

Trail blazers

■ Milford boys lost four seniors, but still is a squad to catch

By MARVIN GOODWIN
Of The Daily Oakland Press

Milford's boys cross country team has maintained a high standard during the past 20 or so seasons, but especially recently.

The Mavs won the Division 1 state championship last year and finished second at states the two previous seasons. They've won three straight Oakland County, regional and Kensington Valley Conference titles and have been ranked nationally.

But Milford lost four seniors who placed in the top 44 at last year's state meet, meaning the Mavs could be vulnerable.

At least three other teams in the conference are capable of breaking Milford's three-year string of unbeaten dual meets.

However, the Mavs won't go down easy. With close to 40 runners on the squad, and some untapped talent, Milford will still be a factor in Oakland County and the state meet. And preseason rankings from dyestat.com has Milford ranked No. 4 in the Midwest.

Returns Mike Andersen and Dana Pitcock, who've each gone under 16 minutes in the 5k, give Milford a solid 1-2 combination. Joel Vanderworp and Tim Wilkins also will contribute.

"Those two guys give us four seniors with tremendous experience," Mavs coach Brian Salyers said. "(Now), it's their turn to leave their legacy."

2. Novi — Will be in the mix of the area's top teams with seniors Mark Moore and Amol Huprikar, another tough duo, returning. Both keyed the Wildcats' seventh-place finish at states last year and runner-up finishes at the KVC and regional meets. Spencer Ornes and Kip Miller both have state meet experience along with Justin Namm.

"I'm cautiously optimistic, that's for sure," Novi coach Robert Smith said. "I like where we are right now."

3. Bloomfield Hills Lahser — Lahser's success in the last several years — three straight OAA 2 titles and three straight top-four finishes at the Division 2 state meet, earned the Knights a promotion into OAA I, in which they'll contend again. Seniors Andrew Kennedy, Bruce Kaczmarek and Kirill Zikanov have big meet experience, along with junior Mike Quick. Sophomore Nick Krol and Charlie Najt also will help while Jon Adler and freshman Joey Grace could contribute. Lahser can pack them up high, but needs a front-runner to break out of the pack.

"The challenge is going to be able to stay healthy and competitive on a weekly basis," said coach Nick Stratton.

4. Lake Orion — Should contend for the OAA I title — it tied for the league crown last season — and challenge for a state qualifying berth. Billy Peterson should be among the area leaders, with Rob Shinouskas on the verge of a breakout season. Colin Motley and Jayson Lawton are dependable and freshman Kyle Lawton and Matt Martin will contribute.

Top individual boys

1. Justin Switzer, Waterford Kettering: Division 1 schools are hot on his heels

2. John Black, Birmingham Brother Rice: Consistency has been his trademark

3. Mark Moore, Novi: Decidedly better in longer races

4. Billy Peterson, Lake Orion: Anxious to atone for poor showing at states last year

5. Mike Quick, Bloomfield Hills Lahser: This is a key season for lanky junior

6. Amol Huprikar, Novi: Comes on strong at the end of season

7. Mike Andersen, Milford: Illness sacked him at end of last season

8. Steve Leonard, Lakeland: Can he continue his steady improvement?

9. Dana Pitcock, Milford: Has good combination of speed and endurance

10. Bruce Kaczmarek, Bloomfield Hills Lahser: Needs to stay healthy an entire season

11. Colin Orr, West Bloomfield: Built like a football player but has lots of stamina

12. Jordan Raetz, Rochester: The bigger the race, the better he runs

Others to watch: Brooks Cowan, Troy; Spencer Ornes, Novi; Nick Battista, Orchard Lake St. Mary's; Steve Derico, Pontiac Notre Dame Prep.

"(We have) a good turnout and the whole crew has done a good job of running this summer," coach Stan Ford said.

5. Lakeland — Might be creeping back to its days as a state contender in the late 1990s. Trouble is, they're in the same conference as Milford and Novi. Together, the three teams have accounted for five of the last 10 Division 1 state championships. Senior Steve Leonard, a state qualifier last year, should lead the group with support from juniors Brad Craig and Dan Welch. Luke Heiman and Ryan Matson also should help.

6. Birmingham Brother Rice — Its sluggish starts in past seasons have been concerning for coach Robert Stark, although the Warriors usually get rolling in October. Senior John Black is one of the top runners in the state, and if Chris Wurster improves and Ryan Tamm, Peter Nicolay and sophomore Anthony Wile develop, the Warriors could have a repeat of last season, when they won regional and Catholic League meet titles. They'll be in a tougher regional, though.

7. Rochester — Is in a league-championship groove with OAA I

titles — it shared the championship with Lake Orion last year — the past two seasons. The Falcons lost two solid runners from last year but return enough to contend again. Sam Watson and Jordan Raetz both ran legs on a 7:55 3,200 relay at track states, and Brad Linden has big-meet experience. The three seniors should provide leadership, plus Jon Payne and Brian Garcia could move up. "They've developed a good tradition and they're proud of it," coach Larry Adams said.

8. Oxford — Won't have Donnie Richmond, who's running at Central Michigan, but the Wildcats have a strong tradition to continue. They've won or shared seven straight Flint Metro League titles and have been unbeaten in league dual meets the past six seasons. Top runner Adam Richmond is improving and seniors Kenny White and German Guerrero are experienced. Brad Haney and Todd Davidson should also help. Another league title is possible, but Fenton will be a challenge. "I'm optimistic," coach Ray Sutherland said. "We've had a lot of kids working out and conditioning over the summer."

9. Walled Lake Central — Should rise dramatically from its 1-5 dual meet season on the strength of summer training. Phil Watkins will be the only senior returning, and he'll have support from juniors Sean Maxwell and Scott Stevens. Sophomores Jake Hill and Tony Sanfillipo will be called upon to help immediately. The Vikings, who could challenge for the WLAA title, could have five runners around 17 minutes. But a tough regional awaits them.

10. Troy Athens — Despite the loss of its top runner to graduation, Athens can still compete. Phil Shaheen and Tom Clippard, both four-year runners, return along with junior Eric Brunning and sophomore Matt Shaheen, who both ran at the state meet last year. Sophomore Neal Duggan could contribute. The Red Hawks, though, need to turn it up a notch to contend for the league title.

Best of the rest

11. Walled Lake Western, 12. Troy, 13. Farmington, 14. Hazel Park, 15. South Lyon, 16. West Bloomfield, 17. Orchard Lake St. Mary's, 18. Rochester Adams, 19. Berkley, 20. Farmington Hills Harrison

Boy harriers may have what it takes

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

Novi boys cross country coach Bob Smith is cautiously optimistic about this year's team.

For anyone who knows Smith and his ability to stay calm in even the most hectic or exciting of situations, saying he is cautiously optimistic means he's bubbling over inside though you'd never be able to tell it by the look on his face.

Instead, Smith stays calm and collected.

"I'm going to use the phrase cautiously optimistic," Smith said when asked how he feels about his team. "I'm excited about the season; that's for darn sure."

And he has a right to be. The Novi Wildcats, though not favored in the highly competitive Kensington Valley Conference, stands a good chance at taking home the crown this year thanks to their deep squad.

Headlining for the 'Cats are Amol Huprikar and Mark Moore. Both ran nearly 800 miles over the summer with number three runner Spencer Ornes right behind them.

"I'm very confident in our top three," said Smith. "We have about 10 runners vying for those other top spots."

Such notables are Kip Miller, Steve Fannon, Bobby Watts and Cal DePotter.

The Wildcats boast a very deep

squad this year. Ruixiao Zuo, Mike Wheat, Scott Wagner, Ben Vallerand, Pat Shrader, Aditya Prasad, Jeff Policicchio, Michael Place, Bryant Ornes, Justin Namm, Mike Marsoupiian, Ricky Manza, Chris Machisak, Joshua Lumey, Pat Lee, Eric Johnson, Ben Foerg, Mark DuFresne, Evan Danielsen, Aaron Croad, Jim Brunner, Mike Beard, Peter Andrews and Brett Anderson will all compete for the Wildcats this year.

The biggest goal for the Wildcats is to make the trip to the state meet.

"It's never a given," said Smith. "You never know what's going to happen. I like to think, though, that we have the man power to make

that a very reasonable expectation from this team."

A personal goal for the Wildcats' coach is to have his squad finish in the top 10 in Division I.

"But who knows, we may end up a whole lot better than that," Smith said.

The Novi harriers will have to keep an eye on Milford, Howell and Pinckney this season as they make a run for the league title.

"I'd also like to think we're included in the 'Who's looking good' category," said Smith.

With the likes of the talent the Wildcats bring back this year, that's probably a given.

>> boys

Name	School	Year
Mike Anderson	Milford	Senior
Daniel Clark	Lumen Christi	Senior
Bruce Kaczmarek	Lahser	Senior
Nick Katsefaras	Pinckney	Senior
Mike Quick	Lahser	Junior

>> girls

Name	School	Year
Erin Batt	Hillsdale	Senior
Kristen Frey	Livonia Stevenson	Sophomore
Katelyn Johnston	Bedford	Junior
Chelsea McVay	Croswell-Lexington	Junior
Liz Mengyan	Clarkston	Senior

GREATER DETROIT'S TOP CROSS COUNTRY RUNNERS

>> boys

Name	School	Year
JOHN BLACK	BROTHER RICE	SENIOR
Boyle	Pinckney	Senior
Amol Huprikar	Novi	Senior
Riak Mabil	Grand Ledge	Senior
Mark Moore	Novi	Senior
Tony Nalli	Dexter	Senior
Jimmy Partridge	Sterling Heights	Senior
Dana Pitcock	Milford	Senior
Corey Thelen	Lakewood	Senior
JUSTIN SWITZER	WATERFORD KETTERING	SENIOR

>> girls

Name	School	Year
Caitlin Clifford	Lahser	Junior
Eileen Creutz	Saline	Junior
Erica D'Angelo	Chippewa Valley	Junior
Lindsey Gaudard	Lake Orion	Senior
JENNY MORGAN	CLARKSTON	JUNIOR
Kristina Olsen	Jackson	Junior
Kayla O'Mara	Goodrich	Sophomore
Kelly Sampson	Renaissance	Senior
BEKAH SMELTZER	MONROE JEFFERSON	SOPHOMORE
Lyndsay Smith	Clarkston	Junior

prime-time players

JOHN BLACK enjoyed a terrific season last year, finishing second (16:17.46) at the Catholic League meet, 17th (15:37.10) at the Lower Peninsula Division 1 state championship and 28th (15:55) at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional.

JUSTIN SWITZER finished in eighth place (15:26) at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional and 27th (15:59) at the Foot Locker National Cross Country Championships last year. On the state level, Switzer finished in third (15:09.45) at the Lower Peninsula Division 1 state championship.

JENNY MORGAN, a transfer from Barnesville (Ohio), finished in ninth place (17:56) at last year's Foot Locker Midwest Regional. This fall, she finished in first (17:54) and led Clarkston to the team title at the Midwest Meet of Champions on Sept. 11.

BEKAH SMELTZER earned a second-place mark of 18:00.95 as a freshman at last year's Lower Peninsula Division 2 state championship. She started this year by finishing in second with a time of 18:11 at the Midwest Meet of Champions on Sept. 11.

Huprikar and Moore have lofty goals set for themselves

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

When Novi boys cross country runners Mark Moore and Amol Huprikar were first being inducted into the fraternity of Kensington Valley Conference running there were legends at Novi.

One was Mark Moore's older brother, Tim. Others were so graceful and powerful that none of the underclassmen ever thought they could be that good.

Yes, there were legends at Novi when Moore and Huprikar first started running. Now, they're the legends.

Neither will admit it, but they're the runners that the other harriers look up to. The underclassmen look at the times Huprikar and Moore produce and they think to themselves that they'll never be able to cross the terrain at the clip.

"Our goal is to just go out and do our best," said Moore. "We think we can really run well this year. We've put in a lot of time this summer."

Both Huprikar and Moore spent nearly all summer running together, taking strides through Novi and Northville on their way to amassing nearly 800 miles of summer training.

"We wanted to run more than we had ever done before," said Huprikar. "Mark had been run-

"We think we can really run well this year. We've put in a lot of time this summer."

Mark Moore
Novi cross country senior

ning about 500 or so miles a summer and I was around 600."

So the duo went about their training, adding speed and stamina to their already impressive runs.

This year, both of the senior harriers are hoping to really make it count.

"We want to go to the states," Moore said of the team as a whole. "I would like to finish in the top five. My ideal finish would be top two."

Huprikar practically repeated the exact words during a later interview.

"I would like to finish in the top five," he said. "That would be a great way to end my career here in Novi."

Moore was always a Novi resident. He and his brother, Tim, ran because their dad told them it was a great way to stay in

shape for soccer. Neither continued to play soccer in high school, instead focusing on their running. Tim is currently a harrier at the University of Notre Dame.

Huprikar, on the other hand, grew up in Allen Park and was one of the top runners by the time he finished middle school. His family moved to Novi before the start of his freshman year and he found himself getting a glimpse of what KVC running is all about.

"I went from winning to being in the back of the pack," he said. "I had no idea how much different high school running was compared to middle school."

He learned fast though, coming along nicely before finally challenging for the top spot on the team — a position Moore holds right now.

Do either one think Huprikar will take the lead?

"I don't think so," Huprikar said. "We'll just keep pushing each other."

Moore wasn't so sure.

"If he does, I won't mind," he said. "It'll just push me to do even better. He's always pushing me."

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'Cats look strong already

The Novi Wildcats boys' cross country team should be excited. They started their season off with a goal to be strong right out of the gates and they've done exactly that.

