

# Milford Lakeland, Traverse City win 'A' cross country

■ **Enjoying the weather:** Runners from Walled Lake Western, Sterling Heights Stevenson first.

By Michael Jordan

NUNICA, Mich. — It wasn't the best day for a cross-country meet, but Coach Randy Wilkins and his boys team from Milford Lakeland didn't let adverse weather distract them from winning the state Class A Championship Saturday.

"We came out here early this morning to check things out," said Wilkins, whose team has been to the finals the past nine years but had not won before. "I heard not one negative comment from any of our kids... This kind of weather is great. The worse it (the weather) is, the better it is for us."

"We did what we normally do to prepare for the meet... I just thank the Lord for winning. Without Him, we wouldn't be here today."

Lakeland had 144 points, Walled Lake Western was runner-up with 166, and Monroe finished third with 168.

Two Lakeland runners placed in the top 10. Dean Rugh finished fourth (16:49) and Warren Johnson sixth (16:51).

Monroe junior Matt Krupinski placed eighth (17:02) and Phil Larpard 10th (17:07).

Walled Lake Western's Bill Crosby won the team race in 16:18. His teammate, James Sweetman, was 16th in 17:16.

"I knew I had done all the hard work to get here," said Crosby, who had the fastest time of the Class A meet. "I knew what I had to do, but I really wanted to do well as a team."

Milford's Brian Pickl was the runner-up in the team race (16:38).

In the individual race, Waterford Kettering's Brodie Ladac ran away from the pack at the mile mark and won the individual race in 16:40, beating runner-up Jeff Ort, of Niles, by 18 seconds.

"I was hoping for this kind of weather... I love to run in this stuff," Ladac said.

Traverse City won the girls title. The team, which has been to the finals the last six years, was ranked No. 1 in the latter part of the season.

"We covered all the aspects of the race and we were prepared for anything," Coach Mark Fries said.

Traverse City, which won with 110 points, placed three runners in the top 15: junior Karlene Kurtz, eighth in 20:37; Lori Klingensmith, 14th in 20:53; and Erika Schimik, 15th in 20:55.

Unranked Dearborn Edsel Ford was the surprise team, taking second

with 121 points. Brighton was third with 141.

Edsel Ford was led by Shawn Onorato (16th in 20:56) and Cheryl Klotkowski (18th in 21:02). The school placed four runners in the top 30.

Sterling Heights Stevenson's Christy Goodison won the team race in 19:17, and teammate Tracey Priska was third in 20:05.

East Kentwood's Molly Lori, last year's state champion, was runner-up in 19:31.

In the girls individual race, Royal Oak Dondoro's Elke Thompson won in 20:04, outdistancing her closest competitor by 23 seconds.

"I knew it was going to be cold, but I thought it would be more difficult," said Thompson, who wore No. 1 on her jersey tag.

Belleville's Anne Gray was the runner-up in the girls race (20:27). Wyandotte Roosevelt's Becky Caldwell was third (20:35).

Runners at the Terra Verde Golf Course were hampered by snow and sleet driven by 45-mph winds. The windchill factor was below zero. The 5,000-meter course also was inundated with water and mud.

■ Michael Jordan is a free-lance writer.

■ **Lumen Christi girls repeat:** Hickey of Coldwater is fastest of boys; Fremont team victor.

By Janie Reilly

BIG RAPIDS — By using the weather to their advantage, the Jackson Lumen Christi girls and Russ Hickey of Coldwater became champions Saturday at the Class B Lower Peninsula cross country finals.

About 2,000 fans watched the four 5,000-meter races, run in wind and snow and 29 degrees, at Winter's Creek Golf Course.

Lumen Christi, running in a pack, won its second straight team title and sixth in 14 years with 95 points.

Hickey, a junior, finished first in the boys race in 16:25, sprinting past Marzuki Stevens, Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook senior, in the last 200 yards. Stevens, who ran 15:35 last week at a regional meet, finished in 16:29.

"I tried to draft off him to stay out of the wind," Hickey said. "Coming out of the woods, it hit so hard. The last 200 yards, I lost all comprehension of where the finish line was."

Fremont's boys won their second title in three years with 122 points. Saline was second in the 25-team field with 160. Defending champion Big Rapids finished fifth with 219.

Senior Jeff Christian of Beaverton won the individual race in 16:39.

Big Rapids junior Annie Erlewine won the team race in 19:33. Tecumseh junior Nicole Randolph won her second individual title in three years in 19:42.

Four Lumen Christi runners finished in the top 20, led by senior Julie Kokoczka, who tied for eighth (20:19) with Summer Adolf of Big Rapids. Junior Cathy Jackson was 17th (20:42), freshman Becky Hand was 19th (20:46), freshman Megan Powers was 20th (20:49) and senior Mary Gibson was 31st (21:13).

"We thought the weather was to our advantage, because there were a lot of fast runners, and it would slow them down and allow our depth to come through," Lumen Christi Coach Mike Woolsey said. "Chelsea beat us three times this year. It would have been easy for our girls to quit, but they wouldn't."

Chelsea, ranked No. 1 coming into the race, tied Big Rapids for second in the 24-team field with 134 points, and finished second after the sixth runner's place was used as a tie-breaker.

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Southfield Christian girls teams won Saturday at Frankenmuth. Charlevoix bested second-place Carson City-Crystal, 76-90. Grant followed with 144.

Southfield Christian won by a wide margin, 53-155, over Onsted. Blissfield took third in the girls competition with 180 points.

Buchanan's Michael Smedley (16:48.42) was the top finisher in the boys team race, followed by Mike Sevenski of Charlevoix (16:54.57). In the boys individual race, Michael Ball of Hudson won with a time of 16:21.37. Saginaw Michigan Lutheran Seminary's Christopher Johnson was second in 16:26.47.

Smedley's sister, Megan, gave the family a second winner, taking first in the girls team race in a time of 19:21.78. Jennifer Barber of Frankenmuth was second (20:15.67), followed by Southfield Christian's Laura Wright (20:16.22).

The girls individual champion was Shelby's Amy Hayes (19:37.64). Jenny Stoffel of Lake Michigan Catholic finished second (19:39.42), and Lorenda Godefroitt (St. Louis) was third in 19:46.39.

Janie Reilly is a free-lance writer. Detroit News staff contributed to this report.

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