

Holly runs away from 'B' field

Special to The Journal

STURGIS — The team aspect of Holly High's cross country contingent spelled the difference Saturday as the Bronchos earned the Class B state championship on the three-mile course here at Green Valley Golf Course.

The victory for Coach Duane Ralfin's team was by a runaway margin with its 83 points dominating the select field and claiming the school's first state cross country championship.

Battle Creek Harper Creek finished a distant second with 182 and Ainsworth claimed third with 202.

THE BRONCHOS, who finished second to Ainsworth in the Mayville regional last week, didn't have the best individual runner or one of the top three.

By getting superb balance from its top five runners, Holly was a shoo-in for team honors.

Jeff Lewis sparked the Bronchos with a fourth-place finish in 15:35. That effort was supported by Bill Lowande, seventh in 15:41, Larry Davidson 14th in 15:59, Mark Seavey 20th in 16:10 and Don Hamilton 35th in 16:26.

Holly's sixth man, Randy Nixon, finished in 42nd place, just one second behind Hamilton.

"WE RAN A SUPER race and blew them out," was Ralfin's reaction to the victory. "These kids have worked hard all year and they deserve it."

Ralfin compared this team to the Bronchos' 1971 track team which won the state crown.

"This group is a tighter bunch of kids and I would have to say they're probably greater than our '71 track team. They've been outstanding all

year."

Holly had been ranked No. 1 since the start of the season much like its Class A counterpart Grand Blanc which won the Class A crown.

"I'm glad for Grand Blanc, it's just great that both of us could win it," Ralfin said.

The challenge from No. 3-ranked Ainsworth never materialized as Coach Kenn Domerese's team failed to repeat last week's winning effort.

Mike Johnson topped the Spartans with a ninth-place finish in 15:50. However, the next runner in line was

Eric Easter in 32nd followed by John Determan 39th, Bill Olson 57th and Scott Vadovich 65.

JERRY DONAKOWSKI from Dearborn Riverside triumphed in 14:57.8 followed by Brian Demer of Grand Rapid Christian, 15:09, and Mount Pleasant's Tom Fountain, 15:25.

GR Christian placed fourth in the team standings with 207, followed by Rockford 210, New Baltimore Anchor Bay 212, Big Rapids 256, Jackson Lumen Christi 259, Plainwell 274 and Otsego 275.

MSU moves forward with victory

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second half didn't help.

Yet what must have meant most to the Spartans, still on probation for recruiting violations, was licking what some felt was a jinx on this field, which this season is natural grass.

Minnesota boasted a 7-2 advantage in the last nine games and former MSU

Coach Duffy Daugherty never was able to win here in seven chances.

FINALLY, Murray Warmath, former Minnesota coach turned radio commentator, said after this battle, "I haven't seen such an attack by tackles since Carl Eller and Bobby Bell played for me."

He was referring to Larry Bethea

and Mel Land, MSU seniors who ruined the Minnesota shotgun and other passing formations that hurt Michigan so much.

Even so, sophomore Dan Bass led the Spartans with 12 defensive points, five solo tackles and seven assists.

But Land had nine solos and Bethea established an MSU record with his 14th tackles for loss this season, most of them sacks of the opposing QB.