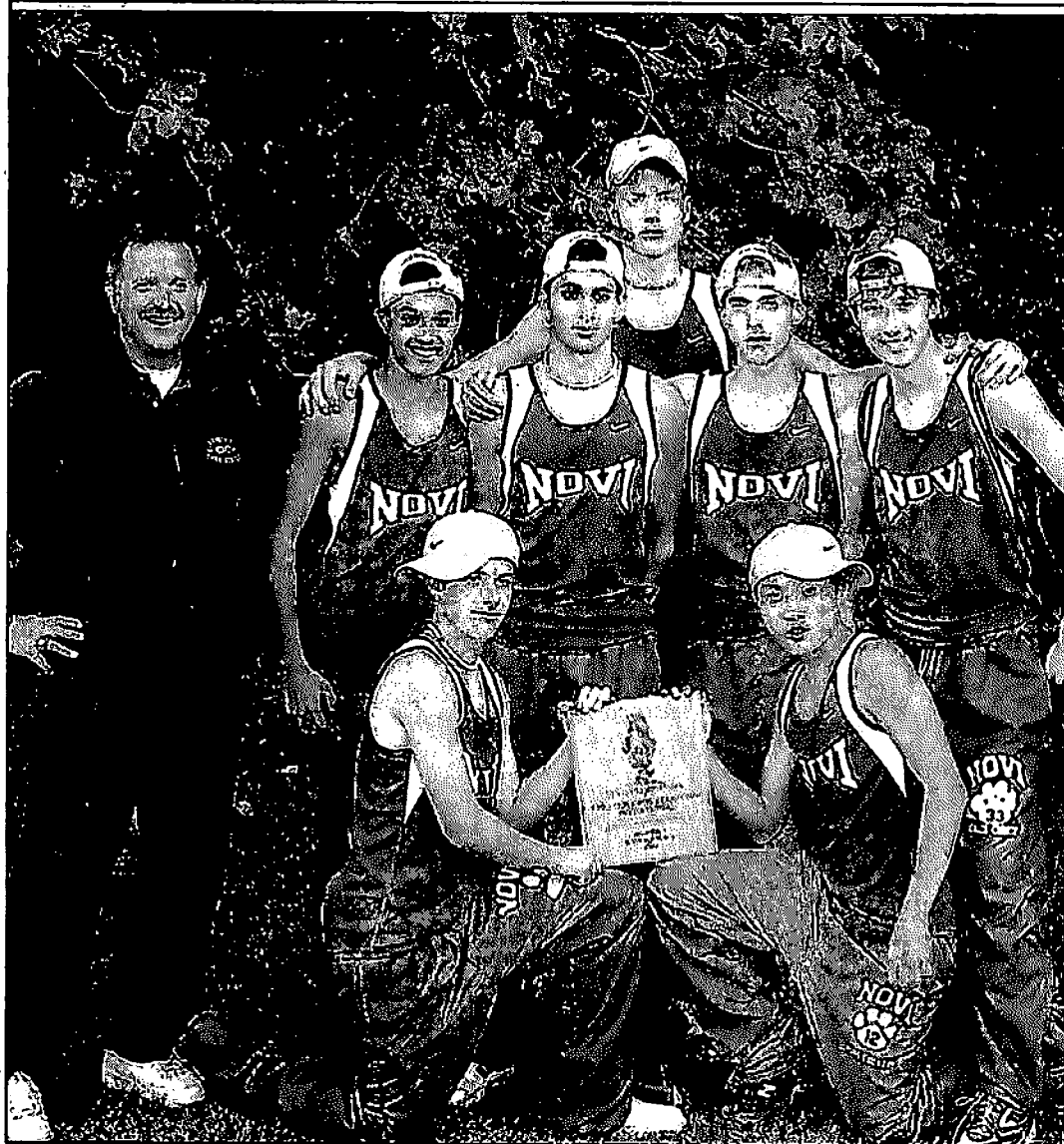
In a scrimmage that tests the squad every year, the Wildcats took on the Northville Mustangs and came away with an impressive 15-48 victory — a perfect score for the 'Cats.

The team took the first six spots and seven out of the top 10, allowing just Northville's Jasen Turnbull to truly test the top runners.

Leading the team were Mark Moore, Spencer Ornes, Amol Huprikar, Kip Miller, Justin Namm and Mark Dufrense with a pack time the Wildcats were well aware they were capable of achieving.

The run, which took place on Novi's home course of Cass Benton in Northville, found a young Wildcat already setting a personal record. Alex Prasad set his PR and finished in the top 10.

The Wildcats are scheduled to be back in action when the girls and guys play host to KVC rival Pinckney Sept. 8 at 4:30 p.m. before participating in the Walled Lake Western Invitational Sept. 11 at 9 a.m.



Submitted Photo

The Novi boys' cuntry team dons the hats of champions as they hoist the plaque given to them as the best team at the Michigan State University Spartan Invitational Cross Country Meet. The meet features some of the top teams in the state as well as some from Ohio.

Wildcats earn top spot at MSU

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

The Novi boys' cross country team started the season off with a gut feeling — they knew they had a special team with some special ability.

Last week, they proved it.

The Wildcats, led by coach Robert Smith, took first place at the Michigan State University Spartan Invitational in East Lansing. The squad earned 87 points to take the top position while Kensington Valley Conference rival Pinckney took second with 105. Finishing in third was Traverse City Central, scoring 180 points.

The finish was impressive, especially considering the field consisted of 27 teams, some of which hailed from as far away as Ohio.

Mark Moore, a senior harrier, finished as the top Wildcat in the race. He came across the line third

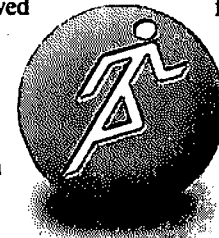
overall in the race with Amol Huprikar fishing 10th overall. Justin Namm came across the line in 17th place and Kip Miller took 20th overall. Spencer Ornes had a nice showing in the extremely competitive field, finishing in 37.

The course was extremely flat, giving the Wildcats a glimpse of the style of course they will run in the state finals this season. Due to it being so fast and flat, numerous 'Cats set personal-best times with their runs.

Earlier in the week, Novi topped Howell in dual meet action. The final tally was 21-37.

Taking first was Moore, while Huprikar finished just behind him in second place. Howell managed to take third and fourth, while Namm and Ornes took fifth and sixth and Miller was seventh.

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Switzer rocks at Spartan invite

By MARVIN GOODWIN
Of The Daily Oakland Press

EAST LANSING — The rock music blaring from two big speakers on the Forest Akers Golf Course might have made the adults cringe, but it was music to hundreds of runners' ears at Friday's Spartan Invitational.

"It gets you pumped up to run," beamed Justin Switzer of Waterford Kettering, who took first in the boys race.

Along with Switzer, who won his second invitational — he took the West Bloomfield-Brother Rice title last week — Clarkston's girls rocked to the beat as they won their second straight team title.

Novi's boys, not to be left out, chimed in with a team title of their own, winning with 87 points in finishing ahead of Kensington Valley Conference rival Pinckney (105) and Bloomfield Hills Lahser 124.

The Wildcats, beaten by Pinckney in a dual meet recently, have been under the radar as a formidable squad. But not any more. Novi had four finishers in the top 20 with Mark Moore (third) and Amol Huprikar (10th) leading the squad in one of the state's most competitive meets.

"We wanted to showcase our team a little earlier this year," said Novi coach Robert Smith, making his first appearance at the meet with his squad.

"We've got a good team. (And) winning a meet of this magnitude helps our confidence."

Switzer came in at 15:36 for the 5K course, pulling away from Moore in the final mile. "My goal was to push the pace right away and get out in front," said Switzer, who is being recruited by Stanford, Oregon and Michigan among other schools.

For Clarkston's girls, it was the same old song with Jenny Morgan and Liz Mengyan leading the way. Morgan clocked 18:07 to win her second straight invitational title — she was Midwest Meet of Champions titlist last week in Ohio — and Mengyan followed in 18:14 for second.

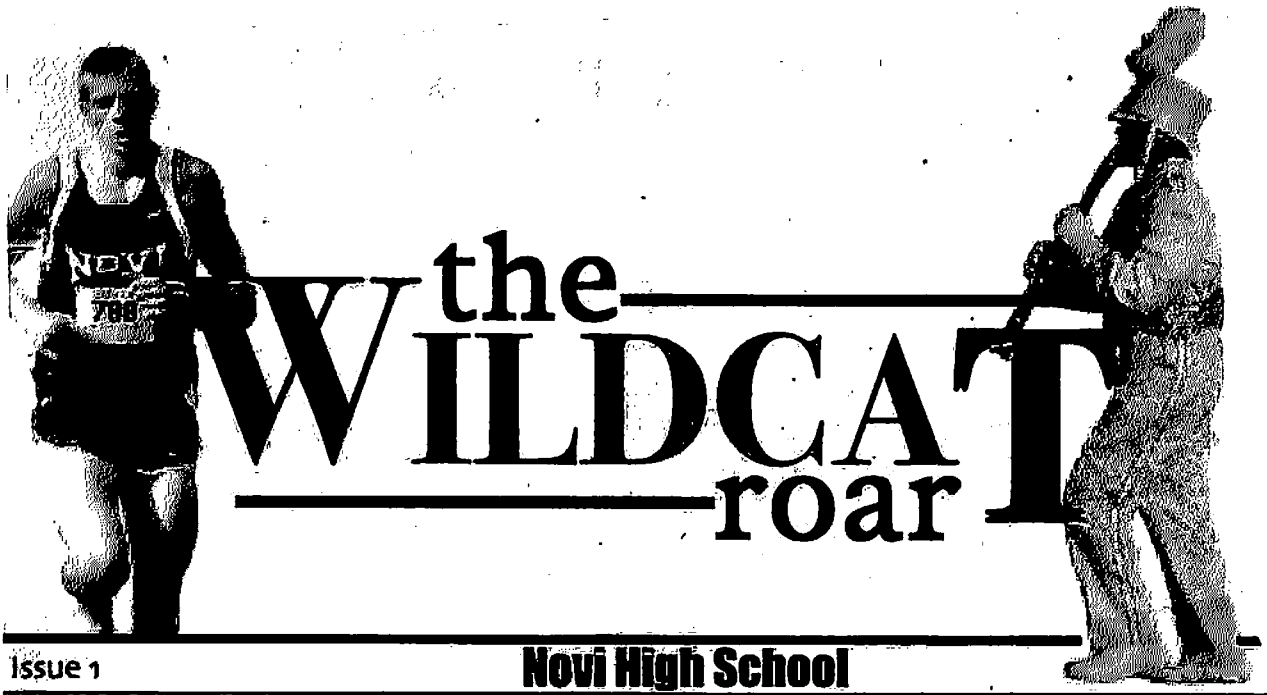
Mengyan overtook Goodrich's Janee Jones midway through the race for the 1-2 finish. "She (Jones) started to slow down and I made my move," said Mengyan, who was third last week at the Midwest Meet of Champions. "I'm ready for more great races."

So is Morgan, who led virtually from the start. "It was a lot more mental (staying in front) but I'm glad I had my teammates behind me."

They included Anne Oltman (ninth), Lyndsay Smith (11th) and Gillian Nordquist (23rd) who completed Clarkston's scoring. The Wolves had seven runners among the top 42 places.

Lahser's Mike Quick placed sixth in 16:05 to lead the Knights. Rochester's Sam Watson was fifth in 16:04 and teammate Jordan Raetz was seventh in 16:13.

CROSS COUNTRY



the WILDCAT roar

Issue 1

Novi High School

Sports

September 2004

Kicking in for KVCs

APOORVA RASTOGI
Staff Writer

According to senior captain Mark Moore, the Boys Cross Country team is determined to do well at all their meets.

"We would like to be top three in the state, win the KVC, win our Regional, and do well at the Oakland County meet," Moore said.

With a list of goals like these, the team is putting in a lot of effort at practices and meets.

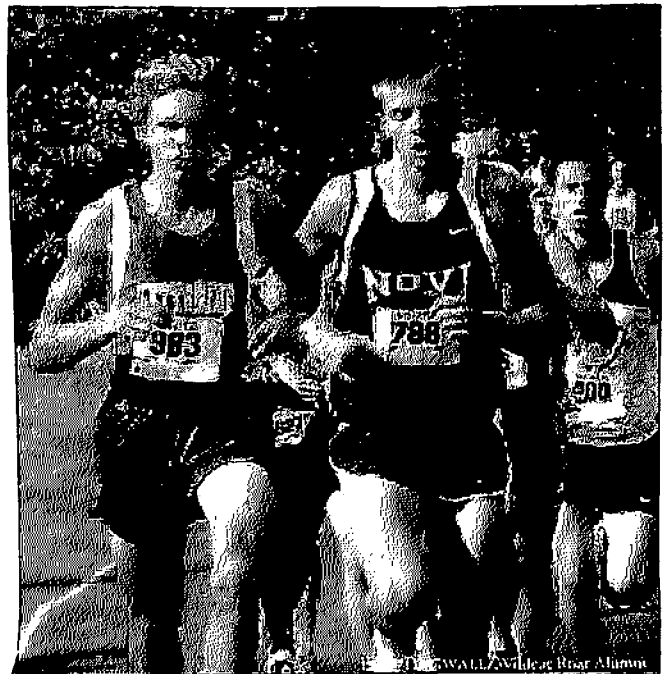
"This is the best team I've ever been on, and we've been working real hard all summer, so I expect big things," Moore said.

According to Moore, the team is working hard to be the best it can.

Cross Country

"This year the KVC is the best it's ever been. It's basically the state meet minus a few teams. I think we can win it, but it'll take good races from all of us to do well," Moore said.

With their hard work and dedication, the team hopes to rank at all their meets.



Mark Moore sprints ahead of the group to cross the finish line. Moore placed third and the team placed first at the Spartan Invitational.

Runners setting 'harried' pace for great season

In the beginning of the season, Novi boys' cross country coach Robert Smith said he was excited about this season.

No, he didn't use that exact term, but if you come to know Smith you'll quickly realize he can be excited without letting you know he's excited. He says things like "guarded enthusiasm" to



Sam Eggleston

throw you off, but if the word enthusiasm comes up you know he's bubbling over.

Smith had a right to be bubbling over. His Wildcats harrier team, led by seniors Mark Moore and Amol Huprikar, are proving to be a group of some very tough cookies.

