

2006 Collegiate Cyclo-cross National Championships

Wednesday, 20 December 2006

Army Fourth at National Collegiate Cyclo-cross Championships

Four members of the Army Cycling Team traveled to Providence, Rhode Island on 15-17 December for the 2006 National Collegiate Cyclo-cross Championships. With minimal training & no cyclo-cross racing experience, these four members set out with the objective of competing in their first ever National Collegiate Cyclo-cross Championships and gain experience in preparation for next year. Racing at Roger Williams Park was under perfect conditions for December racing in the northeast. The course was a 3.2 km course with a total of 1km being paved in divided sections. There was also about 200 meters of gravel road. The remainder was packed dirt, tree roots & grass. Each lap racers were faced with four obstacles: one long run with wooden stairs, one 5-meter run up cement stairs, one set of hurdles on a fast section of flat ground, and one 10- to 12-second run of wooden stairs in a mid-hillside with a 20 meter rise.

With nearly 100 DI & DII anxious riders on the line packed into a small section of the race course, the race got off to an aggressive & fast start. The intensity didn't slow at all for the entire 45 minute race with racers covering 19.4km. Team member Cadet Showman received on the job cyclo-cross training the hard way with his involvement in two crashes early on in the first lap. Eventually, the pack spread out and rider to rider contact subsided. Meanwhile, Cadet Krinke was schooled on that mechanicals are frequent in cross but with a little ingenuity & much guts he completed the race. All in all, the cadets were not disappointed in their experience and performances. Team member results are as follows: 13th Benjamin Showman H3 2008 18th Alexander Krienke A2 2009 19th Steve Pingree E2 2009 20th Shaun Pothin B1 2008

The National Collegiate Cycling Association awards the top 40 racers team points based on their placing and then combines the men's & women's scores to crown overall team champions. Army team members' efforts scored a total of 289 points which placed them second in the Men's DII competition and earned a total of 110 team overall points out of a 120 point max. Although competing with only a men's team, the Army Cycling team earned 4th place overall in the team competition out of the 16 teams at the competition.

USA Cycling has collegiate national championships for road, mountain, cyclo-cross & track disciplines. Team rankings are based on performances at each of these disciplines. For the 2006 competitive season, the Army team was ranked 8th overall but competed in only two of the four disciplines (road & track). In the 32 year history of Army Cycling, this is the first year that cadets participated in Collegiate Cyclo-cross Championships & the first year that the team will participate in all four of the cycling disciplines (pending qualifications for collegiate road championships in the spring of 2007). Army earned 16 of 20 possible team ranking points for their efforts this past December and this year's team is looking to better our Number 2 ranking in 2005. However, the cadets must overcome manpower challenges in order to meet this lofty goal.

The team's current roster includes 18 members on authos & an additional 8 members not on authos. The majority of the members not on authos can not dedicate the time required to develop them into a national caliber athletes. Army's average competitor team has double the number of members with many members specializing in the one of the different disciplines. Additionally unlike NCAA rules, collegiate cycling does not limit competitors based on experience. In fact, the majority of collegiate cycling athletes are graduate students with most having years of racing experience; many at the international level and some at the professional level. Our cadets' physical training & superior fitness allows them to overcome the experience and additional member resources of their competition. However, additional authos are required in order for the team to compete at the highest levels both regionally & nationally. We are continuing to work with USMA's Department of Physical Education to acquire these additional authos which will better development & resource the team for collegiate cycling competition.