



# MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY

# SPORTS INFORMATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: J.R. Belew  
417/625.9359

## Southern set to host cross country regional

### 2004 South Central Regional begins at 9:30 a.m. Saturday

J.R. BELEW,  
SPORTS INFORMATION  
DIRECTOR

BELEW-J@MSSU.EDU

3950 E. NEWMAN RD.  
JOPLIN, MO 64801-1595

OFFICE: 417/625.9359  
FAX: 417/625.9397  
HOME: 417/623.9878  
CELL: 417/437.4513

Missouri Southern State University will host the 2004 NCAA Division II South Central Region Cross Country Championships on Saturday (Nov. 6) at the MSSU Cross Country Course.

The men's 10-kilometer race begins at 9:30 a.m. and will be followed by the women's 6K race at 10:30 a.m. The top three men's teams and the top two women's squads advance on to the NCAA Division II Championships, to be held Nov. 20 in Evansville, Ind. The top two individuals in each race (men's and women's) not on an advancing team will also move on to the NCAA-II Championships. Additionally, for both the men and women, if an individual finishes in the top five but isn't on a qualifying team or one of the top two individuals, they, too, earn a spot at the national meet.

Results from the South Central Regional will be posted on the Missouri Southern State University athletics web site ([www.mssu.edu/athletics](http://www.mssu.edu/athletics)) as soon as possible following the meet's conclusion and will be faxed to sports information directors of competing teams.

Men's competitors in the 18-team field will have a tall order in trying to unseat four-time defending regional champion Abilene Christian (Texas). The Wildcats, currently ranked No. 2 nationally in the NCAA-II Cross Country Coaches Top 25, are coming off a perfect score (15) en route to the Lone Star Conference championship.

ACU returns the top two men's individual finishers from the 2003 regional, held in Commerce, Texas. Junior Martin Okello was the individual Lone Star Conference champion in the Oct. 23 meet, as he finished the 8K course in 24 minutes, 14.27 seconds. Last year's individual regional champion, Bernard Manirakiza, has not competed in the last two ACU meets.

Central Missouri State halted Missouri Southern's string of four straight Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association championships on Oct. 23. Jarod Wall, fourth at last year's regional and third at last month's conference meet leads the Mules, who also had senior Leif Kennedy finish fourth at the MIAA meet. Wall completed the conference course in Maryville in 26:43.5, finishing behind only the 1-2 Missouri Southern finish of Paul Koehler (26:24.8) and Craig Rhoads (26:28.5).

CMSU is ranked No. 15 in the latest coaches poll and is the only other South Central Region team, besides ACU, ranked in the national top 25 (from Oct. 25). ACU is the No. 1-ranked team in the South Central Region, followed by Central Missouri State, East Central (Okla.), Emporia State and Truman.

Drury University, from Springfield, Mo., comes in with the Heartland Conference title under its belt. The Panthers had the top four finishers at the Heartland Conference Championships on Oct. 23 in San Antonio, Texas. Chad Jolliff was DU's top finisher at the meet, with a first-place time of 28:09.

On the women's side, Pittsburg State is seeking its third straight regional crown but is coming off a fourth-place showing at the MIAA Championships. Central Missouri State's women won the 2004 MIAA championship by one point over Truman, 59-60. The top four teams in the MIAA Championships were separated by just 11 points.

CMSU's Kristen Anderson is the top returning finisher from last year's South Central Regional, when she placed fifth. Anderson repeated as MIAA individual champion last month, finishing the 6K

### 2004 NCAA Division II South Central Regional Cross Country Championships

Nov. 6, 2004

Hosted by: Missouri Southern State  
University (Joplin, Mo.)

MSSU Cross Country Course

- Course open for inspection: 7 a.m.
- Men's 10-kilometer race: 9:30 a.m.
- Women's 6-kilometer race: 10:30 a.m.
- Awards: 12 p.m. (Leggett & Platt Athletic Center)



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event in 22 minutes, 41.7 seconds.

Truman, which had four runners in the top 12 at the MIAA meet, could pose a problem for CMSU. Sophomore Lauren White was the Bulldogs' top finisher at the MIAA Championships, placing seventh in 23:43.5. Senior Dani Rawlings was ninth at the 2003 South Central Regional.

Entering this year's regional, Central Missouri State and Truman are the only two teams listed in the national top 25 (from Oct. 25). CMSU is No. 18 and Truman No. 21. CMSU is also ranked No. 1 in the South Central Region, followed by Truman, Abilene Christian and Missouri Southern.

Missouri Southern and Drury University also return top-10 finishers from last year's regional. Senior Ashley Caffey, of MSSU, placed eighth at last year's meet, and Drury's Jaimee Hoffman was 10th.

Abilene Christian captured the Lone Star Conference women's title last month in Durant, Okla., led by junior Adeh Mwamba who won the individual title by more than one minute. Mwamba clocked in at 21:51.85 for the 6K course and the Wildcats had three of the top four runners at the LSC meet.

Central Oklahoma, led by Linda Vasquez' 10th-place finish, was a distant second to ACU.

The 2004 Heartland Conference champion is Lincoln University, which finished that meet with four runners in the top seven. St. Mary's Tara Wicketts was the top Heartland finisher, recording a 6K time of 24:34. LU's Kelly Marshall was second in 24:41. LU finished just four points ahead of Drury, which was led by Hoffman's third-place finish in 24:43.

Missouri Southern has also hosted regional competition in 2001 and 1999. The Lions also hosted the 1999 NCAA Division II Championships.

In 2001, Abilene Christian won the men's South Central Region title and Central Missouri State captured the women's hardware. In 1999, Central Missouri State's men won the Great Lakes Regional in Joplin, while Southern Indiana won the women's crown.

The 1999 NCAA-II Championships went to Western State (Colo.) on the men's side and Adams State (Colo.) in women's action.

### Men's Regional Rankings South Central

*Oct. 25, 2004*

1. Abilene Christian (Texas)
2. Central Missouri State
3. East Central (Okla.)
4. Emporia State (Kan.)
5. Truman (Mo.)
6. Missouri Southern
7. Drury (Mo.)
8. Angelo State (Texas)
9. Northwest Missouri State
10. Texas A&M-Kingsville

### Women's Regional Rankings South Central

*Oct. 25, 2004*

1. Central Missouri State
2. Truman (Mo.)
3. Abilene Christian (Texas)
4. Missouri Southern
5. Pittsburg State (Kan.)
6. Drury (Mo.)
7. Emporia State (Kan.)
8. Central Oklahoma
9. East Central (Okla.)
10. Southwest Baptist (Mo.)