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Roadrunner Track and Field at 2010 National Championships May 6-8, 2010 Columbia, MD

The Gloucester County College track and field teams ended their season in grand fashion at the NJCAA Division III National Championships held at Howard Community College in Columbia, MD. The teams faced their stiffest competition and the strangest weather of the season. The first two days of competition featured unseasonably warm temperatures and the final day included incredible wind gusts that challenged all of the performances. The three tense days of events led to many nervous moments for the coaching staff and athletes but ended with the best combined finish for the men and women's teams.



GCC's Ozzie Huerta was named Male Athlete of the Year at the NJCAA Track & Field Championships



Abiola Majekodunmi on the podium

On the women's side, the NJCAA Northeast District champion team finished 5th in the nation, above their previous poll ranking of 6th. The women had two national champions: Alyssa Figueroa won the pole vault with a new school record of 9' 8", and Abiola Majekodunmi won the javelin with a throw of over 115' 8". These two were crowned All-Americans for their winning efforts. Although only the top two finishers in an event are given All-American honors, it is notable to mention GCC had several 3rd place finishes: Alyssa Figueroa in the 100m hurdles, Amanda Dole in the 3000m steeplechase, Tracy Dobkowski in the 10,000m and also the 5000m.

"The efforts put forth by the women's team were amazing," said head coach Ryan Hughes. "They pushed themselves to the limit and wanted to participate in every event that they qualified in. This unselfish team attitude helped them not only achieve a top five national finish, but pushed them to many personal records and season best times/distances. I am extremely proud of all the girls and the hard work they have done all season." This is the second year in a row that GCC has returned with

big performances in the throwing events and a national javelin champion thanks in large part to the efforts of assistant coach Joe Kalnas.

On the men's side, the team finished in an amazing 3rd place, their highest finish ever! After a disappointing second place finish at the Northeast District championships last weekend, the team refocused and worked hard to make up for the loss. The men had three national champions: Greg Taylor in the 400m hurdles and Ozzie Huerta in the 10,000m and 5,000m. Ozzie was also 2nd in the 3000m steeplechase to claim All-American honors there as well. Due to his fantastic efforts on the track, Ozzie was named the Male Track Athlete of the Year.

Some other highlights of the meet, included: Ali Ejaz finished a fraction of a second out of All-American status to place 3rd in the 400m hurdles. "This event was completely dominated by GCC, with Greg Taylor and Ali heading into the finals with the top two times and with them leading 1-2 in the race up until the final few steps," said Coach Hughes.

Anthony Higareda placed 6th in the grueling 10 event decathlon, with the highest point total for a GCC athlete in 23 years. Coach Hughes on Anthony: "Anthony had the performance of a lifetime in many of the 10 events and finished the decathlon in grand style winning the final event, the 1500m, in an all-out sprint to the finish in which he won by 0.04 seconds!"

"I was ecstatic at the men finishing 3rd in the nation. I knew they were capable of doing it all season, but we had recently been hampered by injuries to a few key performers who were unable to fully compete at nationals (Kevin Walsh – Clearview, Willie Anderson – Paulsboro, Shuan Al-Hassan – Williamstown)," said Hughes. "I was overjoyed with the national championships captured by Greg and Ozzie. I know that each of them have put years of effort into getting those titles and both have overcome many obstacles to finally reach the top of the podium."

Results and photos from the events can be found at the tournament website:

http://cms.hutchcc.edu/hcc/Dragonshome.aspx?menu_id=156&head_id=8554&id=12640 OR

<http://www.dragonrunning.com/>

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