

# Virginia Tech Cross Country Meet Notes



## Virginia Tech Alumni Invitational

August 31, 2012

Women's Race: 6 p.m. • Men's Race: 6:45 p.m.

Tech Cross Country Course • Blacksburg, Va.

### PREVIEWING THE MEET

• The Virginia Tech cross country team opens its 2012 season as the Hokies host the VT Alumni Invitational at the Tech Cross Country Course in Blacksburg on Friday, Aug. 31. The women are on the course first as they will race four kilometers at 6:00 p.m. The men's race is six kilometers and starts at 6:45 p.m. Virginia Tech, Virginia, Duke, Liberty and Radford are the teams competing. (see page 8 for a course map)

### LAST YEAR'S ALUMNI INVITE

• Last year's VT Alumni Invitational on Sept. 2, 2011, was an unsocred meet used primarily as a tune-up meet for many of Tech's younger runners as they were competing unattached. Leading the way for the Tech men were Ryan Kuhns finishing fourth in 19:51.14 and Brayden Burleigh in fifth at 19:57.00. They were followed by George Carter in sixth (20:04.86) and Pat Woodford in seventh (20:07.88). For the women, Ginny Jones ran unattached and registered a fifth place finish (15:43.41). Current cross country assistant coach Natalie Hall won the race in 14:52.72 running unattached.

### 2012 Cross Country Schedule

Date	Meet	Site	Time/Result
<b>Aug. 31</b>	<b>Virginia Tech Alumni Invitational</b>	<b>Blacksburg, Va.</b>	<b>6 p.m.</b>
<b>Sept. 14</b>	<b>Virginia Tech Invitational</b>	<b>Blacksburg, Va.</b>	6 p.m.
Sept. 28	at Charlotte Invitational	Charlotte, N.C.	3 p.m.
Oct. 13	at Louisville Pre-Nationals	Louisville, Ky.	9:30 a.m.
<b>Oct. 27</b>	<b>ACC Championships</b>	<b>Blacksburg, Va.</b>	<b>10 a.m.</b>
<b>Nov. 2</b>	<b>Hokie Open Race</b>	<b>Blacksburg, Va.</b>	<b>4:30 p.m.</b>
Nov. 9	at Southeast Regional	Charlotte, N.C.	12 p.m.
Nov. 17	at NCAA Championship	Louisville, Ky.	12 p.m.
*Home Meets in <b>Bold</b>			

### MEDIA INFORMATION

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 Blacksburg, VA 24061



## Virginia Tech Quick Facts

### GENERAL

Location.....	Blacksburg, Va.
Enrollment.....	31,000
Founded.....	1872
Colors.....	Chicago maroon and burnt orange
Nickname.....	Hokies
Conference.....	Atlantic Coast
President.....	Charles W. Steger
Director of Athletics.....	Jim Weaver
Home Course.....	Tech Cross Country Course
Athletics Website.....	www.hokiesports.com
Cross Country Website.....	www.hokiesports.com/cc
Cross Country Twitter.....	www.twitter.com/VT_Track
Athletics Facebook.....	www.facebook.com/hokiesports

### COACHING STAFF

Director of Track & Field/XC.....	Dave Cianelli
Alma Mater, Yr.....	Bowling Green, 1977
Overall Year.....	28th
Year at Virginia Tech.....	12th
Cianelli Office Phone.....	(540) 231-3094
Cianelli E-mail.....	dcianell@vt.edu
Head XC/Distance Coach.....	Ben Thomas
Alma Mater, Yr.....	Virginia Tech, 1992
Overall Year.....	18th
Year at Virginia Tech.....	12th
Thomas Office Phone.....	(540) 231-9978
Thomas E-mail.....	bethoma1@vt.edu
Assistant XC/Distance Coach.....	Natalie Hall (Virginia Tech, 2009)
Technical Director.....	Stacey Vidt (Virginia Tech, 2003)