They came out looking to be a contender. They wanted to be up with the best in the state. The Wildcats hoped to make a run at yet another year of prestige.

They're going to do that and so much more.

Unlike sportswriters, who can generally say whatever they please — if they say a team is going to win the conference and they do, then the sportswriter is a genius; if they don't, it's written off as know-it-all sportswriters pontificating — a coach must mind his words.

A coach can't come out and tout their team no matter how much they'd like to. They give support and encouragement but they can't come out and say their team is the real deal in a run for a title. If they do and they're right, people say their pompous and arrogant. If they do and they're wrong, people say they're foolish and ignorant.

It's really a lose-lose situation for a coach. It's not for a sports writer.

So, let's go ahead and talk up these Wildcats. They run in one of the toughest — if not the toughest — conference in the state. For years they ran in the toughest regional. Now, they're going to make it all pay off.

Sure, there have been great Wildcats teams in the past. Sure, they have always competed, but this year they're going to be great.

The state finals really aren't that far away when you break it down. It will take a lot of hard work and a lot of dedication, but this squad is going to make it as a team. You know what else? Huprikar and Moore will finish in the top five.

Coach Smith never would, nor has he ever, said any of this. That's the part about being a coach, about being careful.

This Novi Wildcats boys' cross country team is the real deal. They are going to make a run for every competitive title. Novi will be proud when all is said and done because Coach Smith is going to have yet another class of college-bound harriers leading the pack.

Novi cross country is burning up the course thanks to some

RED HOT RUNNING



The Novi Wildcats boys cross country team is currently ranked second in the state.

SPORTS

NOVI NEWS-Thursday, October 14, 2004

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

For the Novi Wildcats boys cross country team, the Oakland County meet is a great way to measure themselves against one of their most bitter conference rivals, Milford.

The measuring took place last Saturday when the two teams faced off along with a slew of other Oakland County schools. The result? Milford earned the top spot in the meet with 57 points while Novi came in second with 68.

"We didn't get to see everyone like Pinckney, the Ann Arbors or Traverse City, but we did get to see the depth of our team," Novi coach Bob Smith said. "In the Oakland County meet if you have any weaknesses they are going to be magnified. There might end up being a whole army running between your third and fourth guys."

Novi, thankfully, didn't have

such an occurrence.

"I don't think we have any glaring weaknesses," said Smith. "All of our top five runners stayed really close together. We are tough through the top runners, including our three through sixth, which is a combination other teams are finding hard to beat."

Except, of course, Milford—the team that has found itself ranked first in the state in the coaches' poll and second in the Midwest and ninth in the country by running groups. Novi isn't far behind, earning a second-place ranking in Michigan, ninth in the Midwest and

possibly the top-25 in the country.

"I don't like talking about rankings," Smith noted. "We can't get stupid and play the rankings game. That came up and bit us a few years ago."

So, his squad needs to focus instead. Every day and every meet has to be run like they are entering the twilight of the season. Why? Because the confer-

ence meet and the regional are right around the corner.

"It's been kind of a wild ride," Smith said. "We have to keep our focus daily."

The Wildcats had a strong showing at the Oakland County race with Mark Moore leading his squad with a third-place finish. He ran the course in just

16:19. Not far behind was Amol Hupikar with a sixth-place finish while Spencer Ornes finished 14th and Justin Namm finished 20th. Taking 25th was Kip

Miller, while the always-improving Bobby Watts crossed the finish line in 29th. Mike Wheat, a sophomore, was the seventh runner for Novi, earning a 60th place.

"This was Milford's home course," Smith said. "You've got to see that they have a little advantage."

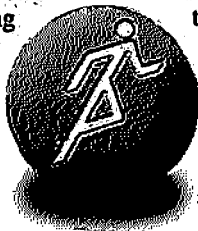
Home course advantage is more prominent in cross-country than nearly any other sport. With hills, twists and turns and trails to be run, a team that races the course and practices on it now and again will have the better advantage.

If the run would have taken place elsewhere?

"It just may have been too close to call," Smith said, noting he wasn't going to speculate.

His team will have their chance to prove their mettle against the Mavericks. Novi is scheduled to visit Milford Tuesday at 4:30 p.m.

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By MARVIN GOODWIN

Of The Daily Oakland Press

MILFORD — Clarkston's girls and Milford's boys cross country teams have been so comfortable with the Oakland County title that they each decided to keep it Saturday at Kensington Metropark.

Both squads won their fourth straight championship, keeping alive an impressive string of performances.

Meanwhile, Justin Switzer of Waterford Kettering and John Black of Birmingham Brother

CROSS COUNTRY

Rice were perhaps the most uncomfortable pair at the park. Switzer took first in the boys race, but was disqualified for wearing jewelry (an earring) during the race, a violation of MHSAA rules. Black, who took second, was the reluctant champ. "It definitely felt awkward," said Black, who got the first-place medal and clocked 15:58 for the five-kilometer course. "Justin ran faster, he really earned it. (But) it was definitely my hardest effort of the year."

Switzer crossed the line first but his ear was taped and Jerry Cerulla, the boys race starter saw it. Cerulla said he discussed the infraction with Dale Kutche, the girls race starter, and meet official Lou Marimonti and the decision was made. "Nobody feels worse than we do," Cerulla said.

"It's the no jewelry rule, period," Kutche said, "and jewelry cannot be taped."

It was a tough lesson for Switzer.

"It's disappointing," he said. "My coach is more upset than I am. We thought we just had to put tape over it."

Clarkston scored a miniscule 33 points as Jenny Morgan (18:50) and Liz Mengyan (19:03) finished 1-2 with Gillian Nordquist (eighth), Anne Oltman (10th), Jenna Leach (12th) and Lyndsay Smith (13th) following.

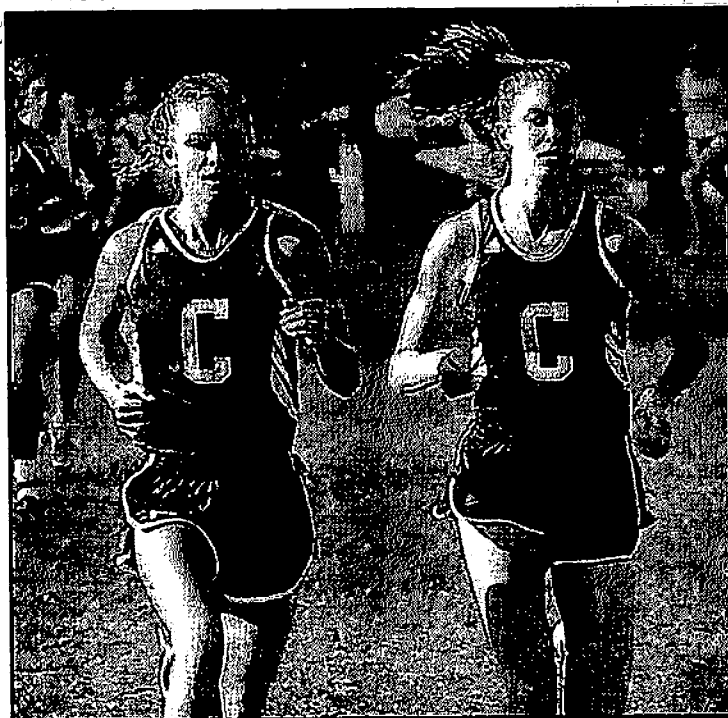
Milford's Carlie Green was third, leading the Mavs to second place with 126 points and Novi was third with 189.

Morgan was still feeling the affects of a bout with bronchitis, but she forged on. "I wasn't feeling too good, but I just had to perform," she said. "I'm lucky to have girls around me, and then knowing how hard they were working behind me."

Mengyan, Oltman and Nordquist have been around for all four titles.

"Our girls work hard and I know we deserve it," Mengyan said. "It's a great feeling."

"It's especially good for the



The Daily Oakland Press photos/CHARLIE CORTEZ

ABOVE: Clarkston's Jenny Morgan (right) and Liz Mengyan lead the pack in the girls race and finished first and second. BELOW: Waterford Kettering's Justin Switzer won the boys race, but was disqualified because of a no jewelry rule.

seniors," Clarkston coach Jamie LaBrosse said. "Sometimes girls regress ... but they're running the best they've ever run."

Nicole Hammer of Troy Athens was fourth in 19:20 and Erin Lafave of Bloomfield Hills Lahser was fifth in 19:39. Both are freshmen.

Ortonville Brandon, led by Kayla Doan's 29th place, was a surprising fourth with 250 points, and the top-finishing team among Division 2-3-4 teams.

While Clarkston breezed to its title, Milford sweated it out as the Mavs scored 62 points and finished only 11 ahead of Novi. Bloomfield Hills Lahser was third with 113.

It was the eighth time Milford has won the county title. "This is a tremendous accomplishment for us," Milford coach Brian Salyers said. "We knew Novi and Lahser are some of the top teams in the state. We had to earn this."

Dana Pitcock took second in 16:06 to lead Milford, Novi's Mark Moore was third in 16:19 and Milford's Mike Andersen was fourth in 16:24, a second ahead of Bloomfield Hills Lahser's Mike Quick and Novi's Amol Huprikar (16:30).

Joel Vanderworp (seventh) and freshman Nick Andersen (12th) were other top finishers for Milford.

Lake Orion was fourth with 209 as Billy Peterson, in only his second race of the season following an injury, placed ninth.



Clarkston, Milford win county meet

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2004

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2004

RUNNING THEIR RACE



The Daily Oakland Press/CHARLIE CORTEZ

Justin Namm (right) of Novi has a pack of runners on his tail during the Oakland County cross country championships at Kensington Metropark. Milford won the team title for the fourth straight year, with Novi coming in a close second. Waterford Kettering's Justin Switzer competed, but he was disqualified for a rules violation after finishing first.

Thursday, October 14, 2004

■ Novi collects perfect score against South Lyon

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

It looks like South Lyon cross country coach Scott Smith is in debt for yet another steak dinner.

A bet that has been around for as long as the Lions' coach and his brother, Novi boys' cross country coach Bob Smith, have been coaching each other has once again come due.

"I think he's behind by four," Bob Smith noted.

Novi took charge of the meet, earning a perfect score as they trampled the South Lyon Harriers, 15-49.

Leading the way for Novi was Amol Huprikar, who ran to a first place finish for Novi while

Bobby Watts took second.

Spencer Ornes showed that his continually driving himself to be better and stronger, notching a third-place finish in the race while Kip Miller captured fourth and Justin Namm took fifth to capture the perfect score. In sixth was Mark Moore, while the nearest South Lyon runner came in seventh in the race, which was held at South Lyon's home course.

All six of Novi's runners cross the line shoulder to shoulder, but had to be given places by the officials at the meet.

That was Novi's plan — have the boys run together and finish in a tight pack.

"It's a tremendous confidence

builder and those guys understood what it takes to stay in a pack and just how close they really are to the front-runners."

However, Novi's ability to pack did leave the Lions in the dust.

"We were able to keep a tight pack of six and we ended up taking care of a very good team's lead runner and put them in our pocket," Smith noted. "My poor brother was a victim of our training strategy though."

South Lyon, however, may be back next season to help even the odds and the steak dinners.

"We'll graduate a lot of very talented runners this year," Bob Smith said. "They graduate no one."

SPORTS

DETROIT FREE PRESS

FRIDAY

Oct. 15,
2004

KVC earns reputation as Valley of the Giants

*Can't catch breath
in this fast company*

CROSS-COUNTRY

By WRIGHT WILSON
FREE PRESS SPECIAL WRITER

After Milford won its fourth consecutive Oakland County cross-country championship at Kensington Metropark on Saturday, the Mavericks hardly had a chance to savor the victory.

"This starts what is an unbelievable stretch for us in intensity and competition. There is no rest," said Brian Salyers, coach of the state's top-ranked Division 1 boys team.

On Tuesday, Milford beat fifth-ranked Pinckney, 27-28, in a dual meet. Next Tuesday, second-ranked Novi waits in the wings.

Chalk that up to membership in the Kensington Valley Conference, an eight-school league that has long enjoyed a reputation for cross-country excellence.

Even so, this appears to be an up year for the league. In addition to four ranked schools (Howell is ninth), White Lake Lakeland and South Lyon received honorable mention in the statewide coaches poll this week.

KVC runners say the tough opposition prepares them for other invitationals and championship races.

"It helps you know your competition going into the state meet," said Novi senior Mark Moore, a returning all-state runner. "Novi, Milford and Pinckney are probably three of the top teams in Division 1 right now."

"The competition in the league is one of the biggest things for us," said Howell coach Paul Webster.

"We just get used to it. If we want to do well in the league, we just have to get really fast."

When Howell won the Haslett Invitational on Oct. 2 — finishing ahead of then-No. 2 Ann Arbor Huron — it had a league dual meet record of 1-3.

"The KVC has produced the state champion team in the past six out of nine years, and it's been done by four different teams," Novi coach Robert Smith said. "Brighton, Milford, Lakeland and Novi have done it — and Pinckney's lurking."

Last year, Milford won the Division 1 team title. Pinckney finished sixth and Novi seventh. Six of the top 30 — the cutoff for all-state recognition — came from KVC schools. Coaches think the conference would have had an even greater presence had the KVC schools not all run in the same regional at Clarkston.

"We were fourth, so we weren't real happy," Howell's Webster said. "Last year we were a definite top-10 team and we didn't get out" of regionals.

That should change this season. KVC schools will be scattered at different sites for the Oct. 30 regionals. Brighton, Hartland, Howell and Pinckney are assigned to the Grand Ledge race; Milford, Lakeland and South Lyon will compete at Holly, and Novi will run at Northville.

The schools' last chance to run together comes at the league championship meet, Oct. 25 at Hudson Mills Metropark near Dexter.

Webster said eight runners are capable of breaking 16 minutes there: Howell's John Wilson and Adam French, Milford's Dana Pitcock and Mike Andersen, Novi's Moore and Amol Huprikar, and Pinckney's Ian Boyle and

Nick Katsaferas.

