

### Season Highlights

What a season! One word comes to mind to best describe it: "rain." There was rain leading up to almost every race and frequently straight through the race. This made for one of the muddiest, funnest, runningest seasons you could imagine! More importantly, either because of or in spite of the rain, we had a phenomenally successful season full of strong races and team building Mexican food. On the whole, I couldn't be more proud of the racers we had this year. Lewis and Chrissy were better teammates than I could ever have asked for and seeing them go to Nationals was the most rewarding experience of the year. While none of the three of us are likely to race for Harvard next CX season, I hope to see Harvard cross continue to give Army and UVM a run every year.

— Mike Kester, CX Captain

- Chrissy and Lewis represented Harvard at CX Nationals in Louisville, KY
- 5<sup>th</sup> Club Team Omnium at Nationals
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Team Omnium in the ECCC
- 4 Racers entered 23 ECCC races
- Lewis, Mike, and Chrissy all "catted up" to Collegiate A
- Chrissy won Women's B (while racing A at NBX)
- Lewis 4<sup>th</sup> Men's B (while racing A at NBX)
- Mike 5<sup>th</sup> Men's B (while racing A at NBX)



---

## Full Season Individual Race Reports

### “Pumpkin Cross”

KEENE, NH

Once again the opening weekend of the ECCC season would visit Surry Mountain Recreation Area in Keene, NH. The course is situated on a picturesque lake surrounded by mountains and at this time of year the leaves changing color makes this race one of the most beautiful venues in the ECCC season. So the time spent not trying to catch your breath, can be used taking in the scenery.

The course itself is consistent with most New England State Championship layouts. It has a few technical sections but is won or lost based on cycling fitness. The course features a single punchy climb shortly after the start on the first lap and another on subsequent laps. During the race this really spread the field out early. The more technical riders are able to push it up the hill and use the off cambers and chicanes coming down to rest. That strategy works well when the course straightens out and opens a great passing lane. There are four sand sections in this course, two designed as long turns, giving the riders a real choice of attack. Overall the course is well designed, challenging, and a ton of fun.

#### Results:

Michael S. Kester  
3<sup>rd</sup> Collegiate Men's B  
15 of 47 Overall Men's 4/5

### “Fruitlands Cup of Cross”

HARVARD, MA

Taking place at the Fruitlands Museum and very close to home in Harvard, MA, this was the second straight State Championship that the

team would attend. Like Keene, the venue is set up to test riders' fitness; however, with rain starting the night before and continuing all day through the races, many of the sections that would have been ridden in years past turned to run-ups or slide

“  
*So this is what racing in New England is like? Mud and constant rain? The commentator was calling this a Nor'easter. I guess this is quite the welcome!*  
”

– Lewis

downs. Particularly in the back section of the course, through some of the recently clipped thick brush, long sections of sweeping switchback downhills had to be taken at a very slow pace, and what would have been a long, but gradual incline back up to the finish line became a slippery, challenging climb with riders forced to make the tough choice of whether it was actually faster to get off and run or worth it to “burn some matches” and muscle through.

“  
*I think I heard someone say “green means grip” but I don't know where they were looking because I couldn't find it.*  
”

– Chrissy

#### Results:

Chrissy Glover  
1<sup>st</sup> Collegiate Women's B  
1 of 5 Overall Women's 4/5  
Lewis Caskey  
3<sup>rd</sup> Collegiate Men's B  
11 of 41 Overall Men's 4/5  
Michael S. Kester  
4<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Men's B  
14 of 41 Overall Men's 4/5

### “Orchard Cross”

HAMPTON FALLS, NH



Chrissy rides the berm at “Orchard Cross.”

It took most of the night to warm up from Fruitlands, but then the team was right back at it for Orchard Cross at Applecrest Farm in southern New Hampshire. This being a split weekend for the ECCC, collegiate turnout was pretty light and gave the team a great opportunity to pick up some season points. The joke was on those that didn't race because this was one of the most fun races of the season! The race stood out in terms of organization with nice details like having the course taped out in yellow except the pit which was taped in yellow and white.

