

MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY 2018-19 RECAPS

Mike Smith Named Men's Cross Country Regional Coach of the Year

November 15, 2018 @ 8:00 am - 9:00 pm

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Muskegon Community College's Mike Smith has been named the National Junior Community College Athletic Association's (NJCAA) 2018 Great Lakes Region Men's Cross Country Coach of the Year.

The award was announced on Nov. 13, following the 2018 NJCAA Div. I Cross Country Championships held three days earlier in Garden City, KS, where the MCC men placed 21st in the nation and the Smith-led MCC women's team took 15th nationally.

On Oct. 27, the Jayhawk men placed second in the Great Lakes Regional meet in Lansing with three Jayhawk runners – Mitch Johnson, Kyle Benham and Michael Hyatt – finishing among the top nine.

Smith, a Reeths-Puffer High School counselor, returned as MCC head coach this fall. In 2010, he restarted the Jayhawk men's and women's cross country programs. He coached the teams for two years and led both to the NJCAA nationals before turning over the coaching reins to Dan Fishel, who guided the Jayhawks for the next six seasons.

"Dan Fishel worked incredible hard to get the programs where they are at," said Smith. "With the help and support from (Athletic Director) Marty McDermott, (Office Secretary) Colleen Morse, and (Assistant Athletic Director) Jimmy Booth, it makes coaching these Jayhawks a pleasure."

"I just feel honored and blessed to have stepped back into coaching at MCC. Like I explained to the Jayhawks, the award is a representation of how hard they have worked. The guys' team improved all season and it's actually amazing how well they raced at nationals considering some of the injuries. It showed their determination and guts. They finished as the second fastest team time in MCC history."

"The ladies actually ended up being the fastest team from the Great Lakes Region at nationals beating Lansing CC for the first time ever. They completed their season not only with the second fastest Jayhawk team time in history but also the second highest national finish for the Jayhawks."

A Muskegon native, Smith has over 20 years of experience coaching Reeths-Puffer High School and Middle School track and cross country. He also led Whitehall High School cross country for three years. He has coached more than 20 all-state honorees and more than 20 conference and county team champions.

A Louisiana State University graduate, Smith competed in track and cross country at LSU. He won the SEC championship in the indoor three-mile run. He was a three-time NJCAA All-American while competing in track and cross country at Southwestern Michigan CC and qualified for the 1992 Olympic marathon trials.

Men's Cross Country at NJCAA Nationals hosted by Garden City Community College

November 10, 2018 @ 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Jayhawk Men finish 21st at the NJCAA National Championship

The Men's team wrapped up their 2018 season with a 21st place finish in Garden City, KS at the NJCAA National Championship. The plan for the race was to lay it on the line to see what would happen. Even though they didn't achieve their goal of finishing in the top 15, they still finish as one of the best Jayhawk teams ever.

Mitch Johnson (Fruitport HS) wrapped up his cross country career with a 98th place to lead the Jayhawks. He was followed closing by Michael Hyatt (Orchard View HS) with a 118th place finish. Cameron Oleen (Fruitport HS) at 140th place and Noah Hendricks (Fruitport HS) in 151st place both had their best race of the year. Finishing the scoring was Chase Eslick (North Muskegon HS) in 197th.

"We had a couple of crazy injuries at the end of the season which will prove to make them stronger in the end and in life," said Head Coach Mike Smith. "It was a great group of guys to coach and mentor!"

Men's Cross Country at NJCAA Region XII & MCAA Championship hosted by Lansing Community College

October 27, 2018 @ TBD

Jayhawks finish as the runner up at NJCAA Region XII Championship.

The MCC men's cross country team competed at the NJCAA Region XII Championship in Lansing and finished with runner-up honors behind Lansing Community College. This is the first time in school history that either team brought home a trophy from this meet.

In the men's race the Jayhawks finished 2nd with 57 points to Lansing's 28 points with 16 teams competing. Four Jayhawk harriers made All-Region: Mitch Johnson (Fruitport HS) finished 5th in 26:34, Kyle Benham (North Muskegon HS) was 8th in 26:50, Michael Hyatt (Orchard View HS) was 9th in 26:51 and Cameron Oleen (Fruitport HS) was 16th in 27:19. Rounding out the scoring was Chase Eslick (North Muskegon HS) in 19th at 28:02. Their team time of 2:15:38 places them as the second fastest MCC Cross-Country team on the All-Time List.

"It was a good battle between us and Grand Rapids CC for second, but our strength and tight running pack is what helped secure the Runner-Up Trophy," said Head Coach Mike Smith. "Mitch was a great leader today, Kyle and Mike used each other to run strong races, Cam will always rise in big meets and Chase stepped it up to help the team."

Men's Cross Country at Jayhawk Invitational hosted by Muskegon Community College

October 12, 2018 @ 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

MCC Jayhawks take sixth in own men's 8K collegiate race.

