

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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ARKANSAS TECH GOLDEN SUNS CROSS COUNTRY RELEASES ITS 2006 SCHEDULE

RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas – Arkansas Tech University Head Cross Country Coach Tom Aspel announced his team's 2006 schedule on Tuesday.

Aspel, who is entering his 12th season at the helm of the Golden Suns Cross Country program, has his team running in six meets before the Gulf South Championships on Oct. 21 in Huntsville, Ala.

Last season, Tech finished 11th at the GSC Championships, but junior **Aoife Cooke** (Youghal, Ireland) made history as she became the first Golden Sun runner to win the GSC individual women's title. In addition, Cooke won the NCAA South Regional and earned All-American honors in cross country after finishing ninth at the 2005 NCAA Division II Cross Country Championships.

Aspel said he is expecting this year's team to perform better at the conference meet.

"Our team is a year older and also more experienced than last season's team, so I expect us to compete better at the GSC Meet," Aspel said. "We're returning almost our entire team from last season, and we've added an outstanding runner that sat out last season."

Aspel's 12th Golden Suns team will open the season on Sept. 2 when they travel to Jonesboro, Ark., to compete at the Arkansas State Invitational. Following the ASU Invitational, Tech will take a week off before resuming action on Sept. 16 at the Missouri Southern Stampede in Joplin, Mo. The Golden Suns will close out the month of September by running at the Orange Crush Invitational hosted by Hendrix College on Sept. 23 in Conway, Ark., and finishing the month at the West Florida Invitational in Pensacola, Fla.

"The West Florida Invitational will be a good test for our team as it will allow us to get the chance to run on the course that will host this year's national championship meet," said Aspel.

Tech will open the month of October by running on Oct. 7 at the three-mile Memphis Twilight Meet, before concluding the regular season on Oct. 14 by competing at the 14th annual Chile Pepper Invitational hosted by the University of Arkansas. The Chile Pepper Invitational is one of the premier cross country meets in the country as it features some of the nation's top-ranked teams from NCAA Division I.

"The Chile Pepper meet should be a very good test for our team heading into the GSC Championship Meet the next weekend," Aspel said.

Following the Chile Pepper Invitational, Tech will run at the 2006 GSC Championships, which this year is being hosted by the University of Alabama-Huntsville. After the GSC Meet, Tech will compete at the NCAA South Regional Meet on Nov. 4 in Memphis, Tenn. The 2006 cross country season will conclude on Nov. 18 at the NCAA Division II National Championship Meet in Pensacola, Fla. The top four teams and the top four individuals not from the top four teams qualify for the NCAA Championship Meet.

2006 ARKANSAS TECH CROSS COUNTRY SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER

2 (Sat)	at Arkansas State Invitational (5K)	Jonesboro, Ark.	8 a.m.
16 (Sat)	at Missouri Southern Stampede (5K)	Joplin, Mo.	9 a.m.
23 (Sat)	at Orange Crush Invitational (5K)	Conway, Ark.	8 a.m.
30 (Sat)	at West Florida Invitational (6K)	Pensacola, Fla.	8 a.m.

OCTOBER

7 (Sat)	at Memphis Twilight (3 miles)	Memphis, Tenn.	8 p.m.
14 (Sat)	at Chile Pepper Invitational (6K)	Fayetteville, Ark.	10:30 a.m.
21 (Sat)	at GSC Championships (5K)	Huntsville, Ala.	8 a.m.

NOVEMBER

4 (Sat)	NCAA Division II South Regional (6K)	Memphis, Tenn.	TBA
18 (Sat)	NCAA Division II Championships (6K)	Pensacola, Fla.	TBA

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