The men’s cross country team had a season marked by top-scores and titles garnered through team effort. Despite the loss of some prominent seniors, the team learned that their dedication was the key to success. They started off their season at the Lou Onesty Invitational in Charlottesville, Virginia where the Tribe finished third out of the five teams present. They finished the eight kilometer race with an overall score of 87, only 51 points behind second place, Duke University, and 68 points behind the University of Virginia, who took home the title. Freshman Max Werner led, finishing 19th overall, followed by sophomore Jay Bilsborrow in 22nd place and freshman Chris Tyson in 25th place.

The Tribe came back from that season start to take first place in the Colonial Inter-Regional Challenge in September. With 11 total runners representing William & Mary at this event, they ran for 32 final points, giving them a seven point lead over second place, Michigan State, and securing them the title.

Individually, three tribe runners finished in the top five of the event, with juniors Ben Massam and Colin Leak taking first and second place, and Patterson Wilhelm coming in fourth, showing that the team still had powerful leaders.

The team came together to win the Inter-Regional Challenge. “We knew going into the season that everything would be a bit more difficult without some of the seniors we lost to graduation or exhausted eligibility, so we’ve really learned to work well as a team,” junior Ben Massam said. “I think we have a large group of motivated and competitive guys who get along well, so it creates a great environment for everyone. In general, I think around team efforts have characterized the success we’ve had so far,” Massam said.

In early November, the Tribe runners took home another title from the 26th Annual Colonial Athletic Association Championships. This win marked the team’s ninth-straight CAA title.

Furthermore, nine of the team’s runners made the All-CAA team as well, with all 12 finishing the eight kilometer race in the top 20. Colin Leak finished second, followed by teammates Jon Grey in third and Patterson Wilhelm in fourth. Their strong finishes gave the Tribe a final score of 20 points, securing a 50 point lead over second place team, Georgia State.

These wins and titles gave the team high hopes for future seasons, despite the fact that they would lose two seniors next year. Their successes showed them that a strong team is not dependent on the age of its members, but their willingness to work together.

Rachel Jablonski