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release
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Nine UNH skiers qualify to compete at 2010 NCAA Skiing Championships

DURHAM, N.H. - A total of nine student-athletes from the University of New Hampshire ski team have qualified to participate at the 2010 NCAA Skiing Championships that will be held March 10-13 at Steamboat Springs, Colo., with the University of Colorado serving as the host school.

UNH, which finished in ninth place at last year's NAAs, will send a full complement of six alpine skiers as well as three Nordic skiers to compete at the national championship under the guidance of 25th-year ski coordinator Cory Schwartz, who is also in his 28th year as Nordic head coach, and head alpine coach Brian Blank.

Seniors Veronique Archambault-Leger (Verdun, Quebec) and Aileen Farrell (Ottawa, Ontario) will be competing at the NAAs for the fourth time in as many years, and both have earned four All-America honors in the women's alpine competition. They will be joined on the slopes of Mt Werner by freshman Marie-Elaine Lepine (Mont-Tremblant, Quebec).

Willie Ford (Plymouth, N.H.) is another senior with three previous years of NCAA Championship experience and he skied to All-America status in both the slalom and giant slalom in '09. Classmate Michael Cremeno (Pembroke, N.H.) competed alongside Ford at last year's NAAs and garnered All-America accolades in the giant slalom. Similar to the women's alpine squad, the seniors of UNH's men's alpine team will be joined by a newcomer - sophomore Paul Atkinson (Toronto, Ontario).

New Hampshire also boasts NCAA Championship experience in the Nordic races, which will be held at Howelson Hill this year. Junior Natasha Kullas (Timmons, Ontario) competed as a freshman in 2008, whereas both sophomore Anya Caldwell Bean (Wolfeboro, N.H.) and senior Dylan McGuffin (Northfield, N.H.) are advancing to the national championships for the first time.

Of these nine skiers, Archambault-Leger, Atkinson, Farrell and McGuffin received All-East Team accolades from the Eastern Intercollegiate Ski Association following the conclusion of the 2010 EISA Championships in the final weekend of February.

Archambault-Leger, a two-time All-American in both 2009 and 2007 as well as a three-time NCAA All-Academic Team honoree, is the third seed out of the East in women's alpine. She completed the EISA season by winning the women's slalom and placing third in the giant slalom at the Eastern Championships (Feb. 27-28). Archambault-Leger recorded five other top-10 finishes, including third place in the slalom at both the Dartmouth and Vermont winter carnivals, this season. Overall, she was UNH's top finisher in five races. She was particularly strong in the slalom, where she recorded the team's fastest time four times and did not finish lower than seventh overall at any carnival.

Farrell, the 11th seed out of the East, raced to an All-America finish each of the previous three years. She attained that status in both the slalom and giant slalom disciplines at the 2009 NCAAAs; in '08, Farrell was an All-American in the slalom and in '07 it was the giant slalom in which she attained that accolade. She had a total of nine top-10 finishes – five in the giant slalom and four in the slalom -- during the 2010 EISA carnival season. Farrell was the top UNH finisher four times, including a third-place finish in the giant slalom at Dartmouth as well as fourth-place finishes in the GS at St. Lawrence and the slalom at Williams. Most recently at the EISA Championships, Farrell placed sixth in the giant slalom.

Lepine, the No. 15 seed from the East, had a total of six top-10 finishes in 2010; four of those efforts were recorded in the giant slalom. She concluded the EISA season in strong fashion with third place in the slalom and ninth place in the giant slalom. She pointed in 10 of 12 races overall, which was a higher total than either Archambault-Leger (eight) or Farrell (nine). That included the giant slalom at Vermont, where she was the top 'Cat and fourth overall. Lepine was also UNH's top skier (sixth place) in the giant slalom at Williams; she also earned sixth place in the slalom at St. Michael's.