"I've been around this area for a long time, and this is as tough as our conference has ever been, and our conference has been the most dominant in the state of Michigan for the last 15 years," Salyers said. "There are a number of factors. One is geography — there's a number of great places for the kids to run. Another is coaching: We have a number of coaches who are the only ones that have ever coached at their school. Over the years they've been successful, the other coaches have been able to learn from that, and as a result the bar has been set so high. If you can rise to that level in our league, that means you're a state contender."

The league's elite runners seem to welcome the challenge.

"You can win a bunch of conference meets by going 16:30," Moore said. "But not the KVC."

Ready for a confence showdown?

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

With a convincing win against Hartland last week and a strong showing at the Gabriel Richard Invite, the Novi Wildcats are beginning to prep for one of their biggest challenges of the year — the Kensington Valley Conference championships.

Novi, ranked second in the state presently, will race top-

ranked Milford and fourth-ranked Pinckney October 25.

"This is basically the state meet minus probably Ann Arbor Pioneer," senior Mark Moore said. "It's going to be a real battle."

One that will let the Wildcats know exactly where they stand. Already, the squad nearly overtook Milford in a highly-competitive Oakland County meet, but they didn't have quite the show-

ing needed.

This time around, the addition of Pinckney, Howell and the other KVC schools will make it more interesting.

"Every team has their top two runners," senior Amol Huprikar said. "Between us, Milford, Howell and Pinckney the top two runners from each school will probably finish in the top eight. It will depend on the third, fourth and fifth runners to see who will

win it."

Both Moore and Huprikar, who have become two of the leading runners in the state, have plenty of confidence in the other harriers.

Rounding out the top seven for Novi are Spencer Ornes, Kip Miller, Mike Wheat, Bobby Watts and Justin Namm.

"They are all working extremely hard and are keeping pace with us during workouts," Huprikar said. "I'm very confident in their abilities."

Novi will have to put up some of the best times this year if they hope to overcome Milford — something both Huprikar and Moore believe is possible.

"I think we can win it as long as we put everything together," said Moore. "We've been improving that whole season in that regards. I don't see why we can't win it."

The possibility of season-best times is there as well.

"We'll be running at Pinckney's home course, which is one of the fastest we've run all year," Huprikar said.

Ranked second in the state and taking on the first- and fourth-ranked teams is never easy — but in the end what does a ranking mean?

"Nothing at all," Huprikar said. "Some teams never live up to their rankings and some unranked teams can end up being rather impressive."

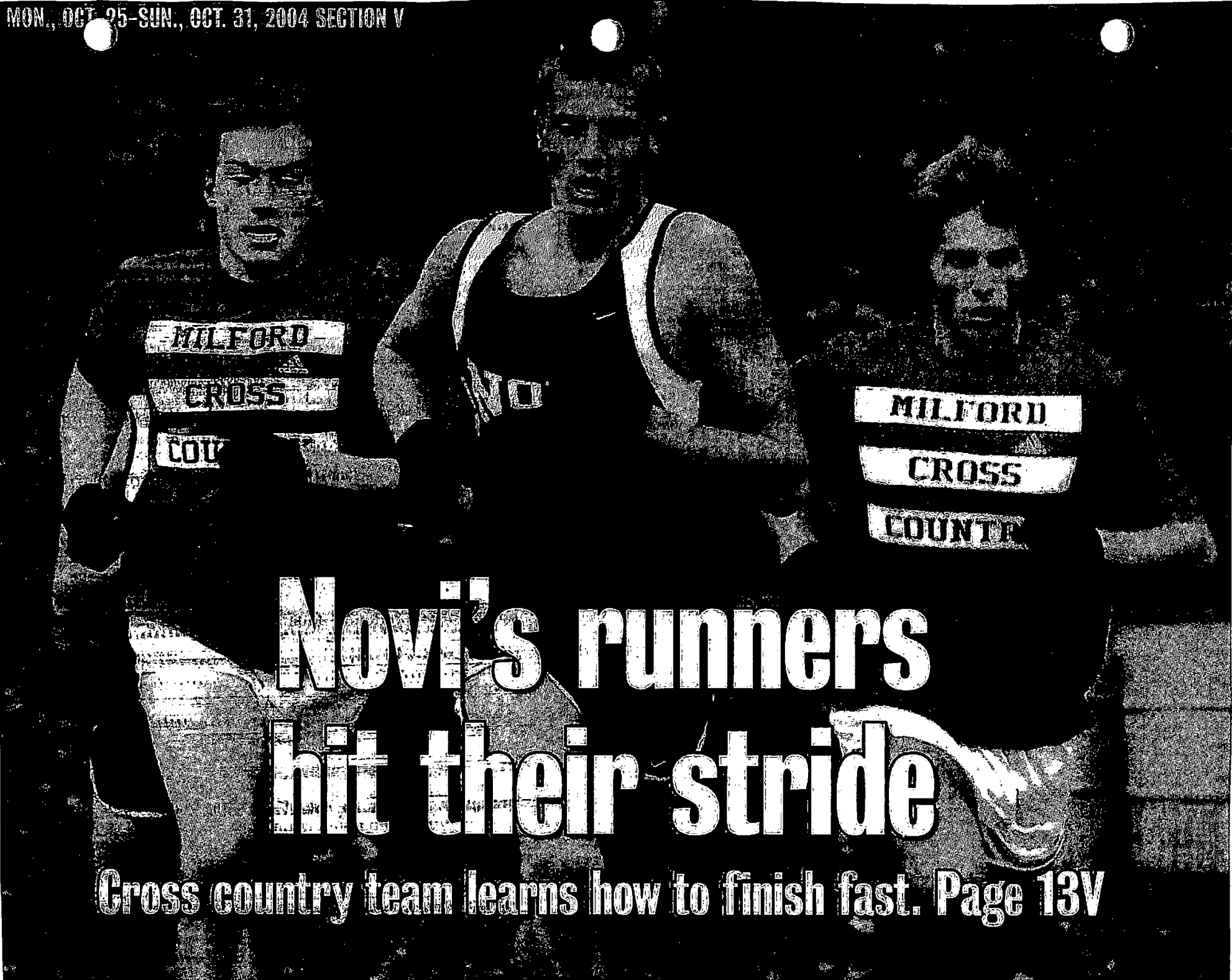
If Novi continues to run the way they have been all season, then the ending to their year will no doubt end up being rather impressive indeed.



Submitted Photo

The Novi Wildcats will be looking to make some noise when they take on top-ranked Milford and fourth-ranked Pinckney in the KVC race. Novi is ranked second in the state.

Sam Eggleston can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 104 or at seggleston@ht.homecomm.net.



Novi's runners hit their stride

Cross country team learns how to finish fast. Page 13V

The Detroit News NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Monday, October 25 - Sunday, October 31, 2004 | The Detroit News 13V

SPORTS



Ricardo Thomas / The Detroit News

The Novi High School boys cross country team races against Milford at Kensington Park for a victory. The Novi team won state titles in 1998 and 1999.

Novi's program has become a premiere one in the state.

LOCAL NEWS

Novi runners pace competition

Cross country squad keeps up its numbers

By Ken Welsch
Special to the Detroit News

NOVI — You remember the Rat Pack. More recently there was the Brat Pack. Now meet the Cat Pack.

The Novi boys cross country team, armed with legs too numerous to count, has ridden those numbers to become one of the premier cross country programs in the state.

Sure, having front-line talent helps, and the Wildcats have, since their state championship years of 1998 and 1999, always boasted one or two top-flight runners. But their true strength is in their numbers, a quality that this year's Wildcat team embodies more than any previous.

"Our original plan was to get our pack time under a minute," said coach Robert Smith. "Now we're down to 30 or 40 seconds."

The pack time — or the amount of time separating their Nos. 1 and 7 runners — continues to dwindle right on schedule. With the Division I regional meet set for Oct. 30 at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, the Wildcats appear on pace to continue their recent tradition of saving their best races for last.

"We have a good reputation of peaking at the right time," Smith said. "We seem to have figured out how to finish the season."

In short, they finish fast.

Beginning in 1998 when the Wildcats won the state championship behind speedster Tim Moore, Novi has been as unflappable as any team in the state. Novi repeated its title in 1999, finished runner-up in 2000 and 2001, dropped to third in 2002 and finished seventh last year.

The Wildcats have found a formula that works. Seniors Mark Moore and Amol Huprikar provide the wheels and regularly turn in front-of-the-pack finishes. Moore's personal best time this season is 15 minutes, 52 seconds, and Huprikar isn't far behind at 16:25. Both are returning all-staters.

Behind them, but not far, is the pack that has become synonymous with Novi cross country. Using their personal bests, senior Justin Namm,

Novi High School cross country team

Brett Anderson	Mike Marsoupien
Peter Andrews	Kip Miller
Mike Beard	Mark Moore
Jim Brunner	Justin Namm
Alfredo Cateriano	Bryant Ornes
Aaron Croad	Spencer Ornes
Evan Dantelsen	Michael Place
Cal DePotter	Jeff Policchio
Mark DuFresne	Alex Prasad
Steve Fannon	Nathan Quay
Ben Foerg	Aditya Sathi
Amol Huprikar	Pat Shrader
Eric Johnson	Scott Wagner
Pat Lee	Robert Watts
Joshua Lumley	Mike Wheat
Chris Machisak	Ruixiao Zuo
Ricky Manza	

sophomore Kip Miller, junior Bobby Watts, senior Spencer Ornes and sophomore Mike Wheat all run within 20 seconds of one another.

A glance at this year's roster indicates that the Wildcats should be in good hands next season. A glance at the results from a junior varsity meet in Oakland County earlier this season show they should be in good shape next year and beyond.

The junior varsity Cats won the Oakland County meet. Afterward, Smith went and calculated that the Cats would have beaten a team of All-Stars, everyone in the field versus Novi.

"It's nice to see," Smith said. "You already hear guys talking, 'I can't wait until next year when it's our turn.'"

"We'll feel the pinch of this (graduating) class, you always do, but we'll be all right. The future looks pretty bright."

Ken Welsch is a Metro Detroit free-lance writer.

SPORTS

It's state crown or bust for Novi cross-country



Photos by JERRY S. MENDOZA/Special to the Free Press

Novi cross-country runner Spencer Ornes beats Justin Namm and Mark Moore (center) in a team competition. Coach Robert Smith has devised some exercises to break the monotony of ordinary drills.

Wildcats runners have depth, talent and desire

THURSDAY, OCT. 28, 2004

CROSS-COUNTRY

BY MARK SNYDER
FREE PRESS SPORTS WRITER

Hard work can make the Novi boys cross-country team sick.

But that's OK with them. Their motto is: If you've never thrown up after a hard workout, you probably haven't pushed yourself enough.

In September, when the "9-1-1" drill — running 1,000 meters, a mile, then another 1,000 — had some of the younger runners losing their lunch, the captains promised their effort would be worth it come November.

"They see how much we want it," senior tri-captain Amol Huprikar said. "We run those workouts at the beginning of the fall."

Regionals are Saturday, the state finals are Nov. 6, and Novi is eyeing the state title.

Coach Robert Smith's Wildcats have thrived in the past seven years, winning the class A title in 1998 and 1999 and finishing as Division 1 runner-up in 2000.

The senior class expects a championship after finishing 10th, third and seventh the past three years. They realize this is their chance at lasting glory.

The Wildcats, led by tri-captains Mark Moore, Huprikar and Steve Fannon, tied for first place in the Kensington Valley Conference dual meet season with a 6-1 record. Their only loss came to Pinckney early in the season when the Wildcats were still training heavily.

The one victory that people will talk about until the state finals came Oct. 19, when Novi edged the defending Division 1 champs Milford, 27-29.

Novi's runners finished second, fourth, sixth, seventh, eighth and 10th, featuring impressive depth highlighted by a late kick from junior Bobby Watts.

"It was huge because it was basically the top two teams in the state," Smith said, adding that he expects Pinckney, Ann Arbor Pioneer and Ann Arbor Huron to also contend for the title. "We were going head to head with them basically on their home turf and it was a very strategic-type course. So you have to know how to race."

The win was Novi's first over Milford in four years.

So what makes this year different from all other years?

"We have a lot of depth," Fannon said. "We have the people who don't score help us mentally in practice. The slower runners don't take it easy just because they're not in the front."

Novi also received a boost when senior Cal DePoter and Watts decided to join the team this fall.

Watts, who also plays hockey, is the team's No. 5 runner and DePoter, who chose to run instead of playing soccer, is the eighth or ninth man.

"Bobby's just got so much talent," said Moore, Novi's top runner who finished 10th at last year's state meet. "Bobby's been improving every race and getting more miles."

Talent and depth have played a major role in Novi's run for the state finals. The Wildcats are expected to advance easily from their regional at Northville.

Much of Novi's success can be traced back to Smith, who tries to keep his runners' minds and legs fresh.

One or two days a week he breaks the monotony with a running game he invented — sometimes "speedball," sometimes an interval elimination game — just to change the pace.

Smith also talks about non-cross country details: what to eat, what to avoid on the weekends, even what shoes to wear to school.

"Though it may have taken them all a few years to buy into

Smith's theories, the older runners have reaped the benefits.

"Junior year I started to follow that and people see that it works," Huprikar said.

"It takes you to the next level," Moore said.

Novi is in peak form and getting stronger, with just nine days left until the state meet.