### HISTORY

All-Americans.....	10 (5 Men, 5 Women)
All-Region Performances.....	44 (22 Men, 22 Women)
All-ACC Performances.....	12 (7 Men, 5 Women)
Men's Team NCAA Appearances.....	4
Best Finish.....	4th, 1987
Women's Team NCAA Appearances.....	1
Best Finish.....	18th, 2006
Last All-American.....	Will Mulherin (2011, 30th)
Men's Best Regional Finish.....	1st, 1987
Women's Best Regional Finish.....	3rd, 2006

### 2011 REVIEW

Men's ACC Finish.....	T-4th
Women's ACC Finish.....	8th
Men's NCAA Regional Finish.....	4th
Women's NCAA Regional Finish.....	6th
All-Conference Runners Returning.....	
.....	Will Mulherin (7th), Michael Hammond (10th)
All-Regional Runners Returning.....	
.....	Will Mulherin (5th), Michael Hammond (19th)
.....	Madalyn Knuckols (23rd)

## Hokie Notes

### ALL-AMERICAN RETURNS

- Redshirt senior Will Mulherin returns after earning All-America honors a year ago. On at the 10k course at the LaVerne Gibson Championship Cross Country Course at the Wabash Valley Family Sports Center in Terre Haute, Ind., Mulherin ran a career-best time of 29:58.1.
- With the feat, he became Tech's first All-American since 1989 (Brian Walter), which was also the last time a Hokie ran at the NCAA meet.

### WELCOME BACK

- The Hokie men welcome back all seven competitors from last season's squad that took fourth at the Southeast Regional. The team includes All-American Will Mulherin and All-Region performer, Michael Hammond.

### TAKING A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

- Sophomore Sara Rapp was one of the top performers on last year's women's team, leading the team at both the Charlotte Invitational and the Indiana State Pre-National Invitational.

### CHAMPIONSHIP COURSES

- This season, Virginia Tech will have the opportunity to train on the conference's championship course as Virginia Tech will host the ACC Championship on Oct. 27.
- On Oct. 13, the Hokies will travel to the Louisville Pre-Nationals in Louisville, Ky., where they will compete on the course that will host the NCAA Championship.

### REGIONAL RANKINGS

- In the United States Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association's (USTFCCCA) Preseason NCAA Regional Cross Country rankings, the Hokie men are ranked fourth in the Southeast Region while the women are sixth.

### COACHING CHANGE

- With the departure of Jennifer McGranahan as the assistant cross country coach, former Tech athlete and volunteer assistant coach Natalie Hall has assumed the role.
- Hall ran under Coach Thomas for five years and owns school records in the 5k and mile. In 2009, she earned All-American honors in the mile.

### TEAMMATES

- Redshirt freshman Darren Barlow, sophomore Brayden Burleigh, redshirt senior Michael Hammond (Midlothian High School; Midlothian, Va.)
- Redshirt junior Jared Berman and junior Taylor Crosson (James W. Robison High School; Fairfax, Va.)
- Junior Grant Pollock and redshirt junior Brian Welch (Mills Godwin High School; Richmond, Va.)
- Juniors Courtney Dobbs and Madalyn Nuckols (Deep Run High School; Glen Allen, Va.)
- Juniors Paige Kwartunas and Alex Watt (West Springfield High School; Springfield, Va.)



## Coaching Staff

### THE THOMAS FILE

#### Virginia Tech (2001-Present)

- 13 NCAA All-Americans (cross country, 2003, 2007, 2008, 2011; 800, 2012; 1,500m, 2004, 2011,2012; DMR, 2007; 5,000m, 2008, 2010; mile, 2009, 2011)
- 18th-place women's team finish at 2006 NCAA Cross Country Championships
- 12 NCAA Championships cross country participants
- 23 NCAA All-Region cross country runners
- One NCAA Southeast Region cross country champion
- 10 All-ACC cross country runners
- 1 All-BIG EAST cross country runner
- 17 ACC Champions (track)
- 1 BIG EAST Champion (track)
- 30 school records (track)

#### Brevard College (1999-01)

- One three-time NAIA National Champion
- One two-time Olympian
- Two Cross Country World Championship qualifiers
- 2000 NAIA Region XII men's and women's team champions
- 1999 NAIA Region XII Coach of the Year
- 1999 NAIA Region XII men's team champion

