

Four Nebraska Wesleyan University track and field athletes have been honored as Capital One/Academic All-District 8 selections in the NCAA III division for track and field/cross country. Junior Johnny Rutford and seniors Jay Wall and Derrick McKenzie were the three NWU men who received the honor, while junior Taylor Tacha was the lone NWU woman recognized as Academic All-District.

All four athletes now advance to the national ballot for Capital One/Academic All-America recognition in track and field/cross country that will be announced June 19.

Rutford, of Lincoln, has a 3.96 GPA as an accounting major. Rutford was the 2012 GPAC champion in the outdoor 10,000 meters at GPAC outdoor championships. He also placed seventh in the 5,000 meters to earn All-GPAC. Rutford was a two-time All-GPAC performer at the indoor championships and has now earned seven All-GPAC awards in track and field. The Lincoln Southeast High School graduate was a NCAA III aualifier in cross country and placed 10th at the conference championships.

Wall, of Grant, has a 3.63 GPA in business administration. Wall was a NCAA III qualifier for the outdoor championships in the pole vault where he tied for 15th. He earned All-America honors in 2011 at the NCAA III indoor championships. He was the 2012 GPAC champion in the pole vault at the indoor championships and is a six-time All-GPAC performer. The Perkins County High School, product holds the NWU school record in the pole vault at 16-2 3/4.

McKenzie, of Fremont, was an All-GPAC performer in the 400 hurdles as a senior. He battled injury but still was among the top 50 in the country in the 400 hurdles in 2012. He qualified for the 2011 NCAA III outdoor championships in the 400 hurdles. The Fremont High School graduate was a four-time All-GPAC performer and a USTFCCCA All-Academic selection.

Tacha of Bertrand, has been a seven-time national qualifier in track and field. She has earned 16 All-Conference awards in hurdles and relays in her first three seasons. Tacha was the GPAC runner-up in 100 hurdles this season despite battling injury all season. She is a four-time GPAC champion in the hurdles and ranks third all-time at NWU in 100 hurdles (14.38) and 400 hurdles (62.82).

Student-athletes must meet four criteria to earn Capital One Academic All-District honors: 1) must have a cumulative GPA of 3.30 or better, 2) must have at least two terms of attendance at the institution, 3) must be at least a sophomore in athletic eligibility, 4) must be a starter or key reserve in their respective sport.

The All-District selection is determined by voting of the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA).