

Shields, Werner Pace Bobcats at Nationals

Written by Whitney Noble

Saturday, 26 October 2013 00:46

Kerry Werner (Birdsboro, Pa.) and Emily Shields (Salisbury, N.C.) each recorded a top-five finish in their respective short track cross country races to earn a spot on the podium, and pace the Lees-McRae College cycling team to a tie for second in the team omnium on Friday on the first day of the USA Cycling Collegiate Mountain Bike

National Championships at the Beech Mountain Ski Resort.

Fort Lewis College holds a narrow two-point advantage in the team omnium standings over Lees-McRae and Marian University, compiling 158 points on Friday compared to 156 for both Lees-McRae and Marian. The University of Colorado – Boulder is fourth with 123 points, followed by Colorado State University in fifth with 98.

Werner led off the day for the Bobcats in the men's short track, finishing third behind Boulder's Samuel Morrison and Chris Baddick, as rookie Luke Vrouwenvelder (Chapel Hill, N.C.) placed 10th for the Bobcats. Gunnar Bergey (Harleysville, Pa.) finished just outside of the top 20 in 21st, as Cody Phillips (Altadena, Calif.) and Davis Bentley (Mill Valley, Calif.) placed 38th and 44th, respectively.

The Bobcats jumped into title contention with an impressive performance in the women's short track, placing all six riders in the top 17, including a trio in the top 10. Emily Shields led the way in fifth, making a late charge with an expertly executed attack on the final lap to earn a spot on the podium. Her twin sister Katherine Shields (Salisbury, N.C.) finished close behind in seventh, as Emma Klingaman (Idyllwild, Calif.) made her nationals debut in 10th.

Sophomore Erin Donohue (Norwich, Vt.) followed closely in 12th, as Hailey Sarausky (Littleton, N.H.) and Mackenzie Filippi (Cary, N.C.) placed 15th and 17th, respectively, to propel the Bobcats into a tie for second in the team omnium.

The Bobcats put themselves in prime positions for Saturday's downhill competition in the afternoon's qualifying heats, with Sarausky and Eric Bercume (Barre, Mass.) each earning a spot among the top 10 qualifiers. Phillips qualified in 11th, as Werner and Brian Jorgensen (Bend, Ore.) came in 18th and 19th, respectively.

Lees-McRae returns to the course on Saturday for perhaps the toughest test of the weekend, with the men lining up for cross country at 8:30 a.m., followed by the women at 11:30 a.m. The Bobcats will round out the day with the downhill finals at 4 p.m.

Photo Courtesy: Kerry Werner, LMC Athletics