#### Appalachian State (1995-99)

- One two-time NCAA National Champion
- 1996, 98 & 99 North Carolina Collegiate team champion
- 1996 Southern Conference champion
- 1996 Southern Conference Coach of the Year

### HEAD CROSS COUNTRY/DISTANCE COACH BEN THOMAS

Ben Thomas has been Virginia Tech's head cross country coach and distance coach since 2001 and now has 17 years of collegiate coaching experience. During 11 seasons coaching at Tech, the Hokies have emerged as contenders in not only the Atlantic Coast Conference and the NCAA Southeast Region, but the entire nation. Thomas is extremely familiar with the Hokie program, having competed in cross country and middle distance for Tech from 1987 to 1992.



On the track, Thomas has coached a distance crew that has broken school track records in the outdoor 800m, 1,500m, 3,000m steeplechase, indoor 1,000m, mile, DMR, 3000m and 5,000m as well as the outdoor 4x800m, the 4x1,500m and the distance medley relays. Last season alone, Thomas' distance unit had three individual ACC Champions. Will Mulherin won his third ACC outdoor title at 5000m, the only athlete to do so in the history of the ACC. He also set the outdoor school record in the 5,000-meter event at 13:41.06. Ryan Witt won the ACC 800m title indoors and Jason Cusack won the 3k Steeplechase at the ACC outdoor meet. Michael Hammond earned All-American honors in the outdoor 1500 finishing 4th, and also garnered All-ACC accolades in the outdoor 1,500-meter run as the runner-up. Sammy Dow broke the school-record in the 3,000-meter steeplechase and qualified for the NCAA Championships.

In cross country, Mulherin earned All-American honors at the 2011 NCAA Championships and then men's team had their best finish at the NCAA Regionals since 1992, finishing 4th. Hammond and Mulherin both had All-ACC and All-Regional finishes as well. Madalyn Nuckols capped her 2011 season by earning NCAA All-Region honors for the first time in her career leading the women to a sixth place team finish. In addition, the 2011 women's team earned USTFCCCA All-Academic accolades with a 3.19 team grade point average.

In 2008, Tasmin Fanning placed ninth at the U.S. Olympic Trials in the 5000-meter event, setting a new school record of 15:37.73. Thomas also guided Fanning to two All-America performances at the NCAA Cross Country Championships. She placed third in 2008, the highest finish ever by a Virginia Tech athlete, and 12th out of 255 runners in 2007. Thomas led the women's squad to the best season in program history in 2006 by posting an 18th-place finish in their first-ever appearance at the NCAA Championships. The Hokie women reached the national meet following a third-place effort at the NCAA Southeast Regional behind an unprecedented five all-region performers. The men captured their best-ever point total at the ACC Outdoor Championships and had their best performance in the NCAA Southeast Regional since 1995. Paul LaPenna became the first Hokie to earn all-region honors since 2003, while Cornwall was named the ACC Freshman of the Year.

Thomas served as the men's and women's distance coach at the University of Georgia for six months before arriving in Blacksburg, and prior to that he was the head track and field and cross country coach at Brevard College. At Brevard, Thomas was named 1999 NAIA Region XII Coach of the Year after leading the men's cross country team to the NAIA Region XII title. Before Brevard, Thomas was the women's cross country coach and assistant track coach at Appalachian State University from 1995-1999.

A native of Lynchburg, Va., Thomas earned a B.A. in English from Virginia Tech in 1992 before completing coursework for an M.A. in education from Lynchburg College in 1999. Thomas began his coaching career with the track & field team at E.C. Glass High School (1992-94) in Lynchburg and coaching cross country at Blacksburg High School (1994-95).

Thomas, his wife, Ann McGranahan, and their daughter, Reily Kathleen Thomas, reside in Blacksburg.