Host Muskegon Community College had 196 points and finished in sixth place in The Jayhawk Invitational Cross Country Festival at University Park Golf Course. Eastern Michigan won the

meet with 16 points. MCC was second in the junior college team standings. Kyle Benham (North Muskegon HS) came in 23rd, Michael Hytt (Orchard View HS) 25th, Mitchell Johnson (Fruitport HS) 26th, Cameron Jones (Boone Grove HS) 57th and Cameron Oleen (Fruitport HS) 65th for the Jayhawks. The final standings had 21 men's teams competing in the 8K race.

MCC returns to action on Saturday, 10/27 when they compete in the MCCA/NJCAA Region XII Championship at Grand Woods Park in Lansing, MI.

The Jayhawks will compete in Garden City, KS at the NJCAA National meet on Saturday, 11/10.

Men's Cross Country at Lansing Invitational hosted by Lansing Community College

October 5, 2018 @ 2:15 pm - 3:15 pm

Muskegon Community College Men's Cross Country team made history by posting a team time of 2:16:43. That time places them as the 3rd all time fastest MCC men's team. MCC finished an impressive 6th out of 26 colleges racing and 2nd among the 14 JUCO teams. The guys raced past two teams (GRCC and Mott CC) that are ranked in the top 22 in the nation. Leading the guys and only off his lifetime PR by a few seconds was Mitch Johnson (Fruitport HS) 26:35. Racing their best to date 8k's were Michael Hyatt (Orchard View HS) 27:08 and Kyle Benham (North Muskegon HS) 27:09. Also setting a PR for 8K and helping the team score was Cameron (Lou) Jones (Boone Groove, IN) 27:47 and making his collegiate debut with an impressive second half was Cameron Oleen (Fruitport HS) 28:03.

"I think it's safe to say the "Cat" or in this case the "Jayhawk" is out of the bag and people will now take notice," said head coach Mike Smith.

They return to action on Friday, 10/12 when they host the Jayhawk Invitational at University Park Golf Course. The men's 8K starts at 1:00 pm, followed by the women's 5K at 1:45 pm.

Men's Cross Country at GRCC Raider XC Invitational hosted by Grand Rapids Community College

September 22, 2018 @ 3:35 pm - 4:35 pm

Muskegon Community College travelled to the Raider Invitational in Grand Rapids. The men's team finished 11th overall and 2nd for JUCO teams. Having his best race of his collegiate career was Kyle Benham (North Muskegon HS) at 25:34 followed closely by Michael Hyatt (Orchard View HS) at 26:09. Proving that training hard over the summer makes a difference was Jake Phillips (Grand Haven HS) with a career best 27:45. Rounding out the Jayhawk scoring was Chase Eslick (North Muskegon HS) at 28:10 and Simon Johnson (Fruitport HS) at 31:29.

The Jayhawks return to action on Friday, 10/5 when they travel to Lansing for the LCC Invitational at Grand Woods Park.

Men's Cross Country at Spartan Invitational hosted by Michigan State University

September 14, 2018 @ 11:40 am - 12:40 pm

The Muskegon Community College Cross-Country teams raced Friday at Michigan State University along with 30 other colleges. The Jayhawk men's team was the 2nd place JUCO finisher and 18th overall. Leading the way was Kyle Benham (North Muskegon HS), followed by Cameron Jones (Boone Grove, IN), Michael Hyatt (Orchard View HS), Chase Eslick (North Muskegon HS) and Caleb Sidock (Orchard View HS).

"Given the extreme heat and wet/soft course the times were slower than expected, but I felt the effort and experience gained will pay off later in the season," said coach Mike Smith. "The freshman got to experience their first 8k and in a huge race atmosphere. Kyle ran a brave race and Cameron (Lou) ran a smart race."

The Jayhawks next compete in the Grand Rapids Community College Invite on Friday, 9/21 at Riverside Park.

Men's Cross Country at Jeff Drenth Memorial hosted by Central Michigan University

August 31, 2018 @ 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Jayhawk men open cross country season with 5th place finish.

Muskegon Community College opened the 2018 cross country season with a solid race at Central Michigan's "Jeff Drenth Memorial" 5k. Although the weather was ideal for a cross country race (low 60's no wind) the course at Pleasant Hills Golf Course ran about 30-40 seconds slow due to the amount of rain in the last week.

Leading the men's team was Michael Hyatt (Orchard View HS) with a 17:12, 34th place finish. Also scoring for the men were Kyle Benham (North Muskegon HS), Mitchell Johnson (Fruitport HS), Cameron Jones (Boone Groove, IN), and Chase Eslick (North Muskegon HS). The team average time was 17:35.

"Over all I was proud of these athletes for getting the first race under their belts and toeing the line with D1 and D3 4 year schools (MSU, CMU, Hillsdale, Alma, and Cleary)", said Head Coach Mike Smith. "It gave us a great gauge as to where we are at and what we need to do moving forward".