

Villanova men, women capture Big East titles

Villanova University women's track coach Marty Stern was wearing the wet look late Sunday afternoon and wearing it proudly.

That's because Stern, of Doylestown, was given the traditional dunk in the steeplechase water jump after his team ran away with the Big East track championships Sunday at Villanova Stadium.

The Wildcats, in winning the team title for the third successive season finished with a team total of 162 points, easily outdistancing second-place Syracuse, which compiled 122. Sunday, they took first place finishes in eight of 14 events.

The University of Connecticut and St. John's University tied for third with 117 points, while Boston College was fifth with 30.

Villanova made it a clean

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sweep of the day's activities by taking the men's team title as well. Villanova's 118 points were 17 more than runner-up Syracuse, while Seton Hall was third with 99, Pitt was fourth with 71, and Georgetown fifth with 70.

The men's team entered Sunday's races with only four points to their credit, but seized seven first places en route to the top spot.

The women's meet was history Sunday afternoon when Dave Coskey of the Villanova Sports Information Department suggested the Wildcats assemble for a series of celebration pictures.

They did, first at the Field House end of Villanova Stadium, then secondly at the opposite end,

where Coskey suggested the background might be a little better (and the water jump more accessible).

It was only a matter of seconds before Stern, like his team had in the meet earlier, was making a big splash.

"It was kind of a neat thing," the coach explained. "About 25 years ago I was out at Villanova watching the ICAA championships when they threw (former Villanova men's coach) Jumbo (Elliott) in there.

"Then last year I saw them do that to them coach at Oregon when they won the NCAA's. I thought how neat it would be to have that done.

"So Dave said let's take one more picture down there where the background was a little better. Then all of a sudden I

heard all this giggling ..."

That was after he had heard all the cheering for his Villanova team, which had just completed the third leg of its 'triple crown': earlier in the year, the 'Cats had captured both both the Big East cross-country and indoor track championships.

They won this weekend the same way they had all season, with a combination of talented individuals and team depth.

Senior Mary Ellen McGowan, coming off a roller-coaster of emotional highs and lows last weekend at the Penn Relays, took part in three first places for the Wildcats, winning both the 3,000 Saturday and the 1,500 meters (4:30.02) Sunday. Also Sunday, she ran on Villanova's winning 4 x 800 relay team (9:05.63) that also included Kelly Toole, Debbie

Grant and Jane Ashton.

Veronica McIntosh, meanwhile, earned the meet's outstanding performance award when she took the 800 meters in 2:07.44. In Saturday's trials, she qualified for the NCAA championships by winning her heat in a blistering 2:04.53.

Connie Sweet, meanwhile, was a double winner for Villanova, taking the shot put (44-6 $\frac{3}{4}$) and discus (132-4) competition; Grant (1:01.18) and Judy Palmer (1:02.80) went one-two for Villanova in the 400-meter hurdles and Lauren Searby won the 5,000 (15:51.69).

Villanova closed out the meet by seizing the 4 x 400 relay in 3:46.84, employing a foursome of Lori Lancaster, Grant, Joanne Kehs and McIntosh.