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Wittenberg Men's and Women's Track & Field 2002 Season in Review

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SETTING THE SCENE: The Wittenberg men's and women's track and field teams put together a fine 2002 season, by any standard of measurement.

The men's team, in particular, came up big at just the right moments. After finishing second to perennial powerhouse Ohio Wesleyan in the indoor championship, the Tigers swept right past the Bishops to claim their first NCAC outdoor crown since 1997. The season was capped in grand style as several athletes turned in their best performances during the NCAC meet, including sophomore **Tim Gaal (Amanda, Ohio/Clearcreek)**, who set a school and conference record in the javelin en route to earning automatic qualification to the NCAA meet.

The women's team finished fourth in the indoor meet and fifth in the outdoor. In both cases, the Tigers' received some outstanding individual performances but didn't have enough depth to challenge for the top spots as a team.

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NCAC CHAMPIONSHIP: The Tiger men's track and field lapped the field at the 2002 NCAC Outdoor Championship meet, winning their first conference title since 1997.

The men's championship, which came on the heels of last year's second-place finish and the 2002 indoor championship second-place finish, was won primarily on the strength of four individuals. Senior **Brian Gehle (Huntsville, Ohio/Indian Lake)**, Tim Gaal, freshman **Joe Rumschlag (Maumee, Ohio/Toledo Christian)** and sophomore **Skip Ivery (Columbus, Ohio/Groveport-Madison)** each scored at least 18 points in the meet, not including relays.

Gehle, who also scored more than 20 points in the 2001 NCAC meet, finished first in the decathlon, second in the pole vault, third in the long jump and fifth in the 400 meters. He was also a member of the 1600-meter relay team that finished second. He wound up a provisional NCAA qualifier in the decathlon and just missed the national meet.

Rumschlag was next with 27 points. He finished second in the long jump, fourth in the 100, third in the 200 and second in the triple jump. He was also a member of the first-place 400 relay team.

Gaal scored 18 points, placing second in the decathlon and first in the javelin. His throw of 206 feet in the javelin was good for an NCAC and Wittenberg school record, as well as automatic qualification in the NCAA Division III Championship meet on May 23-25 in St. Paul, Minn. Gaal went on to finish 11th at the national meet with a throw of just over 191 feet.

Ivery won the 110 high hurdles, giving him

a sweep of the event for the 2002 season. Ivery has won the indoor title each of the last two years, but he finished third in the outdoor event in 2001. He also added a third-place finish in the 400 intermediate hurdles and a seventh-place finish in the 100.

Sophomore **Joel Drake (Springfield, Ohio/Shawnee)** scored 10 points by winning an NCAC title in the discus, finishing with a throw of 148-11. Senior **Chris Silliman (Upper Arlington, Ohio/Upper Arlington)** made it a Wittenberg sweep in the discus with a second-place finish. In addition, freshman **Tim Nguyen (Columbus, Ohio/Groveport-Madison)** chipped in with a fourth in the discus and a fourth in the shot put.

In the hurdles, sophomore **Derek Thompson (South Charleston, Ohio/Greenon)** turned in a second in the 400 intermediates and a fourth in the 100 highs. And the Tigers' other top-four finish was turned in by a pair of aforementioned relays. The 400 relay quartet of Rumschlag, sophomore **Alex Yurovitsky (Lyndhurst, Ohio/Richmond Heights)**, junior **Mark Trempe (Springfield, Ohio/St. Paris Graham)** and senior **Jason Jackson (Columbus, Ohio/South)** finished first. The 1600 relay foursome of sophomore **Mike Torsell (Springfield, Ohio/Catholic Central)**, sophomore **Demetrius Ellison (Cleveland, Ohio/Trinity)**, Gehle and Trempe wound up second.

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ALL-NCAC: The 2002 men's track and field outdoor All-NCAC finishers are documented above. In the indoor meet, the Tiger men finished second and placed seven athletes in all-conference standing.

Skip Ivery claimed the team's lone individual title, defending his first-place finish in the 55-meter hurdles by running a personal-best 7.80, a provisional NCAA Division III qualifying time. Ivery also added a personal-best and fifth-place finish in the 55-meter dash.

Rumschlag finished fifth in the triple jump, fifth in the long jump, second in the 55 and second in the 200 in a personal-best and school record time of 23.15. Rounding out his outstanding meet, Rumschlag was one-quarter of the second-place 1600-meter relay team. He was joined by Yurovitsky, Thompson and Torsell.

Gehle finished second in the pole vault and fourth in the high jump just weeks after returning from a broken foot suffered in preseason basketball. Drake finished second in the shot put with a throw of 47-0.75.

On the women's side at the indoor meet, sophomore **Kristen Mumper (Cincinnati, Ohio/Purcell Marian)** bettered her school

record in the triple jump en route to a third-place finish. Sophomore **Kelly Zilli (Dayton, Ohio/Kettering Alter)** captured the team's lone first-place finish in the 800 with a personal-best time of 2:21.89, and she also turned in a fourth in the 1500 and a seventh in the pole vault. Senior **Sarah Weide (Ft. Wayne, Ind./Homestead)** finished fifth in the 1500 and the 800, posting season-best times in both events.

Also in the pole vault, junior **LaRissa O'Neal (Indianapolis, Ind./Broad Ripple)** was fourth with a season-best mark of 8-11.75, **Jackie Spray (Newark, Ohio/Newark)** was fifth. In the long jump, Mumper finished second with a mark of 16-7.25.

All three women's relays scored points, with the 1600 relay quartet of freshman **Marissa Davoll (Cincinnati, Ohio/Anderson)**, Zilli, Weide and sophomore **Mary Blonder (Lake Forest, Ill./Lake Forest)** earning All-NCAC with a top-three finish as they came within .31 of a school record.

The highlight of the women's outdoor meet was sophomore **Geri Woessner (Dayton, Ohio/Oakwood)**, who repeated as the NCAC Field Events Athlete of the Year. She scored a team-best 30 points by finishing first in the heptathlon with a school-record and NCAA provisional qualifying 4176 points, third in the javelin, second in the shot put, third in the long jump and running on the second-place 1600 relay.

Zilli finished third in the 1500 and fourth in the 800, after turning in the fastest time of the meet in the qualifying race. Weide finished third in the 800. Both were also members of the 1600 relay, along with Davoll.

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THE COACH: **Steve Shutt (Allegheny '97)** completed his third and most successful season leading the Tiger men's and women's track and field teams. He was named 2002 NCAC Coach of the Year for men's track after his team romped to the championship by 44 points over defending champion Ohio Wesleyan. It was his first such honor.

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TEAM AWARDS: For the men, the track MVP was Joe Rumschlag and the field MVP was Brian Gehle. The Most Improved Performer was sophomore **Dorian Dixon (Cincinnati, Ohio/Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy)**. And Alex Yurovitsky was given the Spirit Award.

For the women, Kelly Zilli was the track MVP and Kristen Mumper was the field MVP. Most Improved Performer was awarded to junior **Natasha Malackany (Canton, Ohio/Perry)**, and the Spirit Award was given to Sarah Weide.