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## SPORTS: Colleges

### Buffalo breaks into NCAA regional cross country rotation

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The trail to an NCAA championship will pass through the University at Buffalo this fall as the school will host the Northeast Cross Country Regional on Nov. 12.

The course at Amherst Audubon Golf Course features a 10K for men and a 6K for women as the event will feature 40 of the top programs in the Northeast.

University at Buffalo cross country coach Vicki Mitchell was instrumental in Buffalo landing the NCAA regional in November. Sharon Cantillon / Buffalo News file photo

"I put the bid together and thought I put together an appealing package for our region," said UB cross country

coach Vicki Mitchell. "It's hard to get into that NCAA rotation. Last year we had eight or nine teams from the Northeast region ranked in the top 20 in the country. It's an incredibly deep and competitive region we're bringing to Buffalo and I think it's going to be an eye-opener for other schools and coaches who have a preconceived notion of what Buffalo is like. They're going to have the best-run championship experience they've ever had."

Buffalo will host one of nine regional events which funnel the best to the NCAA National Cross Country Championship in Terre Haute, Ind., on Nov. 21. The top two teams at the regional automatically qualify with 13 teams earning at-large bids. Automatic bids for individuals go to the top four finishers at each regional meet who are not already part of an advancing team.

While Mitchell is excited to showcase Western New York to regional cross country programs, she also welcomes the opportunity to showcase her sport to Western New York.

"First, it's a great opportunity for the athletes who are from the Western New York area and attending other schools to come back to Buffalo and compete in front of family and friends. There aren't many chances for them to do that," Mitchell said.

"And it not only brings the sport to the area, but to so many at [UB] who have never had the opportunity to see a meet. This is fabulous and I love the fact that people are going to know what the sport of cross country is all about."