



LEADING THE PACK

Jeff Proulx (1) leads the mob of runners at Faulkwood Shores Saturday as the Class A cross country state meet gets underway. Proulx, of Brighton's state championship squad, ended the meet in ninth place out of nearly 200 runners. A total of 23 teams competed in the Class A race while another 125 runners ran in the Class D meet. Brighton placed four runners in the top 15 for a total of 85 points and the state championship.

Brighton harriers are 1978 state champions

By Keith Turner
Sports Editor

Livingston County Brighton cross country enthusiasts are flying on cloud nine this week after both Bulldog teams made mince meat of most of their opponents at the state meets Saturday.

The boys, coached by Bob Ritzema, ran true to form at Howell's Faulkwood Shores Golf Course as they placed four runners in the top 15 to become state champions for the first time in Brighton High School history. The Bulldogs outscored second

place finisher Grand Blanc by 10 points, 85-96, for the overall victory.

Meanwhile the Bulldog girl harriers, under the direction of Gary Meehan, completed their first season of competition with a third place finish at their state meet in Haslett. Brighton placed two runners in the top 10 to collect 169 points while state champion Rochester scored 120 and runner-up Ann Arbor Pioneer totaled 149.

The Howell boys team was the only other Livingston County squad to compete in a state meet over the weekend, but the Highlanders had a

hard time at Faulkwood Shores Saturday and finished 23rd with 499 points.

"This is the greatest thing that could happen to a coach," said Ritzema after finding that his squad was assured of the championship. "We knew that we were a contender for the title because we could beat the others on paper, but hadn't done it for real."

Saturday was for real, however, as the Bulldog runners kept close together throughout the three miles to finish within sight of each other. Steve Leach led the Brighton squad with a

seventh place finish of 15:06.7. Leach was followed by Grand Blanc's Rich Scharburg, who, in turn, was in front of Brighton's Jeff Proulx at 15:06.8. A Grand Haven runner separated Proulx from teammate Kevin Hurley who took 11th with a 15:11 clocking. Doug Moore completed the four-man Bulldog sweep with a 14th place clocking of 15:20.2.

Ritzema said that his squad changed its practice habits a bit the week before the meet, concentrating on

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Brighton

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speed instead of distance.

"We did that for only two other meets this season," Ritzema said. "Saturday we did some distance work, but the rest of the week was speed. We ran some miles, but not hard ones."

Brighton took 11th place with basically the same team last year and Ritzema was hoping for a better finish this year, though didn't want to admit that the Bulldogs had a shot at the title. Brighton went into Saturday's race rated second in the state.

At Haslett, the girls from Brighton proved to the whole school system that cross country is not entirely a male-oriented sport as the young Bulldog squad placed two runners in the top 10 for the third place finish.

Sophomore Susan Brown led the pack as she finished fourth followed by Pat Hamparian in fifth place.

Rosie Hamparian completed the race in 36th, Beth Pominville was 38th, captain Pam McKenzie was 86th, Kathy Peterson took 88th and Jenny Lancour finished 104th.

Brown, was not only the forerunner of the team timewise but led the efforts to start a girls' cross country team in the first place. After competing on the boys squad

last fall, Brown encouraged other girls to push for a team of their own.

"There just wasn't enough interest in the past to form a girl's cross country team," Meehan said. "When the team was formed coach Ritzema did most of the training with the girls. We trained with the boy's squad all year long and ran as a team all season long also. We had maybe three or four meets separate."

He pointed out that the two teams are so close that after the girls received their third-place medals at Haslett, they wanted to go to Faulkwood Shores to see how the boys were doing.

Brown and McKenzie are the only non-freshmen on this year's Brighton squad, leaving Meehan with pretty good feelings about next year's chances for the championship.

"I'm not going to say how good we will be because I can't really tell," he said. but I will say that I think we will have a chance for the title. Hopefully we will be strong again next year."

Running in the boy's meet for Howell were Dale Furlong, Brett Jarrett, Drew Mauier, Bud Gigler, Kory Penzien, Jim Klann and Dean Furlong.

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