## ASSISTANT COACHES/SUPPORT STAFF



Natalie Hall  
Assistant  
Distance Coach



Stacey Vidt  
Technical  
Director



## Coaching Staff

### THE CIANELLI FILE

#### Virginia Tech (2001-Present)

- 12 NCAA individual champions, the first in Virginia Tech history
- 124 All-Americans
- Two NCAA East Region team championships
- Six ACC team championships
- 99 ACC individual champions
- 12 BIG EAST Conference champions
- Had 19 athletes earn 24 All-America honors in 2012, the most in his coaching tenure
- 2012 USTFCAA Men's Indoor and Outdoor Southeast Region Coach of the Year
- 2012 ACC Men's Outdoor Coach of the Year
- Seven-time ACC Coach of the Year
- 10-time USTFCCCA Southeast Region Coach of the Year

#### Southern Methodist University (1988-2001)

- Eight top-10 finishes at the women's NCAA Track & Field Championships
- Seven top-10 finishes at the men's NCAA Track & Field Championships
- 1995 men's and women's Southwest Conference cross country champions
- Individual achievements included 19 Olympic and World Championships competitors, 27 NCAA champions, 123 All-Americans, 95 conference champions

#### Cal-Poly San Luis Obispo (1985-1988)

- 1985-87 NCAA Division II women's cross country champion
- 1985-87 NCAA Division II women's outdoor track runner-up
- 1985-87 CCAA women's cross country conference champion
- 1985-88 CCAA women's outdoor track conference champion
- Individual achievements include one NCAA Division II Champion and 13 All-Americans

#### By The Numbers

260 All-Americans · 191 Conference champions · 98 Percent graduation rate at Virginia Tech · 39 NCAA champions · 80 School records at Virginia Tech · 24 Olympic and World championship qualifiers · 17 Top-10 women's NCAA finishes · 11 Top-10 men's NCAA finishes · 3 NCAA Division II cross country national championships · 3 NCAA Division II outdoor track runners-up

### DIRECTOR OF TRACK & FIELD and CROSS COUNTRY DAVE CIANELLI

Entering his 12th year as Director of Virginia Tech Track & Field and Cross Country, Dave Cianelli has built the Hokie program into one of the elite programs in the Atlantic Coast Conference and the nation. Since Cianelli's arrival in the fall of 2001, Virginia Tech athletes have produced 12 NCAA individual titles, 124 NCAA All-America performances and 109 individual conference titles. In addition, Hokie teams have finished in the national top-10 seven times and the national top-20 18 times since 2005.

#### NCAA, REGIONAL AND ACC SUCCESS

The 2012 Hokies continued to demonstrate why they are one of the nation's elite track and field programs. The men's team finished fifth place at the 2012 NCAA Outdoor Championships equaling their program-best finish from 2011. The men also finished a program best tied for eighth at the NCAA Indoor Championships. In addition, the men won their first ever ACC Outdoor Team Championship in 2012 to go along with ACC Indoor Championship they won in 2011. Marcel Lomnický (35 lb. weight throw at indoors) and Alexander Ziegler (hammer throw at outdoors) both won NCAA National Championships in 2012. Other top finishes at the NCAA Championships included Hasheem Halim in the triple jump (3rd indoors, 4th outdoors), Darrell Wesh (4th in the 100 meters at outdoors), Matthias Treff (3rd in the javelin at outdoors), Michael Hammond (4th in the 1500 meters at outdoors) and Ziegler (3rd in the 35 lb. weight throw at indoors). The women finished a solid fourth at the ACC Outdoor Championship and the team produced five NCAA All-Americans with freshman Martina Schultze leading the way with All-American honors both indoor and outdoor in the pole vault.

#### USA AND INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

2012 brought another outstanding year for the Hokies at the U.S. Olympic Trials and international competitions. Virginia Tech had three individuals at the U.S. Olympic Trials in Eugene, Ore. Darrell Wesh in the 100 meters, Keith Ricks in the 200 meters and Ronnie Black in the high jump. In addition, Wesh and Ricks were both selected to represent the USA at the North American, Central American and Caribbean Championships in Mexico. Wesh brought home the gold medal as a member of the 4x100 meter relay and Ricks won the bronze medal in the 200 meters. In the summer of 2011, the Hokies were well represented at the United States Senior and Junior Outdoor Track & Field National Championships. Michael Hammond qualified for the final of the senior 1,500-meter run and finished 13th, while teammates Taylor Crosson and Courtney Dobbs finished second and third, respectively in the 5,000-meters at the USA Junior Outdoor Track & Field Championships. In 2010, Jared Berman placed second in the 3,000-meter steeplechase at the USA Junior Championships and advanced to the IAAF World Junior Championships and where he made the final, placing ninth.

