Welcome to the January edition of Nazareth College cross-country / track and field newsletter! This edition has a cross-country focus as we just finished a season to remember! Our women’s team reached new heights among division III completion while our men’s team added many key pieces that make the future look bright. Other exciting news, we have added two more assistant coaches, Mike Heymann, whose profile is listed below and volunteer assistant coach, Julie Orlando. Julie comes from in-conference rival, Ithaca College, where she competed mainly as a pole-vaulter. As an assistant at Nazareth, Julie will work with men and womens’ pole-vaulters. Jen Adams, a graduate assistant from last year, has stepped down. In all we have six coaches on roster: Head Coach, James Goss, assistant coaches, Rob Castor, Tim Giagios, Charles Infurna, Mike Heymann, and Julie Orlando.

Coaches Spotlight – Mike Heymann

For those who do not know me (I have probably raced against a fair amount of you), my name is Mike Heymann. I am not only attending Nazareth College in pursuit of a Master’s degree in Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL), but I am working as a graduate assistant coach with men’s and women’s distance athletes.

I am originally from Tully, NY, where I graduated from Tully Central High School. After high school, I attended the State University of New York at Plattsburgh, where I studied Childhood Education 1-6, with a concentration in English. While at Plattsburgh, I competed for the school’s cross-country and track and field teams. As a cross-country runner, I earned All-American honors three times, along with All-Atlantic Region and All-SUNYAC honors four-times. Despite all of my individual accolades, my fondest memory came in 2008, when Plattsburgh Men’s Cross-Country team qualified for the DIII NCAA Cross-Country Championships, ending a decade long drought for the program. As a track and field athlete, I specialized in the long distance events, primarily competing in the 3,000 and 5,000-meter run during the indoor season and the 5,000-meter run and 10,000-meter run during the outdoor season. I earned All-American honors four times, twice in the indoor 5,000-meter run and twice in the 10,000-meter run. I was named All-SUNYAC seven times and won six individual titles. According to Claremont Mudd Scripp’s Historians report, my indoor personal record in 5,000 meter-run is the tenth fastest time in Division III Men’s Indoor Track and Field.

In the years that I have been involved in track and field, I have work with athletes of all ages and ability levels, developing training programs, along with working and speaking at various running camps. Coaching at Nazareth is my first experience working with athletes at the collegiate level. I want to bring the experiences and knowledge I have acquired over the years to the cross-country and track and field athletes at Nazareth. It is important to me that they not only learn how to be a successful a collegiate athlete, but also that they have their own experiences that can help create a life long passion in running.

I am very excited about the opportunity that I have to continue to learn and develop as a coach while working with the distance athletes and the coaching staff at Nazareth.
To kick off the 2013 season of Nazareth cross-country, we traveled an hour’s time to Lake Owasco and spend three days and two nights bonding at Camp Casowasco for yet another season. The team had a different feel as many new faces were added to both sides. On the women’s side four freshmen and two transfers made us half of the team, while the men added four freshmen to make up half of their roster. Even with so many new and young faces, expectations were set high and everyone seemed to handle them well throughout the course of the season.

The year commenced at the Houghton Short Course Invite where the women raced a distance of two miles and the men raced 5K. It was a good start to the season as the women placed three in the top ten, while sophomore transfer, Gabby Lebihan and Freshman Emily Thompson lead the way with a second and third place finish, respectively. Over the next month, we alternated weekends between races and workouts with the goal of building strength. Double sessions were introduced to the framework a few days per week and although it was optional, almost all athletes aspired to be their best and completed the two-a-days.

After a month of training and a few races under our belt, we were realizing that this group of women might be the best cross-country team that has put on a Nazareth singlet! With Gabby Lebihan leading the way, running mid 23s and Emily Thompson also breaking 24 minutes in the first 6k, while also having 5th year graduate student, Lauren Jamieson not far behind, we knew this group could be a special team. However, we knew the truth of this conjecture would lie in the hands of our fourth and fifth runners. In workouts and races the two spots alternated between 4 runners. We were also noticing that the men’s team chemistry was at an all time high. For each workout and race, there was a contagious work ethic that helped push everyone to their maximum ability.

