

# Milford harriers are fourth t at state

By MATT SEIDL

What if?  
What if Terese Lemanski and Carrie Pickl would have run their best races?  
What if Theresa Bunker and Amy Young wouldn't have been injured?  
What if Stacy Ray wouldn't have moved to Florida?  
If all of the "what ifs" would have come true, Milford's girls' cross country team probably would be placing a state championship trophy in the school's showcase right now.

Instead, the "what ifs" are just afterthoughts from the Redskins' fourth-place finish in last Saturday's Class A state meet at the IMA Brookwood Golf Course in Flint.

"We did about as well as we could have," Milford coach Gene Balawajder said. "I'm real proud of this team. They've hung in there all season despite all of our setbacks."

"When Stacy moved, they were determined to show everyone that they still were a good team. And when Amy and Theresa got hurt, their attitude was the same. I think the number four team in the state is a pretty good team."

Balawajder was upset immediately following the race because he thought his team should have placed higher, but once he studied the times, he cooled down a bit.

Three of Milford's top five runners recorded personal-best times, and the other two were close to setting new marks.

"If all five would have run their best times, we would have only placed third," Balawajder commented. "With Amy and Theresa, we probably would have been second. And with Stacy, I think we would have won it all."

Despite the problems, Milford still has one of the best girls' cross country teams in Michigan.

Sterling Heights Stevenson won the 26-team event with 127 position points, while Ann Arbor Pioneer was second with 154.

Rounding out the top 10 were Grosse Pointe South with 189, Milford with 207, Washington-Eisenhower with 223, Ann Arbor Huron with 238, Temperance Bedford with 240, Portage Northern with 241, Dearborn Edsel Ford with 251 and Rochester with 256.

The individual winner of the girls' team race was Edsel Ford's Kris Salt, who logged the 6.6-mile course in



Redskin ace Terese Lemanski (inside) struggles for position as she nears the finish line.

place finish from its fourth runner and a 144th from its fifth prevented the Thunderbirds from winning their second straight title.

Pioneer also had problems with balance, placing two runners in the top 10 and two more in the top 25 before having to count a 101st-place finish by its fifth runner.

Lemanski led the scoring for Milford, crossing the line 17th in 19:42. She missed all-state honors by seven seconds.

"Terese started 17th and finished 17th," Balawajder said. "She ran a

Also scoring for the Redskins were Carrie Pickl, 27th in 19:55; Jill Hoye, 32nd in 19:59; Nancy Nielsen, 65th in 20:42; and Becky Lamb, 66th in 20:42.

Hoye, Nielsen and Lamb all recorded personal-best times.

Other Kensington Valley Conference teams competing in the team race were Howell, 12th with 288 points; Brighton, 15th with 402; South Lyon, 17th with 418; and Novi, 25th with 539.

Two of Howell's runners earned all-state honors — Jennifer Schank was 12th in 19:21 and Wendy Gordon was 13th in 19:24. Brighton's top placer was

Lyon's was Kristen Schultz, 22nd in 19:51; and Novi's was Kristen Houtari, 54th in 20:28.

Hartland, another member of the KVC, qualified for the Class B team competition in Dexter but failed to make the top 10. The KVC was the only circuit in the state to have six girls teams qualify for state.

As for Milford...

"We'll give it another shot next year," Balawajder said. "That could be our year. You never know."

If the "what ifs" fall into place Coach "B" may be right.

# Milford girls fourth in finals

In a field of the best 26 girls cross country teams from across the state, the Milford Redskins finished fourth at the state finals in Flint, Saturday, November 2.

Sterling Heights Stevenson, who Milford coach Gene Balawajder said had been rated number one in the state all season, emerged state champions until next year.

Ann Arbor Pioneer and Grosse Pointe South also finished ahead of the Redskins.

Balawajder said 3 of his runners — Jill Hoye, Nancy Nielsen and Heather Ridley — all ran their best times of the season. He added that Terese Lemanski and Carrie Pickl, who finished 1-2 for the Redskins, ran close to their best times of the season.

If all 7 of the Redskin runners had run personal best times, Balawajder said the best the team could have done was third place.

All in all, Balawajder said he was satisfied with the season his girls team had, even though he said he had expected more when the season started.

"The only damper is that we were second in the state last year, and looking at the people we had coming back, we thought it would be a banner year," he said.

The Redskins lost 3 of their top runners this year, 2 to injury and one to the warm weather of Florida. Stacie Ray, who was the number 2 runner on the Redskins last year and first in the state meet, moved to Florida in August where she is the number one runner at a high school in Fort Myers.

Senior Amy Young was lost to Milford after the fifth meet this year. Young was running number one or 2 for the Redskins, Balawajder said.

Another Redskin lost through a freak

injury was Theresa Bunker, who tore her hip in the third meet of the season. A torn muscle took a piece of bone away from her hip. Last year, as a freshman, she finished 37th in the state finals cross country.

There were 178 runners in the state meet this year.

Leading the way across the 3.1-mile course for Milford was Terese Lemanski, who finished 17th in the field and clocked in at 19:42.

The other Milford girls finishers were: freshman Carrie Pickl, 29th place; senior Jill Hoye, 19:54 place; freshman Nancy Nielsen, 65th place; senior Becky Lamb, 20:05 place; junior Heather Ridley, 21:07 place; and Kerry Wolcott, 21:07 place.

## Two Redskins shine in state individuals

The Milford boys cross country team may have been denied the chance to go to the state finals this year, but 2 Redskins provided the best individual showings Milford has ever had in the state individual finals, and one came home with a medal.

Out of 90 runners vying for 15 medals awarded Saturday, November 2, in Flint, senior Tom Royce took 14th place and a medal for the Redskins. Scott Pennebaker, a sophomore, came in 24th place.

According to Redskin coach Gene Balawajder, their showings were the best Milford has done in the individual competition, which is for runners whose teams do not qualify for the state team finals.

Milford was nosed out of a berth in the state final meet by the Lakeland Eagles at a regional meet Saturday, October 26, at the Marshbank metropark in West Bloomfield.

The top 3 teams from that meet qualified for the state finals, Milford finished behind Lakeland, 106 to 102 points.