“

*Berms look very scary. Once you get to them, they look even more scary. But I learned you have to keep pedaling fast or else they'll be the scariest.*

”

– Chrissy

While this is a small detail, it creates the feeling of a race that is trying their hardest to make it a great day for all and avoids half the field accidentally turning into the pit. While the back of the course was a number of back-and-forths, long stretches, and muddy turns that you would expect from a New England cross course, the front was a little less typical. It features a slow turning hay bale “maze”, which flows directly into a pump track, which exits into a banked dirt turn, and then the course

“

*Orchard was my favorite race of the season. The pump track was fun and gave your legs a break. . . also fresh cider doughnuts. . . mmm*

”

– Mike

splits with racers forced to choose left or right through different dirt paths each with barriers, one a little sooner in the path than the other. This meant that you could go wide or inside and get a different line on the exit turn. This was a great race, exceptionally well put together, with interesting and exciting features for riders of any level.



**Mike ran more this season than he rode...this time at “Fruitlands”**

Off the track this is also one of the nicest races of the year. As the name would imply the race is held at an active apple farm. There were some welcoming sheep just to the left of the start line that gave some encouraging “Baaa”s as the riders warmed up. The orchard store has fresh baked goods, tons of apple varieties, warm cider, and fresh cider doughnuts. If you only ever race one single CX race in your life (and anyone who likes riding bikes at all should try it at least once), you could do a lot worse than Orchard Cross. It’s hard to describe just how good a cider doughnut tastes after 40 minutes of all out effort.

**Results:**

- Chrissy Glover
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Collegiate Women’s B
  - 6 of 36 Overall Women’s 4/5
- Michael S. Kester
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Collegiate Men’s B
  - 30 of 70 Overall Men’s 4/5

**“Northampton International Cyclocross”**

NORTHAMPTON, MA

A significant stop in the New England cyclocross calendar as well as the ECCC series, the *Verge 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Northampton International Cyclocross p/b Cycle-Smart* is an exciting weekend filled with amateur races and professional showings. As the oldest UCI race in North America, this weekend always draws a big crowd, and with some fields having more than 120 racers on course, this year was no different.

“

*The downhill on day one was I think the most terrifying thing I ever looked at from the perspective of being on a bike.*

”

– Chrissy

Both days of racing were marked by the crowds and the technical nature of the course, with barriers; two steep, slippery run-ups; a section of course through the woods with roots and rocks; two mini-railroad crossings; and dusty, sweeping turns on Saturday that changed to slippery, muddy turns with overnight rain on Sunday. The fun and excitement of the weekend and the course was perhaps only slightly tempered by having to get used to cold weather again, with morning temperatures around 34 degrees and windy.

**Results:**

*Day 1:*

- Chrissy Glover
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Collegiate Women’s B
  - 4 of 39 Overall Women’s 4/5
- Lewis Caskey
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Collegiate Men’s B
  - 19 of 139 Overall Men’s 4/5
- Michael S. Kester
  - 6<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Men’s B
  - 44 of 139 Overall Men’s 4/5

*Day 2:*

- Chrissy Glover
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Collegiate Women’s B

7 of 32 Overall Women's 4/5  
 Lewis Caskey  
 6<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Men's B  
 20 of 125 Overall Men's 4/5  
 Michael S. Kester  
 7<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Men's B  
 43 of 125 Overall Men's 4/5

## “Supercross Cup”

SUFFERN, NY

A snowstorm mid-week and a sunny 41 degrees the day of the race, combined to make the most brutal cyclocross conditions of the season. The numbers tell the story: race organizers shortened the course to be only 0.85 miles;  $\frac{2}{3}$  of that was only runnable, with mud coming up past cyclists' ankles; Lewis' average speed on Saturday was only 6.5 mph, but that was good enough for 6<sup>th</sup> place. Despite these conditions, Saturday's race featured a good showing from the ECCC with a full contingent from Army as well as the HUCA team and a smattering of other schools. Spirits were high at the start line (“are we seriously racing in this?” “We do

this for fun?!”) but it was all business come race time, as the race of attrition and all that running took its toll on the competitors. Indeed, the winner of Saturday's race was someone new to cyclocross but fresh off of a collegiate cross country career, if that helps explain things! Not much in the way of technical riding (or any riding, for that matter).