Heading into October, where prime cross-country race conditions started to become the norm, we competed at the pre-regional meet held at Letchworth State Park, an invitational in Oneonta, and at the NYSTC meet hosted by Hamilton. Each week the women seemed to get better with almost everyone running faster each time out! And better yet, the fourth and fifth runners were starting to define themselves. Lebihan lead the way at each invitational running under 23 minutes in two out of the three meets - an accomplishment only done by one other runner at Nazareth, Jess Brown. Already at this point in the season, almost everyone had set a personal best time for 6k! For the men, the road was not as smooth, with some up and down performances, but
they continued to work hard. Senior Matt Fedrizzi lead the way for the men, breaking 27 minutes for the first time, landing him in seventh place on the all time list. The freshmen were also adapting the college distance as Ethan Ozborne came four seconds away from breaking 28 minutes and Jacob Murray surprised many by running in the mid 28s, which was a faster average than his fastest 5k average from a year ago.

Similar to last year, the main goal of the season was to run and place well at the Empire 8 championships held at Saratoga State Park. However, the competition from top to bottom in the conference improved vastly from a year ago, making our goals harder to obtain. Entering the race, the women’s team, with it’s best top five ever, was projected to finish anywhere from second place to fifth place – it was that tight of a race! A mile into the race, there was a distinct advantage over two of the teams that could have dropped us to fifth; we just needed to hold on. Coming close to nationally ranked Stevens, we held on to third place and held off Utica and St. John Fisher in the latter parts of the race. The men’s team was projected to finished either fifth or sixth. We needed all runners to perform to their abilities in order to meet the projections and possibly sneak up into fourth place. After a tough battle with St. John Fisher and Houghton running their best race of the year, the men finished sixth overall lead by senior Matt Fedrizzi.

Two weeks after a tough battle in Saratoga State Park, we lined up one last time at Letchworth State Park hosted by Geneseo. The Regional Championships, like the Empire 8 Championships, was loaded with talented teams this year. After running the course once already in early October, the men came in and took advantage of knowing the layout. Improving their overall average as a team, and twins Jake and Zach Lafaver peaking at the right time, the men beat a few teams they lost to at the pre-regional invite. Overall, the season was a success as the seniors showed leadership and taught the underclassmen what it takes to run at the collegiate level.

On the women’s side, there were many PRs to go around. Leading the way was Gabby LeBihan, running a thirteen second PR in 22:43. Also setting personal bests were Emily Thompson, running 23:32 and Senior Lauren Heitzhaus finishing two tenths of a second behind Emily also in 23:32. Lauren Jamieson PRed by ten seconds and came close to breaking the 24-minute barrier in 24:04. Another PR helped finish out the top five by Michaela Gilemeyer taking off 47 seconds from her pervious best! Overall, the women’s team improved tremendously as there was a 45 second difference between the top five’s average at the pre-regional meet to the regional meet. Better yet, the gap between one though five dropped over a minute! At the pre-regional meet the gap was 2:41 whereas at the regional meet it was 1:40. After such an amazing race and consistently dropping time throughout the season we wondered if this was the best women’s cross-country team to put on a Nazareth uniform ever.

**Most Valuable Flyer Awards:** Gabby LeBihan & Matt Fedrizzi

**Most Improved Awards:** Blair Meeson & Zach Lafaver

**Freshman of the Year Awards:** Emily Thompson & Ethan Osborne
Inside the Stats:
Comparing The 2013 Women’s Cross-Country Team to The 2007 Women’s Cross-Country Team

**2013**  
- 3rd place in Empire 8s @ Saratoga  
- Average time for top 5: 19:02  
- 6th place in NYSCTC @ Hamilton  
- Average time for top 5: 24:28 (6K)  
- 19th place in Regionals @ Geneseo  
- Average time for top 5: 23:39  
- Placed 3 in the top 5 and 4 in the top 10 on the all time 6k list

**2007**  
- 4th place in Empire 8s @ Saratoga  
- Average time for top 5: 19:37  
- 6th place in NYSCTC @ Saratoga  
- Average time for top 5: 19:06 (3.04 miles)  
- 8th place in Regionals @ Van Cortland  
- Average time for top 5: 23:58  
- Placed 1 in the top 5 and 4 in the top 10 on the all time 6k list  
- Jess Brown qualifies for NCAA Championships

MEN: Almost doubling our numbers from a year ago, this year’s squad adds eight freshman and three other new members. The future looks bright as the young men’s team gears to vastly improve their standings in the Empire 8 and NYSCTC Championships. Leading the way is Senior Jake Lafaver who looks to improve on a 3rd place ECAC finish in the 800 from a year ago, Sophomores Khiary Gayle, Brandon Vuolo, Luis Rivera who each have at least one school record.

