

Schnell Candidate for NCAA Woman of Year

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UNCG cross country/track and field redshirt senior Ashley Schnell has been nominated for the 22nd annual NCAA Woman of the Year Award. A total of 429 female student-athletes, spanning NCAA Division I, II and III

were nominated for the award, which honors graduating female student-athletes who have distinguished themselves throughout their collegiate careers in the areas of academic achievement, athletics excellence, service and leadership.

"This is obviously a great honor for Ashley and UNCG," head cross country and track coach Linh Nguyen said. "I can't think of a better choice to represent our school and program in the NCAA Woman of the Year process. Ashley was the model student-athlete and achieved at a high level both academically and athletically."

Schnell has already picked up numerous honors and accolades this season as she was named a Capital One Academic All-America after finishing her career with a perfect 4.0 GPA majoring in musical performance. She also earned Third Team Academic All-America honors last year, becoming the fifth UNCG student-athlete all-time to earn two Academic All-America awards. The Academic All-America honor is the latest in a long line of accolades for Schnell, who picked up an NCAA winter sports postgraduate scholarship and the Southern Conference's Dorothy Hicks Graduate Scholarship this year. She is a two-time USTFCCA All-Academic selection and has earned Academic All-SoCon honors in each of her two years of competition at UNCG. She was the league's Student-Athlete of the Week three times in 2011-12.

This season, Schnell won her second straight SoCon cross country title to earn SoCon Runner of the Year honors for the second consecutive season. She finished fifth at the NCAA Southeast Regional, in school-record time, to become the first female runner in school history to qualify for the NCAA Championships. There, she missed reaching All-America status by just 16 seconds. In indoor track this season, Schnell won SoCon titles in the mile and distance medley relay, setting league records in both events. In outdoor track, she won the SoCon title in the 1,500 meters for the second straight year and qualified for the NCAA East Preliminary Round in the 5,000 meters. She graduated with 10 school records to her credit in cross country, indoor track and outdoor track.

Each year, every NCAA member college and university is encouraged to honor its top graduating female student-athlete by submitting her name for consideration. Conferences then select one or two women from the nominees to represent their conference. Those names are then sent to the Woman of the Year selection committee, which chooses the top 10 honorees in each division.

From among those 30 candidates, the selection committee determines the top three in each division and announces the top nine finalists in September. Finally, members of the NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics will vote from among the finalists to determine the 2012 NCAA Woman of the Year. The top 30 honorees will be honored, and the 2012 NCAA Woman of the Year winner will be announced, at the annual ceremony in Indianapolis on Oct. 14.

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Photo Courtesy: Ashley Schnell, SoCon Athletics