



## PREVIEW

## Yellowjacket Scouting Report

What's the outlook for Rochester teams this year?

By Dennis O'Donnell

WITH THREE STRAIGHT NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP appearances and a strong nucleus returning, the men's cross country team is looking for another successful season this fall.

Seniors John Bernstein and Adam Pachek plus junior Marc Rollfs earned all-Atlantic region honors a year ago. They all finished in the top 35 at the Atlantic regional championships last fall (hosted by

▲ **STRONG START:** The men's cross country team returns a strong nucleus of runners for 2013 from last fall's squad, a group that finished 21st at the NCAA national championship meet.

Rochester). Senior Yuji Wakimoto will be another top five candidate on a week-in, week-out basis this fall.

Rochester was one of 16 at-large participants in the 32-team NCAA championship field last year, finishing in 21st-place as a team. Eight regions will conduct championships in mid-November with the top two teams from each region advancing to the national championship site. The remaining 16 teams will be selected by a committee on an at-large basis. No region received more than five invitations last year.

That may change for the 2013 race.

"The NCAA committee will select the best 16 at-large teams without regard to regional alignment," says Sam Albert '01, '02W (MS), director of track and field. "It means a strong region might send as many as seven or eight teams to the championship site."

What does that mean for Rochester's

men and women? "Depending on where we finish at the regional race, we may be fighting for an at-large berth among 50 teams instead of 24," Albert says. Teams that finish in the top eight regionally may be strong candidates to run for one more week.

The Yellowjacket women have good experience returning as well—including senior Danielle Bessette, juniors Caitlyn Garbarino, Victoria Stepanova, and Kathryn Woodworth plus sophomore Catherine Knox. Knox reaped all-Region and all-NY State honors a year ago. Bessette was an all-Region performer. Junior Jennifer Klimentz also had a very strong track season in the long-distance races last spring, and she looks to be a major contributor on the cross country course this fall.

Rochester will compete in three key races before running in the Atlantic regional championships in mid-November. The Yellowjackets will run at Letchworth

State Park in the SUNY Geneseo pre-regional race on October 5, then compete in the Oberlin (Ohio) College Inter-Regional Rumble on October 19. The UAA championships will be held in Pittsburgh on November 2. Geneseo hosts the Atlantic regional championships at Letchworth on November 16 with the NCAA title race set for Hanover, Indiana, a week later.

“Those races are all important because they will put us against teams we may be competing with for an at-large bid at the end of the season,” says Albert. “The UAA race involves teams from six different regions. It could come down to how we do in an ‘us-against-them’ race.”

## A Fall Preview

**Field hockey:** The Yellowjackets earned a first-ever NCAA playoff bid in 2012 and reached the quarterfinals of the championship tournament. The team will be led by senior All-Americans Madison Wagner in goal and Katie Flaschner at midfield. Sophomore Michelle Relin (19 goals, 9 assists, 47 points) was the Liberty League Rookie of the Year last season.

**Football:** Four all-Liberty League honorees return for the Yellowjackets along with record-setting senior quarterback Dean Kennedy. He has two strong targets in senior wide receiver Thomas Hayes (41 catches, 622 yards, 4 TDs) and senior tight end Ken Apostolakis (30 catches, 389 yards, 5 TDs). Kennedy threw for a single-season record 2,028 yards and 15 TDs. Defensively, the charge will be led by senior linebackers Tony Ortega and Zach Cicero who totaled 126 tackles between them.

**Men's soccer:** With seven playoff invitations in the last eight years, Rochester remains one of the nation's elite teams. The veterans include four all-UAA honorees: forward Alex Swanger, midfielder Max Fan, defender Andrew Sheridan, and forward Jack Thesing. Senior goalie Mike Moranz is back as well.



**Women's soccer:** Junior Kailee Zornow is a returning starter with all-UAA honors on her playing resume. Nine players return with starting experience, including seniors Grace Van Der Ven, Alyssa Abel, Kathryn Rowe, and Lila Cantor.

**Women's volleyball:** Junior middle blocker Savannah Benton is back on the floor after earning all-UAA honors in 2012. She had 265 kills and 102 blocks. Setter Xiaoyi Li averaged 9.33 assists per set. Jennie Ford had 3.47 assists per set. She will move

to a hitter's role. Senior Paige Idziur is a libero candidate after registering 163 digs last season.

## Who's No. 1? Rochester

The first preseason polls of 2013 were issued in mid-August and the Yellowjacket men's and women's soccer teams were already making names for themselves. Men's Soccer is ranked No. 1 in Division III by BennettRank, a computer-driven service.

The popular ranking website uses only mathematical algorithms to rank every team and conference in all three NCAA divisions. BennettRank uses wins, losses, goal differentials, and game location to determine rank, differentiating themselves from the more subjective process of voting used by most polls and improving upon the data-driven RPI by factoring in whether a match was played home or away. Five UAA teams were ranked in the top 10 heading into the 2013 season and six are in the top 12.

One year ago, BennettRank determined that the University Athletic Association was the toughest women's soccer conference in Division III. That's reflected in the organization's preseason Division III women's poll. UAA schools filled the top four spots. Rochester was ranked No. 38.

Among all 431 Division III soccer programs, the Yellowjacket women's team played the toughest strength of schedule in 2012. **R**

**FALL FAVORITES:** The women's cross country team (above) is looking to qualify for the NCAA championship meet this fall, while Dean Kennedy '14 is expected to lead the Yellowjacket football team after setting records for passing yards and touchdowns in a season in 2012.

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