

SOCON XC CHAMPIONSHIPS SATURDAY

Written by Sean Jones

Thursday, 31 October 2013 06:57

The 2013 Southern Conference Men's and Women's Cross Country Championships, hosted by Samford, is set to begin at Veteran's Park in Birmingham, Ala., on Saturday, Nov. 2. The event begins with the

men's 8K race at 10 a.m., followed by the women's 5K at 10:45 a.m. The event will be concluded with an awards ceremony to honor top team and individual performances.

The UNCG and Furman men's cross country teams were tabbed as preseason co-favorites in the coaches' poll and will look to stop defending champion Appalachian State from taking home a second straight title. The Spartans are led by two-time SoCon Runner of the Year Paul Chelimo and 2012 All-SoCon performer Paul Katam. Chelimo is gunning for his third consecutive first-place finish at the SoCon Championship. Furman will look to Tripp Hurt, a member of last season's All-SoCon First Team, to pace its squad as it looks to finish out the season on top.

The men's race will also feature two-time SoCon Runners of the Week James Howard-Smith (Appalachian State), Raeven Lantz (The Citadel) and Luis Vargas (Elon), as well as SoCon Runner of the Week selections Lucas Cotter (Chattanooga) and Kyle McFoy (Appalachian State).

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Elon's women's team was chosen as the preseason favorite and hopes to cap the year with a SoCon title. The Phoenix finished just four points behind champion Appalachian State at last year's championship race. Elon's Allyson Oram will look to lead the Phoenix to a team win and improve from her 11th-place finish at last year's championship. Samford's Lauren D'Alessio is back and attempting to defend her individual title from 2012 and give the Bulldogs a shot at a first-place finish.

The women's race will also feature two-time SoCon Runners of the Week Danielle McKee (The Citadel) and Teghan Henderson (Chattanooga), along with SoCon Runner of the Week selections **Kayla Schneider (Appalachian State and Watauga High School)**, Shaina Sumney (UNCG) and Allie Buchalski (Furman).

For complete results and photos from the championship, log onto www.soconsports.com.