In the men's alpine, Atkinson is UNH's top seed out of the East at No. 9. He recorded seven top-10 finishes overall this season with two finishes on the podium and a total of six (four in the slalom) in the top-five. Atkinson was UNH's top 'Cat seven times this season, including both the slalom and giant slalom at the EISAs and Williams in the last two weeks of the carnival season. Most recently at the EISA Championships, Atkinson was third in the slalom and seventh in the giant slalom. He skied to a season-best second place in the slalom at Williams and also finished fifth in the GS at that carnival. Atkinson earned team points in 10 of 12 races, and in one of those other two he finished 13th overall in the giant slalom at Dartmouth.

Cremeno, who garnered All-East Team honors in '08 and '09, is the 11th seed out of the East. He recorded a total of five top-10 efforts with a season best of second place in the giant slalom at St. Michael's. One week earlier in the 2010 opener, Cremeno turned in his second-best performance of the season with fourth place in the giant slalom at St. Lawrence. He was UNH's fastest skier in both races. Cremeno was stronger in the giant slalom throughout the season. He also recorded top-10 finishes in that discipline at Williams (ninth) and Dartmouth (10th), and he was 14th in the GS at the Easterns.

Ford, also bestowed All-East Team awards the previous two seasons, is the No. 14 seed out of the East. He had five top-10 finishes during the 2010 EISA carnival season with top-five performances in the slalom at Vermont (fourth place) and Dartmouth's giant slalom (fifth). Ford was the top 'Cat in that GS at Dartmouth and also recorded the fastest time by a New Hampshire skier in the giant slalom at Vermont (12th place overall). Ford pointed for the 'Cats in eight of 12 races and that included sixth place in the slalom at the EISA Championships. Caldwell Bean is the East's 15th seed in the women's Nordic competition. She had a total of six top-20 finishes during the carnival season, and that included 12th place in the 15k freestyle at the Eastern championships in which she was the top UNH finisher. Caldwell Bean opened the season in strong fashion with consecutive fifth-place

performances in the free races at St. Lawrence (15k) and St. Michael's (10k) carnivals. She was also the top 'Cat - 13th place overall -- the following week at the Vermont carnival. Caldwell Bean's top effort in the classic discipline was 16th place at Dartmouth. Overall, she earned team points in eight of 10 races.

Kullas is ranked 12th out of the East. She was New Hampshire's top skier five times, including both races at the Williams Carnival. At that event, she matched her highest placing of the season with sixth place in the 5k freestyle; Kullas also recorded one of her seven total top-20 finishes with an 11th-place effort in the 5k classic at Williams. In the season opener at St. Lawrence, Kullas placed sixth in the 5k classic. The following week at St. Michael's, she took sixth place in the 10k free. Kullas pointed for the 'Cats in seven races and one of her other season highlights was an eighth-place effort in the 5k classic at Vermont.

McGuffin had a breakout senior season - he had nine top-20 efforts, including four top-five finishes -- and is the No. 5 seed from the East. He opened the 2010 season at St. Lawrence by winning the 20k freestyle race; one day earlier, he finished third overall in the 10k classic. McGuffin followed that with a third-place effort in the 15k free at St. Michael's and one week later finished on the podium again with another third-place finish in the 15k free at Vermont. At the EISAs, McGuffin skied to sixth place in the 20k free to mark his fifth top-10 finish of the season as well the ninth time he was UNH's top finisher.

Schwartz has led UNH to 20 top-10 NCAA finishes in his 25-year tenure. From 1989-96, his teams claimed eight consecutive top-10 NCAA finishes, which is the longest streak in school history. Schwartz has mentored 26 student-athletes to a total of 35 All-America team honors. Included in those numbers are 16 Nordic skiers compiling 21 All-America accolades. He was honored as EISA Coach of the Year in 1985, 1986, 2002 and 2003.

Blank is in his third year as alpine head coach. In 2009, he was named EISA Alpine Coach of the Year. UNH's alpine skiers garnered eight All-America honors last season and the Wildcats were the second-highest scoring alpine team at the NCAAs.

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