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Men and Women's Cross Country Reviews

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University Park, IL,
December
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Men and Women's Cross Country Reviews

Blink and you might have missed the 2020 women's and men's cross country seasons at [Governors State University](#), a year unlike any other in the two programs' history.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the teams had their seasons cut in half with four meets scheduled each over six weeks. Cross country was in the unique position of competing this fall for a Chicagoland Collegiate Athletic Conference (CCAC) Championship when other sports like volleyball and soccer were moved to the spring.



Despite the abbreviated seasons, the Jaguars made the most of their opportunities with notable performances. On the women's side, GSU recorded its highest finish ever at the CCAC Championships, finishing sixth out of eight teams. The absence of five schools did not make the season-ending meet any less competitive as three teams were ranked in the Top 25. GSU earned its sixth-place showing by out-scoring IU South Bend and Lincoln, the newest member of the conference

The 2020 campaign saw the emergence of sophomore [Maddie Janssen](#), who proved to be one of the best runners in team history. A defender on the soccer team, Janssen

posted the team's top time in three meets, setting a season-best mark of 20:40.5 at the CCAC's—the second-best time recorded by a Jaguar at the event.

Janssen and soccer teammate [Avery Fountain](#) accounted for the top-five times during the season. Other squad members who competed this season were: Jacqueline Navarrete a junior college transfer from Moraine Valley, first-year student [Kasey Swanson](#), returning starter and team captain Elizabeth Rios and sophomore [Bailey Honn](#) along with first-years [Michelle Luna](#) and [Vashi Black](#).

"We had our best season since 2016," said Head Coach Kevin Kredens, who completed his sixth year with the Jaguars. "We beat some teams and I think that shows to our hard work and perseverance. The CCAC is one of the most competitive cross country conferences in the nation."

Without any seniors on the team, the Jaguars are expected to return all eight runners for 2022.

Like the women's squad, the men's team opened its season September 25 at the Midwest Intercollegiate. From there GSU traveled to the Bethel Invitational in South Bend and to the Midwest Challenge at Taylor University before closing the season November 7 at the CCAC Championships.



Eight schools were represented at the conference meet while five teams chose not to compete. The Jaguars were without their best runner that afternoon in Logan Wetzel, a freshman from Steger. Wetzel earned team MVP honors after clocking the second- and fourth-fastest eight-kilometer times in school history.

His contributions along with those of senior captain Daniel Perez (who never missed a race in three seasons), returning starter Nick Bushey and the freshman duo of Dante Miller and Amaree Gantt helped the team through a challenging season.

The Jaguars were also fortunate to add four members of the soccer team after several runners opted out prior to the start of the season. Trading in their soccer boots for runner's spikes were Cielo Oviedo, Mario Hernandez, Giovanni Garcia and Miguel Navarrete.

"We had a great season and made a lot of strides this year," related Kredens, who oversees both teams at GSU. "Had we not been without our No.1, 3 and 7 runners for the conference meet, we probably would had finished a couple of spots higher. The soccer guys really added to the team, helping our younger runners. As a team, I feel we made improvements and had a breakthrough year."