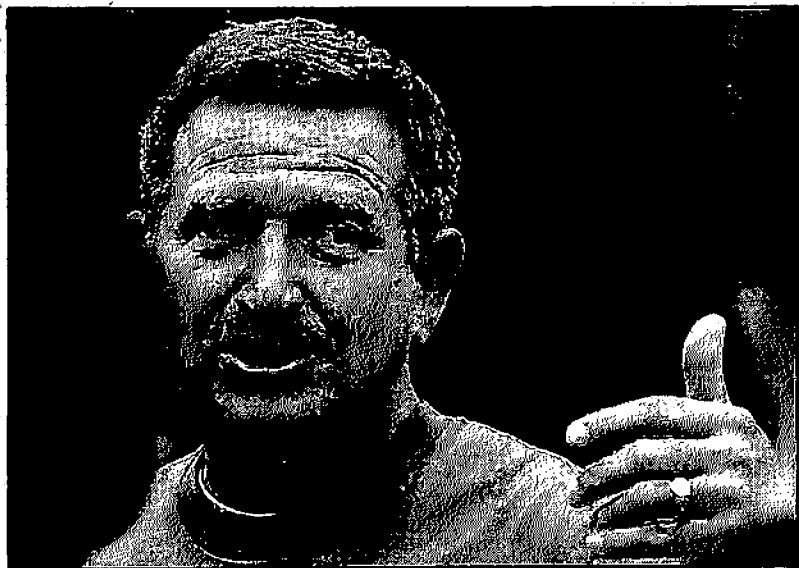
"We have a group of dedicated athletes and have a winning formula that's tremendous," Smith said.

"We have an ability to win at the end."

TOP RUN

Novi's top seven runners, who make up the bulk of the varsity team:

- Mark Moore
- Amol Huprikar
- Spencer Ornes
- Justin Namm
- Bobby Watts
- Kip Miller
- Mike Wheat



Smith also preaches about non-cross country details: what to eat, what to avoid on weekends, even what shoes to wear to school.

SPORTS & MORE^{B-2}

NOVI NEWS

hometownlife.com

Thursday, October 28, 2004

I WANT MY KVC!

Novi boys win cross country title

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

Monday marked the silver anniversary of the Kensington Valley Conference championship meet, but the Novi Wildcats were looking for gold.

The boys found it, taking first place over Pinckney and Milford to seal the KVC title. The girls took third overall behind powerful squads from Milford and Brighton.

"It was an amazing day," boys coach Bob Smith said of ending Milford's streak of three-straight titles and earning one for Novi. "The boys did a phenomenal job."

Novi took first with 45 points while Pinckney finished second with 58 and one-top ranked Milford was third with a 64.

Though Mark Moore and Amol Huprikar finished in their normal position in the top five, it was another harrier that deserved accolades after the race.

Mike Wheat made all the difference in the world for the Wildcats, finishing in 17th place to seal the major victory for his Novi squad.

"Mike Wheat sealed the deal for us," Smith said. "That was Mike's best race by far. He has been the seventh man all year and now he really stepped up to the plate."

Justin Namm and Spencer Ornes had great races too in the victory. Ornes ran a 16:42 for 10th and Namm was 11th with 16:45.

Bobby Watts and Kip Miller ran their average times.

"You can't have average in the KVC meet," Smith noted. "If Wheat would have run his average race, we would have still won by one point, but that would have been crazy. It would have been the tightest meet ever."

Novi knew heading into the meet it would be the third through fifth runners that decided how the chips fell. Every team has a strong one and two runner, but the herd thins out in a hurry from there down.

"We've got the best three through five runners around," Smith noted.

And Wheat has made a name for himself as a runner who doesn't shy away from adversity.

"He's really what a coach

hopes for and dreams of," Smith said. "He ran a great race."

Smith has made a habit out of telling his runners their places on the team weren't set in stone when it came to position. Sure, Moore and Huprikar always seem to come across the line in first and second, but the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh positions are never guaranteed.

A runner isn't only as good as his last finish.

"Wheat took that to heart," said Smith. "He was really motoring."

The top 16 runners were awarded All-KVC honors with Wheat missing out by just one spot. He is, however, only a sophomore.

Novi was ranked second behind Milford in the state coaches' poll. That may change.

"I would think so," Smith said. "It's nice to have that ranking moniker, but there's a lot more to the analysis than that. We know we may not be the top team in the state, but we know we're one of the better teams in the state. We just have to keep pushing it for the next two weeks."

Novi will be back in action when they run the regional tournament at Schoolcraft College on Haggerty Road Saturday at 10 a.m.

The top three teams will advance to the state finals the following week and the top 15 individual will earn a berth as well.

"We've got to keep pushing ourselves for the next two weeks," said Smith. "We have to."

Wildcats in hunt for another major title

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

The goal is simple in the regional cross country tournament: Take one of the top three spots or go home.

The Novi Wildcats girls and boys harrier squads will be looking to do just that when they compete in a very strong regional to be held at Schoolcraft College Saturday at 10 a.m.

The top three teams will advance to the state finals the following week while the top 15 runners automatically earn a berth as well.

"We'd like to win it," Novi coach Bob Smith said. "Some years I might say we just want to qualify for states and I wouldn't care if we were first, second or third. This year, we want to win it. I think that is a very achievable goal."

Mark Moore and Amol Huprikar will be shooting for the top two places in the region, but they are well aware there will be a lot of competition along the way.

"Churchill has a very strong team," Smith said. "And then there's the kid from Northville,

"Some years I might say we just want to qualify for states and I wouldn't care if we were first, second or third. This year, we want to win it. I think that is a very achievable goal."

Bob Smith

Novi Boys Cross Country Coach

Jasen Turnbull. He's pretty solid."

Novi will not, however, be looking to run their legs off. The boys know they stand a solid chance at the top spot, but if they are lagging slightly they aren't going to push themselves to the bring to take first place over second.

The girls, however, will have more of a handful of competitors to deal with. Northville, Stevenson and Churchill are the teams to beat in the region this year.

This season marks the first time in a long time Novi has raced away from Milford and the other top schools.

"All they needed to do was shuffle the deck," said Smith. "Some of the seeded teams have been dispersed, but I don't think that was the main attempt by the state. I think they were truly shaking things up a bit, which is just fine with me."

Both the girls and the guys will have plenty of challengers throughout the meet Saturday, but if they succeed and advance to the state finals they will run in Brooklyn, Mich. for the state finals November 6.

Sam Eggleston can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 104 or at seggleston@ht.homecomm.net.

BOYS KVC CROSS COUNTRY STANDINGS

1. NOVI (6-1)	45
2. Pinckney (6-1)	58
3. MILFORD (6-2)	64
4. Howell (4-3)	121
5. Lakeland (2-5)	122
6. Brighton (3-4)	128
7. South Lyon (1-6)	138
8. Hartland (0-7)	209

GIRLS KVC CROSS COUNTRY STANDINGS

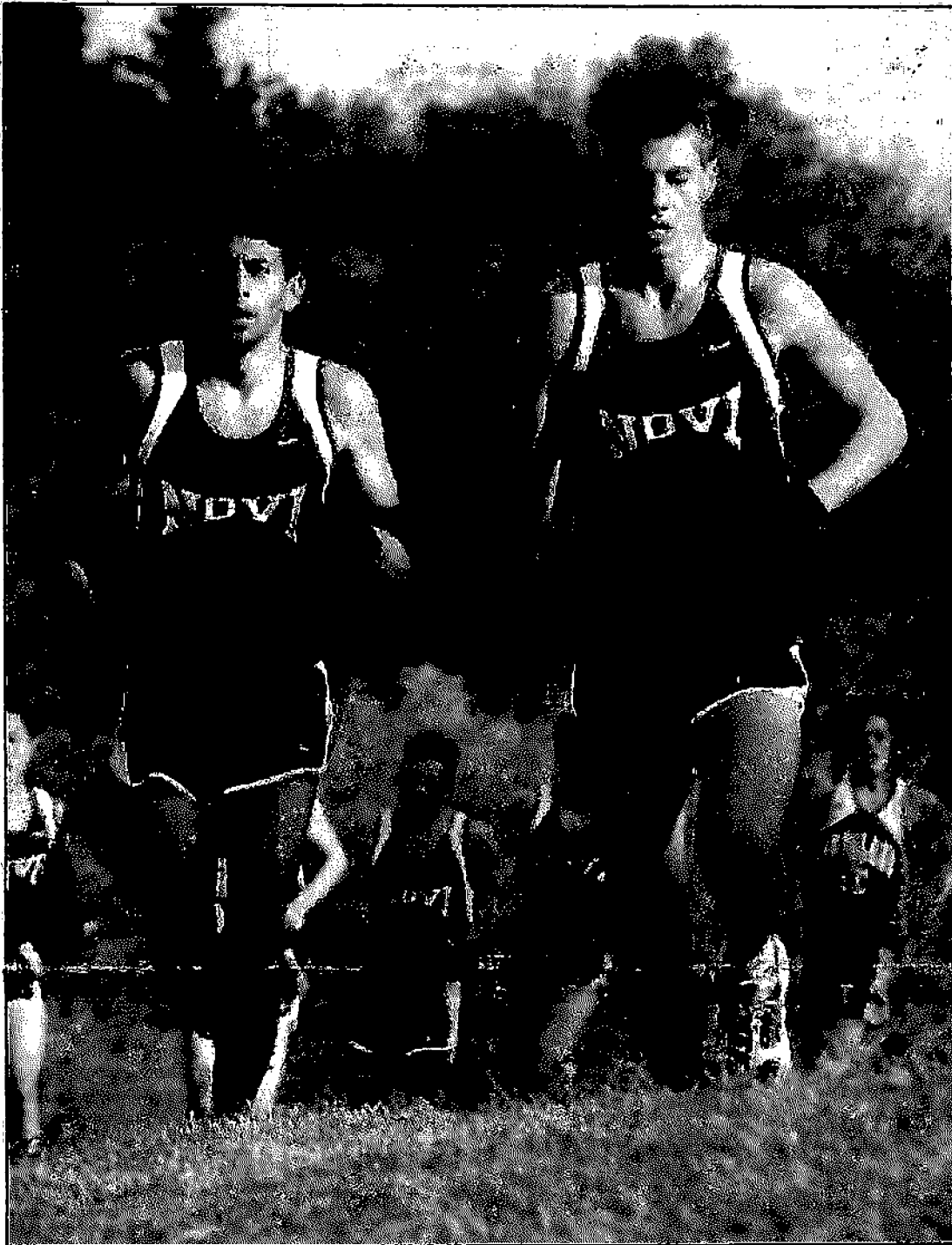
1. Milford (7-0)	29
2. Brighton (6-1)	63
3. NOVI (5-2)	83
4. Lakeland (3-4)	114
5. Pinckney (3-4)	134
6. Howell (0-7)	162
7. South Lyon (1-6)	171
8. Hartland (3-4)	182

AND DON'T MISS OUT...

It never hurts to have plenty of fans cheering a team on to victory. The Novi Wildcats cross country team will be the only show in town Saturday morning, so don't miss out on a chance to see the girls and boys make a run for the state finals.

The course at Schoolcraft is flat, which means plenty of speed and low times across the boards. The meet is scheduled for 10 a.m. at the college, which is located on Haggerty Road in Livonia between Seven and Six Mile roads.

Thursday, October 28, 2004-NOVI NEWS



Submitted Photo

A familiar view indeed as Novi's top runners Amol Huprikar (left) and Mark Moore climb over a hill against Hartland recently. The duo helped Novi to the KVC title, ending Milford's streak of three-straight.

TUESDAY OCTOBER 26, 2004

Novi stops Milford's boys streak, but Mavs' girls triumph

By MARVIN GOODWIN
Of The Daily Oakland Press

DEXTER — Novi, Pinckney and Milford, three of the state's top boys cross country teams, took turns beating each other in the rugged Kensington Valley Conference.

But when a victory was really needed, the surging Wildcats distanced themselves from the rest of the pack at Monday's conference championship at Hudson Mills Metropark. Novi halted a string of three straight titles by Milford, as the Wildcats scored 45 points to win their first KVC title in four years.

Milford's Dana Pitcock won the individual race in 15:43, but Novi's Mark Moore, who was second in 15:51, led the depth-laden Wildcats, who had five runners in the top 17. Pinckney finished second with 58 points and Milford was third with 64.

In the girls race, Milford's Carlie Green took first in 18:54, pacing the Mavs to their second straight KVC title. Milford had 29 points, Brighton followed with 63, Novi was third with 83 and Lakeland fourth with 114.

Novi, Pinckney and Milford, the defending Division 1 state champion, each had one dual meet loss going into the boys championship. But the Wildcats, who lost to Pinckney in a dual meet — Milford beat Pinckney and Pinckney handed Novi its lone dual loss — were brimming with confidence.

"It was great, we've been working all year for something like this," said Moore.

"We knew we had it in ourselves, (because) we're more of an invitational team."

Amol Huprikar (fifth), Spencer Ornes (10th), Justin Namm (11th) and Mike Wheat (17th) completed the Wildcats' scoring in a contest

of wills that left many runners drained from exhaustion.

CROSS COUNTRY

"This was a hard-fought victory," Novi

coach Robert Smith said. "My hat's off to Milford and Pinckney. It's a real testament for our league. If we can do well here, we can do well anywhere."

Few took notice of Novi during the season, according to Smith.

"We were underrated all year," he said. "But our team knew how good we were. Our guys had the utmost confidence."

Last year, Green finished ninth at the girls conference meet. This year, she stayed with the lead pack and went to the front in the last mile, but with Brighton's Nora Killunen in striking distance. Still, Green didn't give in.

"I've come this far and I'm not going to give up after working this hard," said Green, who kept Killunen at bay. "And I knew my teammates were working hard, too."

Indeed, high finishes by Mallory Farnum (fourth), Megan Jambeck (fifth), Allison Iott (sixth) and Megan Kaid (13th) were no match for league rivals.

"It's only the second time this season we've had our top five girls on the course together," Milford coach Brian Salyers said.

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Howell



Oct 26 2004 59°F Forecast

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Today's Online Sections **Tuesday, October 26, 2004**

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Sports Back
First round
 By Tim Robinson
 daily press & argus

DEXTER - The Kensington Valley Conference boys cross country season was nip-and-tuck all along, and all Monday's league meet at Hudson Mills Metropark proved was that it's entirely possible there could be a rematch at the state meet next month.