Sunday's race saw a much smaller field, as many more local racers determined it wasn't worth braving those conditions once again. But those of us from further north are used to tougher conditions, and weren't scared away from a second day. That, and I mean, we had already driven all this way, so... Colder temperatures overnight helped firm up the course in spots, so there was slightly more riding, though some of the muddy sections were even wetter than the day before, making for a real contrast between the parts of the course up on a hill and the section that had been collecting all the melting snow for a number of days. Still, both days of racing provided positive results for HUCA and the first whis-

perings of a shot at nationals started to appear in team conversations.

**Chrissy's take:** This was the race I was most looking forward to this season, as I remembered it from last year as being more “fitness-y” than technical, with sweeping grassy hills and a wide course. When I heard it would be wet (which in hindsight was an understatement) I got even more excited, as playing in the mud is what I do best. On day one, I'd estimate that I ran about 80% of the race. It was a very strange feeling; I felt like I was going slow (I guess it's hard to go fast while trudging through mud with a heavier-than-usual bike on your back) but at the same time did not feel like it was possible to go any faster, and I got so used to running that I had to remind myself to get back on my bike in the rideable sections. I also learned a very valuable lesson about disk brakes: they are capable of getting completely worn through after one race full of muck and grit, rendering you brake-less for the race the next day. So I would describe day two as the same as day one, but add in some fear-filled fun.

It took hard riding and even harder running to succeed at Supercross!



**Results:**

*Day 1:*

- Chrissy Glover  
1<sup>st</sup> Collegiate Women's B  
1 of 9 Overall Women's 4/5
- Lewis Caskey  
3<sup>rd</sup> Collegiate Men's B  
6 of 79 Overall Men's 4/5
- Michael S. Kester  
4<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Men's B  
16 of 79 Overall Men's 4/5

*Day 2:*

- Chrissy Glover  
1<sup>st</sup> Collegiate Women's B  
1 of 7 Overall Women's 4/5
- Lewis Caskey  
1<sup>st</sup> Collegiate Men's B  
3 of 37 Overall Men's 4/5
- Michael S. Kester  
2<sup>nd</sup> Collegiate Men's B  
10 of 37 Overall Men's 4/5

**“NBX Grand Prix of Cross”**

WARWICK, RI

Subtitled “The Essence of New England Cyclocross,” the NBX course did not disappoint. NBX was a highly technical course, though not entirely because of the human-made structures. Yes, there were two staircase

“

*NBX was quite fun course to try out cyclocross for the first time. . . I'll definitely [race] again in future. . .*

”

– Ciarán

run-ups and a set of barriers, but it was really the elevation and the stretch of beach running that kept racers on their toes. This course featured many steep climbs with some bad lines you could take if you got stuck on the wrong side, as well as multiple stretches of course through the sandy-soiled woods, where a plethora of roots were prepared to end your racing prematurely with a flat tire. As the final weekend of racing, ECCC teams showed up in full

force to garner all the points they could, and Sunday was a crucial day, with double-the-points on offer. For HUCA, this was also a big weekend as three racers had moved up to the collegiate ‘A’ category in an attempt to garner the points necessary to qualify for nationals. Happily, the move paid off,

“

*I wish the beach run was longer.*

”

– Chrissy

as Chrissy, Lewis, and Mike all would gain eligibility for the collegiate nationals in Louisville! Additionally, the team secured their 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall in the ECCC team omnium standings; Chrissy winning the women's B; and Lewis and Mike finishing 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> in men's B, respectively, despite none of the three of them racing as a ‘B’ this final weekend.