In 2008, Queen Harrison made history when she earned a spot on the U.S. Olympic team, by finishing second in the 400-meter hurdles at the U.S. Olympic Trials to qualify in the event. Harrison was the first Tech track and field athlete to represent any country in the Olympics and only the second Hokie to become an American Olympian in any sport, following Bimbo Coles who represented the United States in basketball in 1988.

#### COACH OF THE YEAR HONORS

Cianelli's illustrious career is proven by the awards he has collected throughout his career. For the 2012 season, he was awarded both the Men's Indoor and Outdoor Southeast Region Coach of the Year award by the USTFCCCA. Cianelli was also named the Men's ACC Outdoor Coach of the Year for leading the Hokies to their first-ever ACC Outdoor title. He has been selected as the ACC Coach of the Year seven times and the USTFCCCA Region Coach of the year 10 times.

Cianelli has assembled one of the most accomplished coaching staffs in America. Associate head men's and women's track & field coach Greg Jack has produced nine NCAA individual national championships with his throwers. Jack has multiple Men's Indoor and Outdoor Southeast Region Assistant Coach of the Year honors to his credit and was named National Throws Coach of the Year in 2006. Former Hokie and NAIA Region XII Coach of the Year Ben Thomas is the cross country coach and distance coach and has produced 14 All-Americans in cross country and track during his tenure at Tech. Thomas is assisted by former Hokie Natalie Hall. Long-time assistant Bob Phillips, a former All-American for the Hokies, coaches the pole vaulters. Phillips earned recognition in 2011 as the USTFCCCA's Men's Indoor Regional Assistant Coach of the Year. Tech introduced Charles Foster as the sprints, hurdles and jumps coach in the fall of 2009. Foster quickly made a reputation for himself, earning USTFCCCA Regional Coach of the Year honors for the women's sprints and hurdles. Foster is a former world record holder in the 110-meter hurdles and a U.S. Olympian in 1976. Under Foster's coaching, Queen Harrison won three NCAA national titles in the hurdles in 2010 and was selected by Track and Field News as the collegiate athlete of the year and received the 2010 Bowerman Award as the most outstanding female collegiate track and field athlete. Foster was honored in 2008 by the USTFCCCA as Men's National Coach of the Year for sprints and hurdles.

#### ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The Virginia Tech track & field and cross country programs continue to achieve at a high level in the classroom. Frances Dowd won the NCAA Elite 89 Award in 20012 for the indoor season, honoring the student-athlete with the highest GPA at the NCAA Championships. Kelly Phillips became a two-time Capital One Academic All-American in 2011 with her selection to the first team. She also won the NCAA Elite 88 Award, which recognizes the true essence of the student-athlete by honoring the individual who has reached the pinnacle of competition at the national championship level in his or her sport, while also achieving the highest academic standard among his or her peers. For the 2011 track season, 16 total individuals were named to the All-ACC Academic team. In addition, the women's cross country team earned USTFCCCA All-Academic accolades for the seventh season in a row. In 2010, both Matej Muza and Kristi Castlin were honored as the ACC scholar-athletes of the year for track and field.

#### PREVIOUS COACHING EXPERIENCE

Prior to Tech, Cianelli gained plenty of experience in 13 seasons as an assistant coach at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. With the Mustangs, Cianelli worked with 19 Olympic and World Championship competitors, 27 NCAA individual champions, 123 All-Americans and 95 individual conference champions. Cameron Taylor of New Zealand was a quarterfinalist in the 200m at the 1992 Olympics, and Tytti Reho won the 2000 NCAA championship in the 800m. In cross country, both the men's and women's teams captured the 1995 Southwest Conference titles and earned a spot in the NCAA Championships. During 13 years at SMU, the track & field teams finished in the top-10 nationally 15 separate times.

Cianelli served as the assistant women's track & field and cross country coach at Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo from 1985-88, where he helped the cross country team to the NCAA Division II National Championship three consecutive seasons; and the outdoor track & field teams finished as the runner-up at the NCAA Division II Championships three years in a row. Individual honors during his four years included 13 All-Americans and one NCAA champion.

