Nelson goes wire to wire

UW-Stout’s Tim Nelson capped a decorated career Saturday with a national title, crossing the line 8 seconds ahead of his nearest competitor at the NCAA Division III cross country championship in Terre Haute, Ind.

The Augusta native, who finished in 24 minutes, 26.8 seconds, is only the fourth Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference runner to win a cross country national title. He also has won three track national championships (5K indoor, 5K outdoor, 10K outdoor).

Nelson led the majority of the race, gradually pulling away from the pack. Showing signs of fatigue just before the finish line, Nelson did go to the ground after crossing the line.

“My strategy was to stay relaxed for the first 2K and not slow down on the winding turns,” Nelson said. “I told myself before the race that if I didn’t win, I’d be OK with it as long as I gave everything I had. To be able to do that and win the race, it’s very satisfying.”

UW-Stout sophomore Patrick Jenkins finished 43rd.

The UW-Eau Claire men recorded their highest finish ever at the national championship, taking 10th out of 32 teams.

Two Blugolds claimed All-American honors (top 35) as senior Jeremy Kieser led the way, taking 15th place. Senior Aaron Easker tied for 26th place. The pair are the second and third to earn the honors since UW-Eau Claire made the move to the NCAA. On the women’s side, the Blugolds had two All-Americans — Ashlyn Mauer took sixth and junior Madi Sawyer finished 30th — on their way to a fifth-place finish as a team. The pair give UW-Eau Claire 10 NCAA All-Americans in program history. Steph Sjostrom finished 41st.

The Blugolds’ finish is their best since 2010, when they were fourth. UW-Eau Claire won the national title in 2009.