**Results:**

*Day 1:*

- Chrissy Glover  
5<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Women's A  
15 of 23 Overall Women's Cat 3
- Michael S. Kester  
12<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Men's A  
30 of 103 Overall Men's 4/5

**Chrissy in the Women's club race at Nationals.**



- Lewis Caskey  
13<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Men's A  
34 of 103 Overall Men's 4/5
- Ciarán O'Neill  
14<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Men's C  
86 of 103 Overall Men's 4/5

*Day 2:*

- Lewis Caskey  
10<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Men's A  
12 of 69 Overall Men's 4/5
- Michael S. Kester  
11<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Men's A  
25 of 69 Overall Men's 4/5

**“Cyclocross National Championships 18.2”**

LOUISVILLE, KY

**Chrissy's take:** Holy cow. This was by far the toughest course I've ever ridden, with what seemed like every technical feature possible: a flyover, deep sand pit, sketchy rooty rocky hairpin turn, barriers, limestone stairs, off-cambers galore, tight-cornered downhill chicane, and steep hills. And this was just when it was dry. Lewis and I got the awesome opportunity to travel to Louisville, KY to represent Harvard Cycling amongst the best CX racers in

the country. It was a really cool environment to be around, with races happening almost non-stop for the week in all age ranges. The women's collegiate race was Thursday, when conditions were mostly dry with wet/muddy spots sprinkled here and there. As this was my first time at CX Nats I didn't know what to expect, but once the gun went off I caught a little glimpse - these girls were going fast. I did my best to hold my own on the pretty technical course, ending up placing 11<sup>th</sup> out of 13 riders. At first I was a little bummed, but then gained some of that "perspective" (namely that this is still a sport I'm new at and my technical skills are not so strong) and got super pumped to cheer on Lewis in his race Friday and race the team relay on Saturday. After my race the rain came in, and one thing the season in New England taught us was that wet ground + lots of bike traffic = mud fest. Lewis got to experience the drastic shift in conditions in his collegiate men's race, and did awesome in the field, often catching people on the uphills. Saturday was a fun day - a unique aspect of CX Nats is the

"Team Relay," where teams of 4 riders (2 males and 2 females) blaze the course for one lap each in a quest to gain points for the team omnium. We saw the 4 rider description as more of a recommendation, and so attacked the race with just the two of us alternating laps and an attitude of "let's just go out there and have blast." We accomplished our main goal while also finishing 4<sup>th</sup> for club teams (out of 4 - but we beat some of the varsity teams!) but still had one more race to go - the race to the airport to catch our flights back to Boston on time. After the finish we made a mad dash to the hoses, sprayed ourselves and the bikes off, and changed into clean clothes that contradicted the look of mud specks in our hair. We made it, and upon arrival back to campus learned that the team relay was definitely worth it, as Harvard ended up placing 5<sup>th</sup> in the team omnium out of 32 club teams.

**Lewis' take:** As Chrissy said, the muddy NE season served us well as preparation for Nationals! As the race weekend got closer, the forecast for my Friday race was looking more and

more like overnight rain as well as during the race. I made a last-second search through the Boston bike shops for toe spikes, and I'm so glad I did! During my race, having the right gear paid dividends as I was able to run right up slippery slopes that others were sliding down. I knew that the race would start at a blazing pace, but I also knew that if I wasn't careful my adrenaline and the excitement of Nationals would get the best of me. I was able to stick to my plan and went out hard enough to be part of the lead pack, but was not trying to compete for a front spot. In the second lap, I got a little nervous, as I was last on the course; maybe I was just totally outclassed! However, my strategy paid off and I picked off fading riders over the last lap and a half, staying strong through the running sections thanks to all the running this season. In the end, I was able to bring back ten spots, for 35<sup>th</sup> out of 45. I'm very happy with that result, and with getting to live out a dream I didn't think was ever going to happen: qualifying for and racing at CX nationals!

**Left: Lewis and Chrissy catch up after their relay @ nationals. Right: Chrissy on a run-up @ NoHo.**