Cianelli started his coaching career at San Marcos High School in Santa Barbara, Calif., as the head track & field coach from 1982-84. In three seasons, he coached seven junior national qualifiers in the heptathlon and decathlon.



## Men's Roster

Name	Class	Hometown	High School	Major
Darren Barlow	r-Fr.	Midlothian, Va.	Midlothian	Engineering
Jared Berman	r-Jr.	Fairfax, Va.	James W. Robinson	Civil and Environmental Engineering
Brayden Burleigh	So.	Midlothian, Va.	Midlothian	University Studies
Thomas Curtin	So	Leesburg, Va.	Loudoun County	University Studies
Jason Cusack	Sr.	Griswold, Conn.	Griswold	Industrial Design
Leoule Degfae	Jr.	Alexandria, Va.	Thomas A. Edison	Business
Kevin Dowd	Jr.	Fairfax, Va.	Fairfax	Environmental Policy and Planning
Ryan Hagen	Sr.	Sterling, Va.	Potomac Falls	Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise
Michael Hammond	r-Sr.	Midlothian, Va.	Midlothian	Economics
Ryan Kuhns	r-Fr.	Fredericksburg, Va.	Riverbend	University Studies
Will Mulherin	r-Sr.	Yorktown, Va.	Tabb	Engineering
Grant Pollock	Jr.	Richmond, Va.	Mills Godwin	Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise
Brian Welch	r-Jr.	Richmond, Va.	Mills Godwin	Civil Engineering

## Women's Roster

Name	Class	Hometown	High School	Major
Kaila Blackburn	Fr.	Richmond, Va.	Monacan	
Camille Bouvet	So.	Bathesda, Md.	Walter Johnson	Wood Science
Stephanie Cario	Jr.	Mechanicsville, Va.	Lee Davis	Psychology
Taylor Crosson	Jr.	Fairfax Station, Va.	James W. Robinson	Business
Courtney Dobbs	Jr.	Glen Allen, Va.	Deep Run	Accounting
Frances Dowd	r-Jr.	Fairfax, Va.	Fairfax	Environmental Policy and Planning
Hannah Gray	Fr.	Chesapeake, Va.	Grassfield	Communications
Ashley Hayes	Fr.	Severna Park, Md.	Severna Park	Architecture
Lauren Jaeger	Fr.	Blacksburg, Va.	Blacksburg	Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise
Ginny Jones	So.	Chalfont, Pa.	Central Bucks East	Architecture
Paige Kwartunas	Jr.	Springfield, Va.	West Springfield	Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise
Shalonda Mitchell	So.	Richmond, Va.	Varina	Business
Shannon Morton	Fr.	Chesapeake, Va.	Indian River	
Britani Myers	Fr.	Strasburg, Va.	John Handley	Biology
Madalyn Nuckols	Jr.	Glen Allen, Va.	Deep Run	Undecided
Sarah Rapp	So.	Raleigh, N.C.	Cardinal Gibbons	Psychology
Katarina Smiljanec	So.	Karlovac, Croatia	General Secondary	Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise
Amanda Smith	So.	Chesapeake, Va.	Grassfield	Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise
Leigh Ann Soistmann	Fr.	Yorktown, Va.	Tabb	Interior Design
Alex Watt	Jr.	Springfield, Va.	West Springfield	Interior Design
Sarah Woynicz	Fr.	Raleigh, N.C.	Middle Creek	Architecture





## 2012 Season Meet-by-Meet Results

### Women

	VT ALUMNI INVITE	VT INVITE	CHARLOTTE INVITE	LOUISVILLE PRE-NATL.	ACC CHAMP.	HOKIE OPEN	REGIONAL CHAMP.	NCAA CHAMP.
DISTANCE	4k							
DATE	8/31/12	9/14/12	9/28/12	10/13/12	10/27/12	11/2/12	11/9/12	11/17/12
FIELD								
Kaila Blackburn								
Camille Bouvet								
Stephanie Cairo								
Taylor Crosson								
Courtney Dobbs								
Frances Dowd								
Hannah Gray								
Ashley Hayes								
Lauren Jaeger								
Ginny Jones								
Paige Kwartunas								
Shalonda Mitchell								
Shannon Morton								
Britani Myers								
Madalyn Nuckols								
Sarah Rapp								
Katherine Sheridan								
Katarina Smiljanec								
Amanda Smith								
Leigh Ann Soistmann								
Alex Watt								
Sarah Woynicz								
Team Finish								