WOMEN: Returning many integral parts from last year, the women’s team looks to send a few athletes to the NCAA championships, acquire a handful of NYSCTC individual titles and many Empire 8 individual titles. As a team, the women will focus on bettering their indoor and outdoor empire 8 placements of 4th and 3rd, respectively. They also look to improve a 6th place indoor finish and 5th place outdoor finish at the NYSCTC meets. This year’s squad is lead by returning All-American, Taylor Pierson, and Standout Juniors Hannah Brackley and Michaela Gildemeyer. Also in the mix are Sibo Chisi and Gabby LeBihan. New to the team includes eight freshmen lead by vertical jumper, Kelsey Hill and distance runner, Emily Thompson.

**** Be sure to support and follow Nazareth Track and Field this year by liking us on Facebook, checking out the Nazareth Athletics’ website and supporting the Flyers at meets this season! ****
Q & A with Senior Jake Lafaver

Tell us a little about yourself, where you are from and how you got involved in track and field.
I am from Syracuse, New York and went to West Genesee High School. I got involved in Track & Field when I was in middle school. I knew I was a good runner and I love sports, so I joined the team and I have stuck with it and grew from there.

What is your major/ minor?
I am majoring in business administration and I have a minor information technology

What do you want to do after you graduate?
I’m not quite sure yet. I would love to keep running and coach track, but I also will be job-hunting to help pay off the student debt.

Are there any particular fond memories that stand out from your cross country/ track experience so far?
There are many memories that stand out, but some great memories in particular are the ECAC championships and the road trips. Running on the Armory track was very memorable experience. I also enjoyed running around NYC with Coach Castor watching him act like an athlete again smiling ear-to-ear enjoying the sport. Other memories include the blob at “God” camp with Goss and Castor. I also will never forget Coach Goss slamming his clipboard on the ground after a poor XC performance - we joke about it now.

What are your individual goals and goals you would like to see the team achieve this year?
My individual goals are to make Nationals for both the indoor and outdoor seasons and to try and break one of the school records. My team goals are to keep growing and place better than last year in the empire 8 championships. Also I would like to be on the 4x800 team and break the school record.

Do you have any pre-meet routines?
My pre-meet routine just consists of focusing on the race coming up. I listen to music and wear the same clothes for every single meet.

What goes through your mind when you are at the starting line?
When at the starting line I think about what my racing strategy is that I talked about with the coaches. I also think about two things that motivate me to race the best I can.

Have a question, idea, or suggestion? E-mail us! JGoss2@naz.edu
Q & A with Sophomore
Taylor Pierson

Tell us a little about yourself, where you are from and how you got involved in track and field.
I am from Wellsburg, NY and I have been involved in track and field since 7th grade. I signed up for track after my elementary gym schoolteacher suggested it to me.

What is your major?
I am majoring in psychology.

What are some of your accomplishments?
Some of my accomplishments include two Empire 8 long jump titles, as well as two NYSCTC championships, an indoor title at ECAC’s and an 8th place finish at Nationals, all in long jump.

Are there any particular fond memories that stand out from your cross country/track experience so far?
The Virginia trip was definitely one of the best memories I have had so far. I feel like everyone became a lot closer and become more comfortable not only running together, but forming friendships as well.

What are your individual goals and goals you would like to see the team achieve this year?
I would love to be able to go to nationals again and PR in long jump. My goals for the team would be to place higher in meets as a team, especially at Empire 8 championships and states.

Tell us about your trip to nationals.
The first time was very scary because I had never flown before and I did not know what to expect at the meet. The second trip was more comfortable because I knew what to expect and was able to relax.

Explain how you felt when you first knew you were an All-American.
I was really happy getting a PR before I knew I had placed. Finding out I had gotten all American seemed so unreal!

What is your mindset like this year knowing you are a returning All-American?
It makes me put a lot of pressure on myself because I always want to do better than I had done previously. I know that I will have to work really hard in order to accomplish my new goals.

How are the team dynamics?
The team dynamics are so good and everyone gets along so well. I can’t wait to continue the season with my teammates!