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(Neb.)-Girard joins CSC cross country team



By: Andrew Lacy Posted at: 10/22/2013 10:37 AM

by Alex Helmbrecht, CSC Sports Information

CHADRON – It's not every day when an All-American joins a team late in the season but that was the case when Stacy Girard began practicing with the Chadron State College women's cross country team a couple weeks ago.

Girard, an Alliance native and 2008 All-American for the Eagles' track and field team, recently joined the team after head coach Ryan Baily discovered she had one semester of eligibility remaining.

According to NCAA rules, each student-athlete is granted 10 semesters to compete. Since Girard, who is working on a graduate degree in organizational management this fall, only used nine semesters all devoted to track and field, she was eligible to run cross country.

"My coaching staff and I were discussing the fact we wanted another strong runner on the women's team," Baily said. "(Graduate assistant coach) Brian Medigovich and I started brainstorming and we knew Stacy had a semester remaining. Our compliance coordinator, Melissa Burke, put in a lot of work so it could happen and she found Stacy never triggered

a full time semester in her transcript and so we got the go-ahead.

"Then I started talking to John (Stacy's husband) to gauge her interest. She said she'd love to do it to help the team and give us a chance to potentially do well in the regional meet. She brings another element to the team and the girls are pumped about it. It could not have worked out better."

Girard, an All-American in the 1,500 meters in 2008 and the owner of six school records, will get her first taste of cross country competition Saturday in Silver City, N.M., when the men's and women's cross country teams will run at the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference Championship hosted by Western New Mexico.

The Eagles will then compete at the NCAA Division South Central Region Championships, Saturday, Nov. 9 at Canyon, Texas. The top six teams in each region will then qualify for the national championships Nov. 23 in Spokane, Wash.

Girard, who admits many things fell into place for her chance to compete, is thankful for another opportunity to run at Chadron State.

"The races are going to be a gut check for me because I haven't been in training for as long as the others but I'm looking forward to helping mentor these girls and push them to do their best any way I can," she said. "John and I are host parents for many of them and my family really enjoys being around them. I haven't really set any personal goals because I haven't really had a chance to think about it but I know I'll run the best I can and I hope that motivates the other girls to do their best, as well."