As it turned out, Novi nipped Pinckney after the Pirates upset them in the league's first dual, and the Pirates in turn nipped Milford, which it had lost to in a race that went down to the final 20 feet.

"It easily was the toughest competition I've ever run against," said Pinckney's Ian Boyle, who finished third overall while leading the Pirates. "(Finishing second) felt all right. First would have been better, but it was tough today. Everyone was so close, (and) our teams were so closely matched it could have been anyone."

Novi finished first with 45 points. The Pirates finished with 58, Milford with 64.

"I'm glad that we're coming around," Pinckney coach Tom Carney said. "I'm glad we got a victory like this. We got four guys (on the all-league team) who are in the toughest cross country league in the state.

"This is what we needed," he continued. "Being second in this league is an incredible accomplishment. Novi did a very fine job today."

Howell, which expected to make a bid at the league meet, was far off the pace with 121 points, barely holding off fifth-place Lakeland (122) and Brighton (128). South Lyon was in the mix with 138 points, good for seventh, and Hartland finished last with 209.

Pinckney, Novi and Milford had all gone 6-1 in dual meets, with the league meet determining the final standings.

Novi had 15 points, seven for tying for first, eight for winning the league meet. Pinckney had 14, and Milford 13.

Howell (10) finished fourth, while Lakeland and Brighton (seven apiece) tied for fifth. South Lyon (four) and

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Pinckney boys, Brighton girls 2nd in KVC

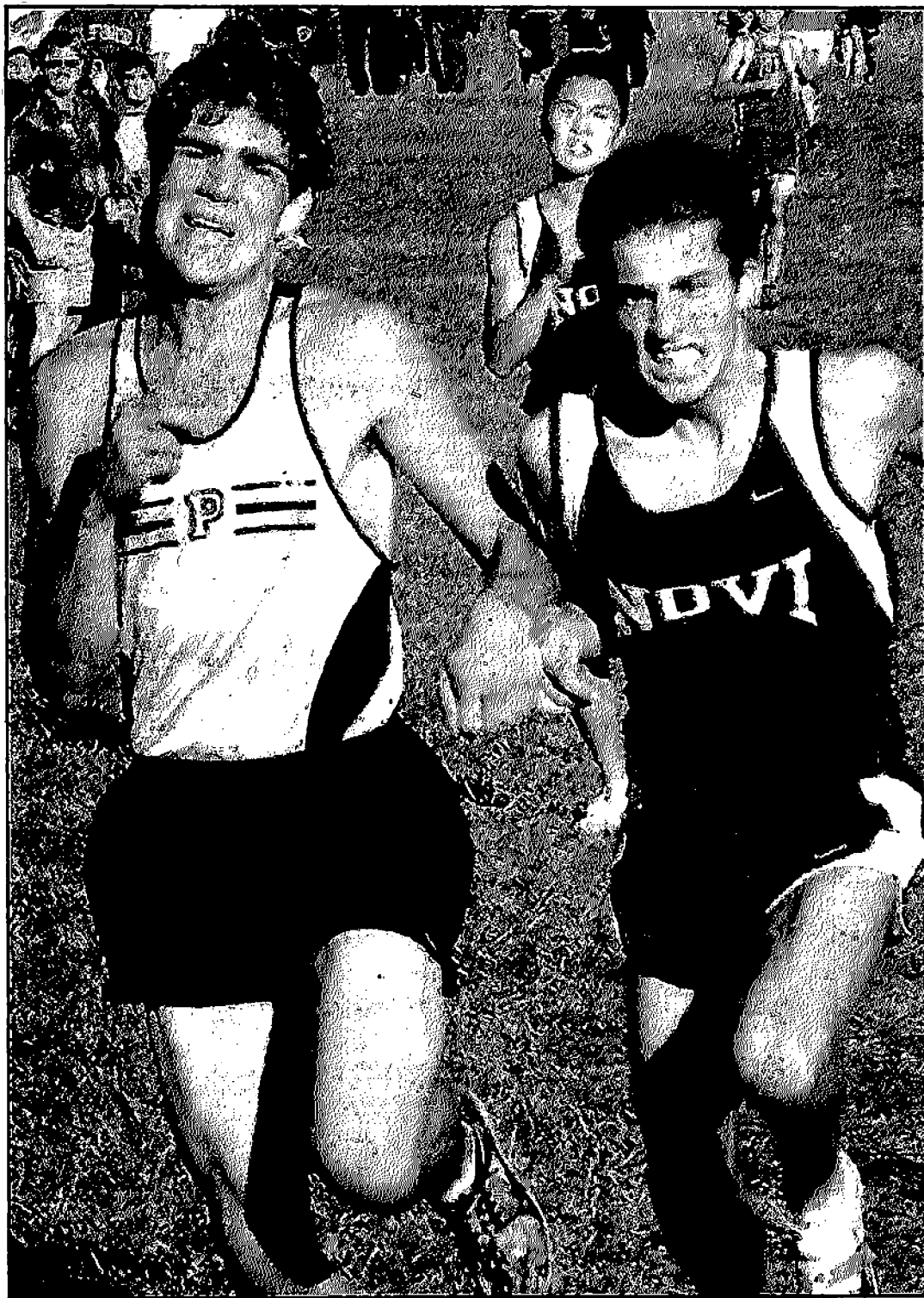


Photo by MARK A. DULL

Pinckney's Levi Hohl (left) and Novi's Spencer Ornes are neck-and-neck as they near the finish line in Monday's Kensington Valley Conference cross country meet at Hudson Mills. Hohl would edge Ornes out to finish ninth overall. Novi won the overall race, while Pinckney was second.



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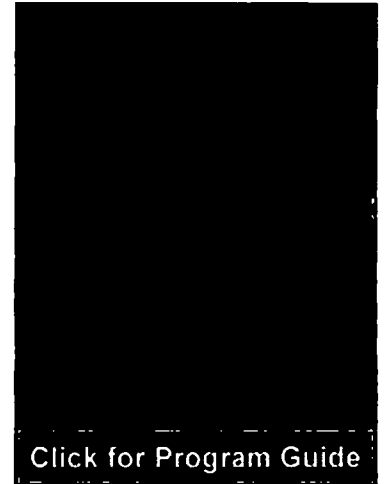
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Pinckney boys place second in KVC cross country meet

Novi wins race, No. 1 Milford places third

Tuesday, October 26, 2004
From Local Reports

Three teams entered the Kensington Valley Conference boys cross country meet ranked among the top five in the state. After Monday's race at Hudson Mills Metropark, those rankings might do some flip-flopping.

Milford, the No. 1 team in the state according to a system of scoring based on previous invitational results, finished third in the KVC. Fifth-ranked Novi won the meet with 42 points, followed by No. 3 Pinckney (58) and the top-ranked Mavericks (64).

Pinckney coach Tom Carney was satisfied with the result.

Novi really takes it out hard," Carney said. "They had a brutal pace going there. My guys put themselves in position to do well, and they did very well. It's nice to see us take second. You work too hard to come in third sometimes."

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The three teams entered the final meet with identical 6-1 dual-meet records, meaning the conference meet reflects the final overall standings.

Individually, Milford's Dana Pitcock finished first in 15 minutes, 43 seconds.

Pinckney's Ian Boyle (15:56) was third and Nick Katsefaras (16:26) was seventh. Howell's John Wilson (eighth, 16:33), Pinckney's Levi Hohl (ninth, 16:42), Howell's Brian Marcinkowski (12th, 16:50), Pinckney's Brenden Marcum (15th, 16:57) and Brighton's Derek Shortt (17:00) all received All-League honors for finishing among the top 16.

Milford easily won the girls event, outscoring second-place Brighton 29-63. Brighton's Nora Kiilunen finished second, 10 seconds behind Milford champion Carlie Green's 18:54 performance. Pinckney's Lynsey Ardingo was third in 19:16.

Brighton's Stephanie Venier (eighth, 19:56), Howell's Jennifer Johnson (11th, 20:09), Brighton's Alexandra Nichols (14th, 20:18) and Howell's Ashley Gardynik (15th, 20:21) earned All-KVC accolades.

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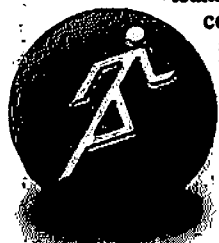
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Harriers win tough regional title

Was there any doubt?

Novi's boys cross country team crushed the competition at the regional meet last week. The top two runners across the line? None other than Mark



Moore and

Amol Huprikar. These guys don't seem to be able to slow down, even when the rain and wind keeps assaulting them through a race.

It will be interesting to see how well Novi does in the state finals — and not just the boys.

The girls team made the finals in a great showing at the regional, taking third as a team to earn the berth. They even outran Northville, which had been putting up the best numbers in school history.

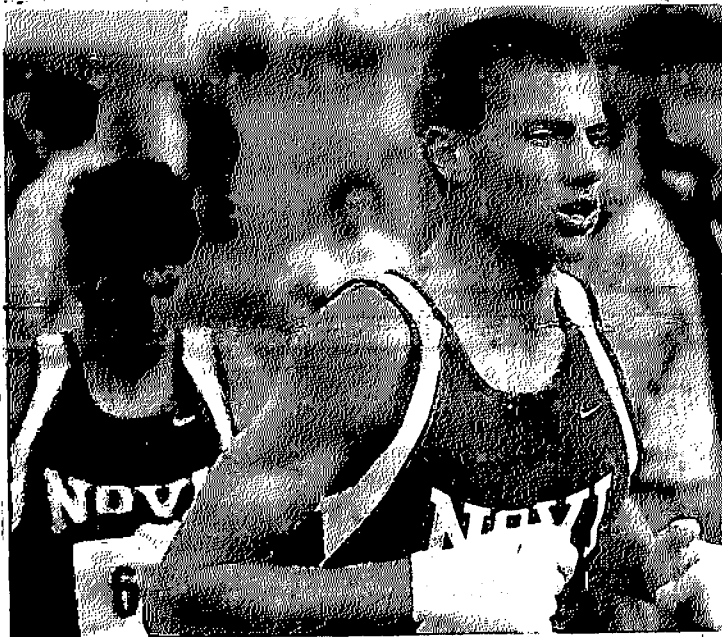


Photo by JEREMY KINDY/WESTSIDE PHOTO

Amol Huprikar (left) and Mark Moore took the top two spots in the regional meet last week. The boys won the regional, qualifying them for the state finals Saturday.

There was never much doubt in the minds of their fans and for anyone else for that matter.

The Novi Wildcats did the predictions proud as they ran away with the top spot in the regional meet last Saturday. They earned 31 points along the way to finish first while Livonia Churchill took second with 65 points and Salem was third with 68.

"The course was slow due to the soggy ground," said Novi coach Robert Smith of Schoolcraft College's regional racing ground that was assaulted with two days of rain. "Places are what counted and we took four out of the top eight. All of our guys (were) in the top 18."

The impressive performance gave Novi a berth into the state finals, scheduled to be held Saturday in Brooklyn, Mich.

Novi will be looking to have even better times than they did this week and hope rain doesn't play a factor in two days.

Mark Moore, a senior, was not surprisingly the top finisher in the regional last week. He took the top spot in just 16:20. One second behind him was fellow senior Amol Huprikar, who finished second in 16:21.

Novi wasn't through at that point though and continued to impress as Spencer Ornes finished in seventh in just 16:47 and Justin Namm crossed the line at 16:49 for eighth place. Both harriers are seniors.

Kip Miller put on a show, finishing 13th in 17:18 to be the second-best sophomore finisher at the meet behind Northville's Jasen Turnbull, who finished fifth. Novi also had Bobby Watts, a junior, finish 17th in 17:30 while Mike Wheat, a sophomore, took 18th in 17:34.



OAKLAND PRESS
ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

BOYS
CROSS COUNTRY



Moore

Mark Moore, Novi

Senior was regional champion, he also led the Wildcats to a Kensington Valley Conference title and a regional title in the last two weeks. Should be one of the top runners in the Division 1 state meet on Saturday at Brooklyn.

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 4 2004

Clarkston, Milford looking to defend its state titles

By MARVIN GOODWIN
Of The Daily Oakland Press

On many other area cross country teams, Clarkston's Anne Oltman would be the top runner.

But on the powerhouse Clarkston squad, she's only third, fourth, sometimes fifth best on a team that has dominated the competition this season.

"Every year, you've got to work hard to keep your spot," said Oltman. "(But) I know if I didn't have the girls behind me pushing me, I wouldn't be running as fast as I am now."

Clarkston will go for its second straight Division 1 state cross country title Saturday at Michigan International Speedway. Milford is the defending Division 1 state boys champion.

Oltman, Gillian Nordquist and Liz Mengyan, all seniors, helped comprise a strong freshmen group that instantly made Clarkston one of the area's best teams. The Wolves were



Oltman

CROSS COUNTRY

sixth at states when the trio were freshmen, they were second at states as sophomores and they won the title last year. Clarkston has won four straight Oakland County titles and Nordquist, Oltman and Mengyan have been a part of all four, much to the delight of coach Jamie LaBrosse.

"Sometimes girls ... they regress," LaBrosse said, "but they're (Nordquist, Oltman and Mengyan) running the best they've ever run."

Jenny Morgan, a junior transfer from Ohio, has made the Wolves even tougher to beat. She clocked one of the state's fastest efforts, 17:36, in capturing the regional title.

"You can't go anywhere and get a team like this," Morgan said. "Practices are almost as hard as the state meet. It's awesome."

The Wolves relish the chance to compete at states. "We're not going for second place," Morgan said.

Whatever happens at states, it's been a delightful run for the Clarkston seniors.

"My four years here are definitely memorable," Oltman said. "I'm going to be crying when I have to leave."

State cross country meet

When: Saturday

Where: Michigan International Speedway

Admission: \$5

Race Times — 10 a.m. Division 3 Girls; 10:30 a.m. Division 4 Girls; 11 a.m. Division 3 Boys; 11:30 a.m. Division 4 Boys.

