what turned out to be the second-closest margin of victory for SUU in its seven-year run. In 1999, the Thunderbird women outlasted UMKC by three points, 48-51, in their first title defense which marked the team’s smallest margin of victory over that championship span.

Senior Alisha Bezanson earned first team all-conference honors for the third-straight season to lead the Thunderbirds, placing second individually with a 6k time of 22:56.2.

“It was a pretty awesome weekend for us,” Head Coach Eric Houle, who was named conference men’s and women’s Coach of the Year, said. “Our men are as good as we thought they were and to have our top-three finishers being freshmen makes us pretty excited for the future as well. I was also happy with the way our women battled. Alisha [Bezanson] finished out a great four years in the conference for us and Tracy [Robbins] came through when we really needed it and got us the win.”

For the SUU women’s cross country and track and field programs, the victory is the seventh-straight conference championship overall as the Thunderbirds claimed consecutive Mid-Con “Triple Crown” sweeps of the cross country and indoor and outdoor track titles in each of the last two seasons. Meanwhile the men’s program, which recorded its first conference



Alisha Bezanson

“Triple Crown” sweep in 2003-04, ran its overall Mid-Con cross country and track winning streak to four-straight.

SUU Women’s Gymnastics team wins sixth Academic National Championship title in ten years.

Southern Utah University’s women’s gymnastics team claimed its third-straight academic national championship with the team’s second-highest grade point average of all-time at 3.760 during the 2003-04 academic year. The Thunderbirds have won four of the last five academic national championships overall and have

earned the honor six times in the last 10 years. All 13 Thunderbird gymnasts were named academic all-American posting GPAs ranging from the high of 3.95 to 3.47. “I think that this was a very special one for us because every single member of the team was an academic all-American, and with all the success that we’ve had academically, that has never happened,” Head Coach Scott Bauman said. “Additionally, from an athletic standpoint, this team was the best we ever had in the program’s history and our record shows that. They wanted to win athletically and academically and that says a lot about the character and type of athletes we have on our team.”

“This is an outstanding honor for our gymnastics program,” SUU Athletic Director Tom Douple said. “Congratulations to our student-athletes and coaches for their great efforts. To win this honor six of the last 10 years and to have all 13 of our gymnasts be named academic all-Americans



The 2003-04 SUU Gymnastics team.

speaks highly of the type of student-athletes involved in our program.”

The Lady Thunderbirds, which set a team record with a 3.78 GPA in winning the title last season, also claimed academic championships in 1994, 1997, 1999

and 2001, with second-place finishes in 1993, 1995, 1998 and 2000 and a third-place finish in 1996. The award is presented annually by the National Association of Collegiate Gymnastics Coaches (NACGC).