

## Werner Tops Podium, Bobcats Third at Nationals

Written by Whitney Noble

Monday, 28 October 2013 08:32

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Kerry Werner (Birdsboro, Pa.) captured the individual omnium for the second time in his career as the Lees-McRae College cycling team placed a total of five riders on the individual omnium podiums en route

to a third-place finish at the USA Cycling Collegiate Mountain Bike National Championships at the Beech Mountain Ski Resort on Sunday.

Sunday's competition came down to a battle between the top three teams in the nation, with Fort Lewis College holding off a final-day charge by Marian University to claim the team omnium title with a three-day total of 732 points. Marian's Sunday surge proved just enough to jump into second in the omnium standings, narrowly edging Lees-McRae for second with 658 points, only 12 more than the Bobcats' total of 646.

The Bobcats easily held off Lindsey Wilson College for the team bronze, as Lindsey Wilson finished 180 points behind Lees-McRae in fourth with 466 markers. Colorado State University was fifth with 415, followed by University of Colorado – Boulder (401), University of Vermont (340), Lindenwood University (309), Cumberland University (292), and University of Wyoming (291).

Werner proved to be one of the top stories of the weekend for the Bobcats, running away with

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the individual omnium title with a three-day total of 419 points, claiming the stars and stripes jersey by a margin of 178. The individual omnium title is Werner's second in the mountain bike discipline and fourth overall, entering this season as the reigning national champion in cyclocross after topping that podium in each of the last two years.

Cody Phillips (Altadena, Calif.) surged onto the podium with an impressive run to the semifinals of the dual slalom competition, finishing seven spots higher than his qualifying run to claim the bronze in the individual omnium with 196 points. Gunnar Bergey (Harleysville, Pa.) grabbed the final spot on the podium in fifth, as Brian Jorgensen (Bend, Ore.) finished eighth in the omnium standings with totals of 141 and 83 points, respectively.

Hailey Sarausky (Littleton, N.H.) turned in the top overall performance for the Bobcats on the women's side, earning the fourth spot on the individual omnium standings with a three-day total of 307 points, just one marker shy of a tie for the bronze.

The Bobcats kicked off the day Sunday with the first-ever team relay, finishing third and claiming the bronze in the event with a time of 15:00.90, nearly one minute and 10 seconds better than the fourth-place team from Cumberland. The team from Marian crossed the line first to win the national title with a time of 14:50.73, following by Fort Lewis in second with a mark of 14:56.10.

Phillips and Werner followed with a pair of impassioned performances in the dual slalom, each

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earning a spot on the podium in fourth and fifth, respectively. Werner was perhaps the biggest surprise of the afternoon, improving upon his qualifying run by 13 spots and narrowly missing a chance at the semifinals. Phillips made a strong run through the field as well, making it to the semifinal round and finishing fourth after a slipped chain on his first semifinal run.

Eric Bercume (Barre, Mass.) ran into a spot of bad luck in the first round, missing a gate on the first run and charging through the course on the second run to make up the difference, only to have the second-round berth slip through his fingers when his wheel slipped at the line.

Sarausky and Laura Wright (Apex, N.C.) both turned in a strong performance in the women's dual slalom, each narrowly missing out on a spot in the quarterfinals after taking on two of the event's top qualifiers.

Werner earned a spot on the podium in three of the weekend's four individual events, finishing second in cross country, third in short track, and fifth in dual slalom while anchoring the team relay on the bell lap. Luke Vrouwenvelder (Chapel Hill, N.C.) posted his top individual performance of the weekend in Saturday's cross country race, finishing close behind Werner in fifth to earn his first career podium at collegiate nationals.

Davis Bentley (Mill Valley, Calif.) recorded his top finish of the weekend in the cross country race, placing 17th, as Matthew Clements (New Market, Md.) finished 14th in the downhill. Bergey placed 15th in cross country, while Bercume turned in a top-10 performance in the

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downhill on Saturday.

Emily Shields (Salisbury, N.C.) posted a pair of individual top-10 performances on the weekend, finishing fifth in the short track and sixth in cross country, as twin sister Katherine Shields (Salisbury, N.C.) placed seventh and 11th, respectively. Freshman Emma Klingaman (Idyllwild, Calif.) added a pair of top-10's as well, finishing eighth in cross country and 10th in the short track.

Erin Donohue (Norwich, Vt.) placed 12th in the short track and 18th in cross country, as Sarausky finished third in the downhill to highlight her weekend. Mackenzie Filippi (Cary, N.C.) finished 17th in the short track and 22nd in cross country, as Wright posted a pair of top-20 performances in the dual slalom and downhill.