1:30 p.m. Division 2 Girls; 2 p.m. Division 1 Girls; 2:30 p.m. Division 2 Boys; 3 p.m. Division 1 Boys.

These girls are my best friends."

■ If the next boys Division 1 champion comes from the Kensington Valley Conference, it won't be much of a surprise. Five teams from the KVC qualified for states with three — Novi, Milford and Pinckney — solid contenders for the title. Lakeland and Howell also qualified. Few teams are running as well as Novi, which has surged the last two weeks by winning KVC and regional titles.

The Wildcats won two straight state titles (1998-99) and in the past six years have finished among the top 10 at states each time.

"We take great pride in knowing we finish strong," Novi coach Robert Smith said.

Early fall doesn't keep Clarkston down

■ Wolves repeat as girls state champs, while Milford boys also win title

By MARVIN GOODWIN
Of The Daily Oakland Press

BROOKLYN — Disaster nearly felled Clarkston's girls Saturday at the state cross country meet at Michigan International Speedway. But the Wolves literally got back on their feet and ran to their second straight Division 1 title.

Meanwhile, Milford won its second straight boys Division 1 title.

Bloomfield Hills Lahser's boys took third in Division 2 and Justin Switzer of Waterford Kettering led an Oakland County

sweep of the first three places in the Division 1 race as area runners turned in solid efforts.

Switzer won in 15:22 for the five-kilometer course and was followed by runner-up John Black of Brother Rice in 15:35 and Mark Moore of Novi in 15:38.



Switzer



Mengyan

CROSS COUNTRY

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 7 2004

Milford led four Kensington Valley Conference teams in the top nine, scoring 108 points. Pinckney was second with 120, Novi was fourth with 154 and Lakeland was ninth with 319.

Walled Lake Central was sixth with 269 and Lake Orion seventh (289), giving Oakland County teams five of the top nine places.

"Last year our depth was our greatest advantage," said Milford coach Brian Salyers, who had only two runners from last year's state meet competing this year. "This year we were skinny in the lineup. But the whole key is the kids never gave up. A lot of people counted us out."

Indeed, Milford finished third in its conference meet but was strong at state. "It's great to go out there and show everyone we could do it," said Dana Pitcock, who was seventh in 15:47. "Everyone ran awesome."

Mike Andersen was 12th (16:00), Joel Vanderworp was 24th (16:07), Nick Andersen (36th) and Matt Picou (85th) to complete the Mavs' scoring.

Milford coach Tom Carney and Salyers were teammates at Milford and have known each other since the second grade. "This was a special moment for us," Salyers said.

Switzer, who was third last year, took the lead in the second mile and was never headed. "At the end, it was extremely difficult coming around that (last) turn," said Switzer, who peeked to see if



Moore

anyone was coming in the last 400. "The grass was wet and it was deep muddy. It slowed me down considerably. (But) it's awesome. The amount I've come in my four years in cross country is amazing."

Black surged at the end to secure second. "I guess I kinda surprised myself," said the senior, who passed three runners in the last 600. "I was hurting pretty bad."

Lakeland's Luke Heiman placed 11th (15:58) and Rochester's Jordan Rastz finished ninth (15:49). Novi's Amol Huprikar placed eighth (15:48).

Fourth place in the state!

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

It was a race Novi coach Bob Smith sure wouldn't mind running again — but the other teams in the state finals may not agree.

Novi took fourth in the Division I state finals behind the likes of Milford in first and Pinckney in second.

"We beat Milford two out of the last three times," said Smith. "The boys are taking consolation in the fact that they know they can beat them. I can pretty much guarantee Milford and Pinckney would say 'No thank you' if offered a rematch. That race could be run several different times and have several different champions."

But, the Wildcats aren't disappointed with how they fared. Smith admits his squad was eyeing the top spot when they arrived at the finals, but knew it would be a dogfight.

"There were five teams there that have beaten each other up all season long," Smith said. "I would have been disappointed if we weren't in the top five. All the teams there performed as expected."

The leading Kensington Valley Conference individual may not have had the opportunity to hoist the team trophy, but he still wore green and white.

Senior Mark Moore finished as the top conference runner, coming in fourth in the finals.

"I looked at Mark and told him this was his opportunity to exact some revenge," said Smith. "Some of the other runners may have beaten him this year but his training was focused on the finals. I looked at him and said 'Mark, you'll beat them today.'"

And he did. Moore ran a

"I can pretty much guarantee Milford and Pinckney would say 'No thank you' if offered a rematch. That race could be run several different times and have several different champions."

Bob Smith
Novi Cross Country Coach

finals time of 15:38.5. Moore set his season personal record, but wasn't able to reach his career mark thanks to some unfavorable conditions.

"After two days of rain the infield (at Michigan International Speedway) was soaked," Smith said. "Race tracks are designed to keep the water off of them by flowing to the infield. That just happens to be where we were running."

The boys fared well though. Finishing eighth in the state was Amol Huprikar, who is also a senior.

"Last year people talked about how we had a superstar because Mark finished in the top 10," Smith said. "We don't have just one superstar though. We have two."

Huprikar ran a 15:48 for his position in the finals.

Not far behind was senior Justin Namm, who ran a 16:38. He finished 55th overall in the race.

"Justin really kicked in up a notch," said Smith. "For much of the year he was considering himself the fourth or fifth guy on the team. He definitely deserved being our three man."

Spencer Ornes, who is also a senior, finished just seven seconds behind Namm, but was 75th overall.

"There were runners coming in about three or four ever second," Smith said. "It was pretty amazing."

Kip Miller ran a 16:52 and Mike Wheat came in not too far behind him in 17:39. Wheat's performance was one of the more inspiring on the day.

"Mike ran an exceptional race, especially considering he had just been diagnosed with chicken pox," said Smith. "He had the beginnings of it but I thought it was just nerves because he had already had the pox. It wasn't."

Rounding out the Wildcats was Bobby Watts with a 17:46.

Novi will be in good shape come next season despite losing their top four runners to graduation.

"I did the math," said Smith. "If I took out all of our seniors' times and let everyone else in the regional keep their seniors from this year, we still would have qualified for the state finals."

Which definitely bodes well for the future of Novi cross country — even without staples like Moore and Huprikar to keep things interesting.

Sam Eggleston can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 104 or at seggleston@ht.homecomm.net.

Wildcat
boys
have
strong
run
in
Division
I
finale

Cross Country places fourth at states

A.J. GLUBZINSKI
Editor in chief

BROOKLYN, MI. - Bright sunlight and a warm breeze met heavy ground and an unkempt course at the cross country State Finals. Of the two images, the painful passed the pleasant at the finish.

The boys team took fourth place with 154 points at the Finals on Nov. 6 at Michigan International Speedway. Fourth place was three places short of the team's vision for the day.

"It's extremely disappointing, and it's frustrating too. Both of those. I still think we're as talented as anyone out there," senior Mark Moore said.

Milford, Pinckney, Ann Arbor Huron and Ann Arbor Pioneer took the other top five places.

"All five of the teams scored in the 100s. No one scored double digits, and the sixth best was way out in the 200s. So, it was a five team race," coach

Bob Smith said. "It pretty much came out as predicted. We were confident [before the race], but we also were realistic, knowing it was too close to call."

Sharing the state's top ranking with Milford entering the race, the team was optimistic about its chances of winning.

"I had extremely high confidence going in," Moore said. "I thought it was really our state meet to lose. During the season, we beat the team who got first twice, and the team who got second twice. The team who got fifth I expected to be our biggest challenge... I thought I could get the job done with Amol out front, and I had a lot of confidence in Justin and Spencer too."

A fourth place finish was dissatisfying for much of the team.

"It kind of sucks," senior Amol Huprikar said. "We knew that on any day the race could have gone to any of five teams going into the state meet. I am somewhat disappointed. But, fourth really isn't bad."

The tight race in the finals was characteristic of most of the season. The team endured fierce battles with the top five teams throughout the year.

"Us coaches of these five teams didn't even know how it was going to turn out," Smith

said. "I think one of the most frustrating things is that we beat Milford two out of the last three times. I think part of the equation was that we had to be at such a high energy level throughout the entire year. It was a blood bath. It was very tough to stay at that level meet after meet after meet."

The course conditions added

ing to Huprikar; since it had rained during the week and because the Division One race was the final race of the day, the trail was torn apart and ran about 15 seconds slower than the year before.

"The inside of the track was real soft and real slow," Moore said. "And, where the course crosses the track, they put sand down. Usually they use a roller, but this year they didn't so it was like running on a beach for those parts of the race, which is really hard."

The race had a noticeable effect on many of the competitors. One Ann Arbor Pioneer runner cramped and collapsed within 30 feet of the finish line. After falling several more times he crawled across the finish line, as others whisked by him on both sides.

Senior Spencer Ornes crossed the finish line upright with a time of 16:45.00 but threw up about 50 yards beyond the finish line. Other Novi runners also appeared dazed and exhausted following the race.

In spite of the agony and disappointments, several team members achieved pleasing results. Moore, Huprikar, and Justin Namn ran season best times despite the course's shape.

Moore finished third with a time of 15:38.50 and Huprikar finished eighth with a time of 15:48.00 to earn All-State honors.



Spencer Ornes vomits in the infield after the finish of the race. He finished with a time of 16:45.00.

they ran fantastic," Smith said. "They ran great. Mark got third. He was the fastest team guy. He scored one point, he couldn't have done any better... Amol scored five points. That's remarkable. And yet they were disappointed. They weren't disappointed in themselves, they were disappointed for the team."

Following Moore, Huprikar Namn, and Ornes, Kip Miller crossed the finish line at 16:54.05 as the team's fifth finisher.

Smith was also impressed with the effort of sophomore Mike Wheat, who ran with chicken pox. According to Smith, Wheat's time would have been an achievement even without his affliction.

Some members of the team

practices to run in post season club level races.

Moore will run in Footlocker Regionals in Wisconsin, and Huprikar will run in the United States Association for Track and Field (USATF) Regionals in Kentucky.

Ten other runners also ran in USATF Districts with Huprikar.

Rather than dwelling on shortcomings, Smith hopes the team will recognize their accomplishments.

"These guys should be real proud of what they did," he said. "They put their expectations so high that sometimes they set themselves up for disappointment. If they reflect on what they've accomplished, they accomplished what most high school students just dream about."

HIGH SCHOOLS

All-county cross country



Andersen



Black



Helman



Huprikar



Moore

By MARVIN GOODWIN
Of The Daily Oakland Press

Oakland County's solid performance at the boys' state cross country meet is evidenced by this year's collection of All-Oakland County athletes, a senior-dominated group with loads of experience. Runners from the Kensington Valley Conference — ranked as high as the second-toughest conference in the nation — took six of the 10 spots.

BOYS

Mike Andersen, Milford — Placed third at the KVC meet, Holly Division 1 regional and Catholic Central meet and was a fourth-place finisher at the Oakland County meet. Placed 12th at the Division 1 state meet in 16:00.

John Black, Birmingham Brother Rice — Was Oakland County champ as well as first in the Oxford and Holly invitationals, Hansons Invitational, Catholic League meet and Clarkston regional. Placed second at the Division 1 state meet, where he clocked 15:35.7. Also a Footlocker National Cross Country meet finalist.

Luke Helman, Lakeland — The only sophomore on the squad, he surged toward the end of the season after placing 15th at the Oakland County meet. Was sixth at the KVC meet and Jackson Invitational, and fifth at the Holly Division 1 regional and Oxford Invitational. Capped season with 11th place at state meet in 15:58.1.

Amol Huprikar, Novi — Gave the Wildcats a solid 1-2 punch as he placed fifth at the KVC meet, second at the Northville Division 1 regional and 10th at the Spartan Invitational. He was sixth at the Oakland County meet and placed 8th at the Division 1 state meet in 15:48.

Mark Moore, Novi — Experienced senior was KVC meet runner-up and Northville Division 1

All-county second team

Name	School	Year	State time
Nick Andersen	Milford	Fr.	16:29
Doug Bosin	Lahser	Sr.	16:38.65
Justin Kelly	Ferndale	Sr.	16:18.2
Sean Maxwell	Walled Lake Central	Jr.	16:07.2
Spencer Ornes	Novi	Sr.	16:45
Colin Orr	West Bloomfield	Sr.	16:08.4
Billy Peterson	Lake Orion	Sr.	16:23.7
Rob Shlnouskas	Lake Orion	Jr.	16:28.55
Sam Watson	Rochester	Sr.	16:22.4

Honorable mention: Jeff Aspinall (Walled Lake Western); Todd Bowmar (Walled Lake Western); Brooks Cowan (Troy); Tim Crouch (Hazel Park); Ted Howard (Birmingham Seaholm); Andrew Keller (South Lyon); Justin Namm (Novi); Phil Shaheen (Troy Athens); Jason Sosnoski (Lakeland); Ross Teach (Stoney Creek); Anthony Wile (Birmingham Brother Rice).

regional champion. A three-time selection, Moore took third at the Oakland County meet and the Spartan Invitational, and gutted out a third place at the Division 1 state meet in 15:38.5.

Dana Pitcock, Milford — Came on strong at end of the season, nailing the Kensington Valley Conference title and taking second at Holly Division 1 regional. He was Oakland County meet and Catholic Central Invitational runner-up and placed fifth at the Division 1 state meet in 15:47.25.

Mike Quick, Bloomfield Hills Lahser — Came through with solid junior season, winning Clarkston Division 2 regional and Jackson Invitational. He was OAA I meet runner-up, placed fifth in the Oakland County meet and sixth at the Spartan Invitational. He broke 16 minutes five times. Placed 18th at Division 2 state meet in 16:13.

Jordan Raetz, Rochester — Was OAA I league champ and Marysville Division 1 regional champion. Placed second at Hansons Invitational and took ninth place at the Division 1 state meet in 15:49.1.

Justin Switzer, Waterford Kettering — Consistent winner during season, capping career with OAA II, Spartan and West Bloomfield Invitational titles. Also added Holly regional and Division 1 state championships. Michigan-

bound senior also is a Footlocker National Cross Country meet finalist. Clocked 15:22.5 at states.

