

Powerful Glendale women's cross country team sets sights on unseating Orange Coast (again); San Bernardino Valley men seek four-peat!

By decisively winning the 2009 Southern California Regional Cross Country Championships 38-87 over Orange Coast, Glendale College's Lady Vaqueros served notice that GC's 2007 state success is repeatable. Meanwhile, San Bernardino Valley College's Wolverines demonstrated that a four-peat is also in the works on the men's side thanks to a 56-134 margin over OCC in the SoCal Championships.

If SBVC wins the 46th California Community College Championships at Fresno's Woodward Park on Saturday, Nov. 21, it would vault coach Wes Asford into distinct company. A fourth consecutive state championship would tie him for fourth place on the all-time list of CCC cross country coaches.

The same is true for Glendale's Eddie Lopez. He has guided the Vaqueros to two men's titles (1995 and 1998) and the 2007 women's title.

Bob Larsen, formerly of Grossmont, leads the way having won eight men's championships, including seven in-a-row from 1972-78. His eighth title came in 1982.

In the second closest finish of the 32-year history of CCC women's cross country championships, Orange Coast's Pirates won the 2008 title 84-86 and dethroned the Vaqueros. Thus, OCC won it all for the tenth time in 12 seasons. Previous to 2007, the Pirates won six consecutive state championships. OCC has won 14 women's cross country titles and four men's championships. Pirates coach Marco Ochoa is second to Larsen on the all-time list with six state titles in CCC men's and women's cross country.

While the team favorites are clearly Glendale and San Bernardino, Hartnell's Daniel Tapia is a strong favorite to capture the men's individual title. The 2008 state runner-up is the Northern California champion and hasn't lost a race in 2009. On Nov. 7, he beat College of the Sequoias' David Sanchez by nine seconds. At 23, Tapia is a veteran of road races who rarely makes tactical errors. Southwestern's freshman Dahir Mohammed is the SoCal individual champion having defeated Jose Lezama of El Camino on Nov. 6 by ten seconds.

On the women's side, Glendale's star freshman Nina Moore is the SoCal champ while teammates Brianna Jauregui and Rosa Del Toro were third and fifth respectively. In the 2007 state meet, GC's Tove Berg and Vivien Wadeck were second and third while Justina Sadaukait was ninth. Thus, since they finished among the top 14, Lopez coached three All-Americans. Could history repeat in 2009?

Up North, sophomore Kim Crouch of Sacramento City finished 51 seconds ahead of Central Valley Conference champion Allison Gonzales of COS.

Saturday's women's race at Fresno's picturesque Woodward Park is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. The men's race is set for 11 a.m.