## The Tech Cross Country Course

During the past 19 years, Virginia Tech's cross country course has provided many benefits to the program and has paid dividends for the Tech cross country team. The course has attracted several of the nation's top programs and been the site of some of the state's largest high school meets.

"In conjunction with our indoor and outdoor track facilities, the cross country course makes Virginia Tech unsurpassed in the quality of facilities," said Director of Track & Field and Cross Country Dave Cianelli. "The training aspect of the course is also great."

Tech has the luxury of competing and training on a course designed solely for cross country competition, affording the team an opportunity to have exclusive rights to the use of the facility.

Over the years, the all-grass course has provided an ideal surface for racing and training. Located on the southwest end of campus near the corner of Southgate Drive and Route 460, the terrain gently rolls through the cornfields and wooded locations typical of the Tech surroundings.

Opened for racing in 1993, the course now starts and finishes behind the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. It covers a total of 3.1 miles, passes historical Smithfield Plantation and crosses Stroubles Creek. There is also a five-mile version of the course for the men.

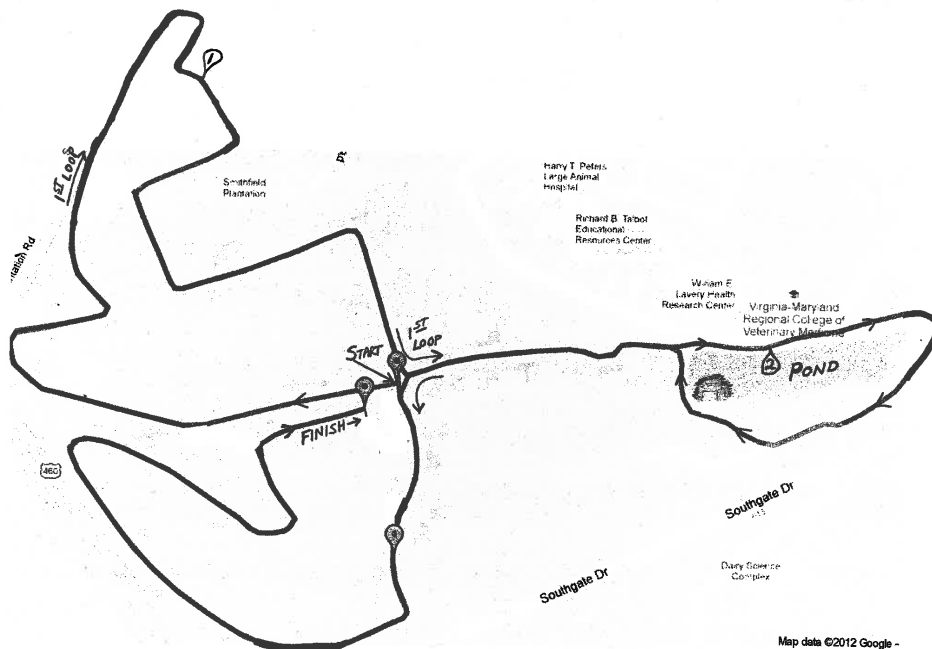
"I think it's one of the nicest settings for a cross country course I have ever seen," Cianelli said. "The fact that it is on campus makes it ideal for our teams to train and compete."

Another key trait of the course is its proximity to campus facilities. Rector Field House allows athletes to warm up in perfect conditions.

The Hokies will host four meets on their home course this year, starting with the Virginia Tech Alumni Invitational on Aug. 31.

"There are very few schools with a cross country course and two tracks so close together," cross country coach Ben Thomas said. "The competition facilities here are unbeatable."

### Women's 4K Course



### Men's 6K Course