Joel VanDerworp, Milford — Placed seventh at Oakland County meet and had top-10 finishes at the Milford Open (seventh) and Catholic Central Invitational (fifth). Placed 24th at Division 1 state meet in 16:07.4.

Coach of the Year
Brian Salyers, Milford

After winning the Division 1 state title last year, opposing teams came from all sides to try to beat the Mavs, and some succeeded. Still,



Salyers

Salyers was able to succeed in a challenging season despite a rare league dual meet loss and a third-place finish in the KVC meet. That broke a three-year string of titles. But Salyers, in

his ninth season at the helm, coached Milford to its second straight state crown, the fourth straight year Milford has finished first or second at states. "The biggest thing was to be patient and poised and then working together," Salyers said. "Teamwork was the key."



Pitcock



Quick



Raetz



Switzer



VanDerworp

HomeTown squad loaded with quality runners

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

The Kensington Valley Conference is basically the best cross country conference in the state. The Western Lakes Activities Association, where the Northville Mustangs run, isn't far behind.

The All-Area team for the cross country squads represents some of the best runners Michigan has to offer. They are the cream of the crop. They are the best of the best.

Moore please

There are few cross country runners that have the ability of Novi's Mark Moore.

He's fast, especially when it counts, and he doesn't buckle under pressure. Moore's top time this year was a 15:38, which he ran in the state finals meet for third place overall. He was the top runner in the Kensington Valley Conference at the state finals.

"Mark has been the spiritual leader of this senior class," said Novi coach Bob Smith. "He has been the guy that all the other athletes measure themselves against. Because of his knowledge and ability, he commanded respect."

Moore didn't just step up for one meet though. He did well all season. He took second overall in the Kensington Valley Conference finals meet as well as third in the Oakland County meet. In the regional, Moore was first overall.

"He has set the tone of the team and, fortunately, the tone has been positive and profound," Smith said.

The Novi senior is a returning member of the HomeTown Newspapers All-Area team, having been named to the squad last season as well. He was also named Athlete of the Year by his team.

Leading the pack

As a sophomore, runners are supposed to sit back, put their legs up and relax. Why shouldn't they? Seniors will lead the team and so will juniors.

Well, that just doesn't sit well with Northville sophomore Jasen Turnbull.

Turnbull was the leader in Northville this year. He qualified for the state meet after finishing fifth in the region for All-Regional status.

"Jasen has a lot of potential," said Northville coach Chris Cronin earlier this season. "He can be a great runner if he puts in the time and is dedicated enough."

The Mustang sophomore's best time this year was 16:11 at the CC Classic, though he managed to earn the championship in the Western Division this season. He earned second-team All-Western Lakes Activities Association against some of the toughest competition the league has ever offered. At the highly competitive Michigan State University Invitational, Turnbull took 15th.

Another strong finish

Novi is lucky to have such talented runners.

Their top two harriers in the above-mentioned Moore and senior Amol Huprikar helped make them one of the most competitive teams in Michigan. Why? Because you could never tell which would push the other to try that much harder.

"Amol is a very gifted runner," said Smith. "He has proven that when it counts the most."

Huprikar is a walking trophy case. He was the fourth-fastest Kensington Valley Conference runner in the state finals this season with his overall finish of eighth place in just 15:48. He earned All-KVC, All-Oakland County, All-Region and All-State honors this season.

"He has twice achieved All-State status in Division I cross country," said Smith. "Amol is also a student of the sport. He knew the competition, the curses, the strategies and the mental aspect of racing."

Quite frankly, any team would have been drooling over having such a high caliber runner step up and be their top man.

"He was very active in guiding our younger athletes in the finer points of meet preparation," Smith said.

The All-Area team is just another accolade Huprikar can add to his resume. It marks a return trip for him to the squad, having made it last season as a junior.

Spencer for hire

A strong cross country team has strong finishers who may not be the top runner on the team but always does what's best for his squad.

Spencer Ornes, a senior at Novi High School, is one of those

runners. His best time this season was a 16:42 and he came through for his team when they needed it the most.

"Spencer was 100-percent committed to our program," said Smith. "He came into the season fully prepared to make his senior year his best. He accomplished that goal and then some."

In the Kensington Valley Conference meet, against some of the toughest runners Michigan has to offer, Ornes pushed his way into the top flight of runners and came away in 10th place to help Novi secure the championship. In the regional, he ran one of his best races of the year, finishing seventh to help Novi earn that title too.

"As evidence of his drive to excellence, Spencer ran over 700 miles during this past summer leading up to the season," Smith noted.

He also earned an All-Oakland County nod this season to add to his All-Area honors. Ornes deserves his accolades. Few runners work as hard as he does.

Career performances

Novi senior Justin Namm came into this season knowing if he put up his best performances he could hang with some of the toughest runners around — his peers in the Kensington Valley Conference.

Namm did that and a whole lot more in his final stint as a harrier.

"Justin knew how to race and train," Smith said. "It was not unusual for Justin to be at the front of the pack during our practice runs. He stayed focused all year."

In his senior season, Namm collected a career-best run of 16:38 in the state finals. He also earned All-Oakland County honors this year thanks to his impressive running.

"Justin knew the correlation between quality practices and quality racing," said Smith.

In the KVC meet, he was key in Novi's overall victory for the conference title. He edged past some tightly-packed runners and came in 11th to help secure the crown. He also notched an eighth-place finish in the regional meet and helped Novi to the title.

In the state meet Namm kicked out his best performance, finishing 55th overall.

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Moore's a true athlete

What isn't there to be impressed with about Mark Moore?

The Novi senior pulls in good grades, plays three sports and is just a pretty nice guy all around.

"Mark is an amazing athlete," said Novi cross country and track coach Bob Smith. "He's been a leader on our team and the kind of athlete everyone can look up to."

Moore has had an impact on every sport he has participated in as well. In cross country this year he was a top-10 finisher in the state of Michigan's Division I state finals and finished first in his Regional. Moore was also the top Kensington Valley Conference finisher in the finals.

In basketball last season he helped lead his team to yet another District title as the Wildcats upended the Northville Mustangs in double overtime.

In track and field he helped lead Novi to a surprising Kensington Valley Conference title.

"He's had a lot of success," remarked Smith, who has coached the senior in two sports over the past few years. "I'm really proud of him."



Sam Eggleston

Moore has all the tools necessary to be full of himself. He plays every sport to his fullest potential, earning respect and success in all three of them. He's been rewarded with numerous accolades, including All-State status in cross country.

Yet, Moore is one of the quietest athletes at Novi. He doesn't say much, even when prompted to. He answers questions the shortest way possible, never elaborating or pushing his opinions on others.

No, the Novi senior knows the

true meaning of being an athlete. With that comes natural leadership and the ability to inspire others. He doesn't talk himself up because he knows the only way to truly make a statement is with his play on the court, track or cross country course. Actions, they say, speak louder than words.

Novi has never been in the position where leaders were in short supply. The school is full of them both academically and athletically. Few schools are so blessed. Yet, when the question of which athletes rise above the rest comes out, Moore ranks as high as any of them.

Don't expect him to tell you that though. He's much rather just nod when asked if he plays sports. Want to know how good he is? Don't ask him, just show up to a contest he's participating in. Moore isn't going to tell you just how skilled he is. He'd much rather show you.

That's what a true athlete would do.

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SPORTS

Smith doesn't coach for money

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

There's little doubt that Novi boys cross country and track coach Bob Smith loves his job.

He's always smiling, even managing to do so after a loss on most occasions. He is the first to commend his runners and he's the first to give them credit for any victory.

"It's real gratifying for myself and for the students," said Smith of coaching. "It's lets both of us see hard work does pay off."

Indeed it does. The Novi boys track and field team qualified two sprint relays and a discuss thrower to the state finals last year after winning the Kensington Valley Conference title. In cross country, Novi took fourth in the state with two runners finishing in the top-10.

"We've been on a bit of a roll," said Smith. "We've had a lot of success at Novi. I'm very proud of these kids and how well they've done."

Many coaches would be quick

to tell Smith that he's lucky to have so many great athletes at Novi. Luck, quite often, seems like something that has required a lot of work to achieve.

"A lot of people don't remember the kid that ran a 25-minute five (kilometer)," said Smith. "All they see is the end result of when they graduate their they're stars. It's kind of humorous at times."

Smith does do wonders. Sure, quite a bit of the talent produced from Novi is the proud product of good genetics — but some of it takes a lot of hard work.

"Athletes can be made, not just born," said Smith. "A lot of kids that come into this program have very low raw skills. Before they graduate we're usually able to make them into athletes."

The list of accolades Smith has received over the years is fairly long, but that's not why he does it. Nor does he do it for the pay he gets.

"It's really a labor of love," he said. "My brother is a coach as well and we've had these discussions about what drives us. It's not

monetary and we're not trying to relive the past. It's just the true teacher in us coaches coming out."

Smith pointed out that many coaches, including himself, once loved participating in the sports they now coach. He said when that love makes the transition to the coaching level it makes for a much more enjoyable experience.

"When you coach something you love, it's not work," he said.

Through the years, Smith has come to the realization that winning in the sports he coaches isn't everything — an no, it's not the only thing either.

"The kids sometimes don't have the benefit of that kind of point of view," said Smith. "They want to win it all. Sometimes we're our own worst enemy in that respect."

As the Novi News coach of the year, there's no doubt Smith tries to teach such a viewpoint to those he coaches.

"It's hard for teenagers to keep things like that in perspective," he said. "But I enjoy trying to help them get a good handle on it."

YEAR OF GREATNESS

Mo Pawlak was named Female Athlete of the Year, Mark Moore was Male Athlete of the Year and Bob Smith was Coach of the Year for 2004 — but there were plenty of close calls.

Kate Mackenzie was always in the running for the title as she represented Novi in the Olympics in rowing.

Ampl Hubnikar and Kevin Cislo were major considerations for the male athlete nod thanks to their contributions.

Tab Kellepourey was right in the running with his success in football yet again.

Huprikar now an All-American runner

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

Amol Huprikar runs through life.

In the fall, Huprikar runs with Novi High School's cross country team and in the spring he runs with the track and field team. After the season's done he finds himself running some more.

Huprikar recently made news with a second place finish in a highly competitive national race with a time of 15:37 in less-than-favorable conditions. He was less than a second behind the winner.

The end result beyond places and times? Huprikar can now claim the title of All-American.

"I was happy that I got second," he said. "I was excited because I didn't expect that. I wanted to stay up front and planned out when I would move, but I honestly thought there would be a lot more people with me."

Instead, Huprikar and the first-place finisher were ahead of the pack by over three seconds with a half of a mile to go. As the race quickly came to a close they had put even more distance between themselves and the competition — but they couldn't seem to get much space between each other.

"He had the lead and then I took the lead and with about 100 meters to go he took it back," Huprikar said. "I wasn't sure how I'd finish, so I wasn't disappointed at all with second."

"I like the idea of racing against harder competition."

Amol Huprikar
Novi senior runner

In fact, Huprikar admitted his single goal heading into the race was to take home an All-American title. That meant he had to finish in the top 25 out of over 200 racers taking to the course.

The conditions in Illinois, where the race was held, weren't what cross country runners would call ideal. Instead it rained constantly for two days prior to the race and Huprikar's crew were the last race of the day following about 1,800 other harriers.

And the temperature?

"The actual temperature was about 25," Huprikar said. "With wind chill it was about four or five degrees though."

Huprikar toughed through it though. He had to. It was his first national race. Following last season's cross country schedule he chose not to compete at that level.

"Last year I was pretty beat up by the end of the year," he said. "Plus, I was happy with my finish at the state meet and

content to leave it like that. This year we've been planning on doing stuff after the end of the season so we went out and did it."

The other part of the "we" is none other than Novi coach Bob Smith. He knows talent when he sees it. He's coached national champions before. Huprikar definitely had the fire to compete at that level.

"Amol is an amazing athlete," said Smith. "He knows what it takes to reach his goals."

Which is exactly what Huprikar will have to do when he heads to college. He's been talking to Michigan State with hopes of becoming a Spartan next year with fellow Kensington Valley Conference runner Dana Pitcock. He's still looking at the University of Michigan and Purdue as well.

"Right now I'm just scheduling some official visits," said the senior. "Even if I don't get a scholarship, they usually end up giving money to the runners who do good their first season."

Huprikar, who hopes to study engineering at whatever school he ends up attending, is looking forward to the challenge of racing at the collegiate level.

"I like the idea of racing against harder competition," he said. "The kids are bigger and faster and it's twice as far. It's not going to be easy, but I'll enjoy it."

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Harrier Huprikar honored

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

Amol Huprikar sure can't complain about his senior year in athletics.

The harrier earned All-State status, ran a 15:58 over three miles and finished eighth in the MHSAA state finals. He also took second in the USATF National Cross Country Championships.

To top it off, Huprikar was honored by Sen. Nancy Cassis with a special tribute from the state of Michigan.

"The Novi School District is very proud of Amol," said his coach, Robert Smith. "He serves as a fine example of what is right with athletics and education in the state of Michigan."

Huprikar was honored two weeks ago during a school board meeting with a tribute plaque signed by Cassis. He earned the award for all of his accomplishment while representing Novi and the state of Michigan.

"Most people would be quite satisfied with those results," said Smith of everything Huprikar accomplished prior to the tribute and his national race. "But for Amol, the best was yet to come."

And the best still may be yet to come. Huprikar still has his track season this spring to compete in and will be looking to add to an already impressive senior resume.

Smith said his work ethic and dedication should be examples for all athletes to follow.

"Through hard work and dedica-

"(Amol) serves as a fine example of what is right with athletics and education in the state of Michigan."

Robert Smith

Novi boys cross country and track coach

tion, Amol has gone from a freshman with great potential to a senior who is one of the best runners in the United States of America," he said.



Submitted Photo

Amol Huprikar (center) poses with Senator Nancy Cassis and coach Robert Smith.