

Running on empty

■ Wildcats leave it all on the course with ninth-place finish at state finals



Ricky Manza works his way along the course at the MHSAA state finals.

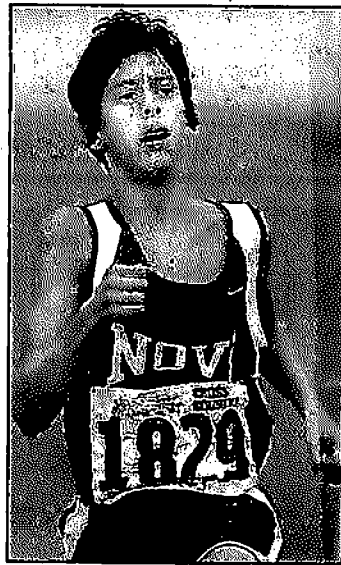
By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

It's starting to become a bit like an expectation around Novi these days.

After seven straight years of coaching the Novi Wildcats boys cross country team to a top-10 finish in the state, Robert Smith's fans have come to just expect him to lead the team to its recognized place as one of the state's best.

Smith didn't let them down again this year.

The Novi Wildcats raced to a ninth-place finish in the state finals despite not having any seniors leading the way. Novi was one of four Kensington Valley Conference teams finishing in



Lukas Barnes at the state finals last Saturday.

the top 10. Pinckney won the event with Ann Arbor Pioneer coming in second, Rockford in third, Walled Lake Central fourth, Lake Orion fifth, South Lyon sixth, Milford seventh, Portage Northern eighth and Rochester Adams 10th.

"You're really looking at the KVC showcasing itself as the premier conference in the state," Milford cross country coach Brian Salyers said.

The run took place with ideal conditions and managed to miss out on the winds that

tore through the state the following day.

Leading the pack for Novi was Mike Wheat, who took 19th overall with a 16:04—just 30 seconds off the top spot. Alex Prasad ran a 16:39 for 55th place while Scott Wagner ran a 16:40 for 60th. Taking 96th in 16:59 was Josh Lumley while Lukas Barnes ran a 17:06 for 109th place. Kenny MacDonough ran a 17:17 and Mike Place ran a 17:43 for 127th and 163rd, respectively.

Novi's girls squad was represented by lone harrier Meghan Bannatz. She ran a 20:07 for

147th place in the girls state finals.

The race was run at Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn. It's a place where some of the top runners have ended up with disappointing times.

Livonia Churchill's Tim Howse is a perfect example. After blowing away the field in the regional, Howse struggled in the finals, coming up with a third-from-last finish.

Northville's two boys runners, Jasen Turnbull and Nick Kolbow, also didn't run well. Turnbull finished 98th overall with a time

of 16:44.4 while Kolbow finished 171st in 17:16.3.

"This is an easy course to miscalculate," South Lyon coach Scott Smith said. "I've seen many great runners totally wreck their races on the MIS course. It is easy to go out too fast and it is easy to get boxed in by the large field of 250 runners. It is easy to make the final kick too early."

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Clarkston girls grab another Division 1 title

By MARVIN GOODWIN
Of The Oakland Press

BROOKLYN — Contending teams got a little closer to Clarkston at Saturday's Division 1 state cross country championship. But they weren't close enough to overtake the Wolves, who won their third straight state title at Michigan International Speedway.

CROSS COUNTRY

Jenny Morgan took fourth and Stephanie Morgan sixth as Clarkston scored 123 points, finishing ahead of runner-up Okemos (138) and Rockford (140).

Meanwhile, Bloomfield Hills Lahser's boys (130) took second behind Dexter (95) in the Division 2 race and the Knights' Erin LaFave was nipped at the tape by .05 seconds to finish second in the girls Division 2 race.

Lakeland's Luke Heiman was overhauled in the last 400 meters to finish second in the boys Division 1 race, where Oakland County teams took six of the top 10 places.

Pinckney won with 146 points, and Ann Arbor Pioneer was second (176). Walled Lake Central (249), Lake Orion (268), South Lyon (270) and Milford (287) took places four through seven and Novi (339) and Rochester Adams (356) were ninth and 10th, respectively.

Sean Maxwell (13th in 15:53) and Jake Hill (15th in 15:53) led Walled Lake Central. Rochester Adams' Dave Demres was 14th (15:53) and Brother Rice's Anthony Wile (15:48) placed eighth.

Lake Orion's Rob Shinouskas (15:49) and Drew Collette (15:49) were 11th and 12th respectively, and Milford's Matt Picou (15:58) was 22nd. Mike Wheat (16:04) led Novi in 29th and Andrew Keller of South Lyon was 16th (15:56).

Mike Quick was 14th in 15:57 and Joey Grace was 26th (16:09) to lead Lahser, which has finished in the top four at state the last five seasons. Dexter, with 95 points, won its fourth straight Division 2 crown.

"They came to race," Lahser coach Nick Stration said of the Knights. "We're competing at the highest level. It's an honor to go against a great team like Dexter. (But) we're not giving up."

STATE CROSS COUNTRY RESULTS

Boys

DIVISION 1

Team standings

1, Pinckney, 146. 2, Ann Arbor Pioneer, 176. 3, Rockford, 223. 4, Walled Lake Central, 249. 5, Lake Orion, 268. 6, South Lyon, 270. 7, Highland-Milford, 287. 8, Portage Northern, 337. 9, Novi, 339. 10, Rochester Adams, 356.

Individual results

1, Ryan Grau, Kalamazoo Central, 15:34.25. 2, Luke Heiman, White Lake Lakeland, 15:36.30. 3, Robbie Fisher, Grosse Pointe North, 15:42.25. 4, Dan Kapadia, Salem, 15:45.85. 5, Jacob Wernet, Grosse Pointe South, 15:46.05. 6, Pete Loy, Warren DeLaSalle, 15:47.25. 7, Cole Sanseverino, Monroe, 15:47.35. 8, Anthony Wile, Birmingham Brother Rice, 15:48.35. 9, Steve Breisach, Kalamazoo Central, 15:48.55. 10, Peter Christmas, Ann Arbor Pioneer, 15:48.95.

DIVISION 2

Team standings

1, Dexter, 95. 2, Bloomfield Hills Lahser, 130. 3, Flint Powers Catholic, 180. 4, Sparta, 184. 5, Coldwater, 205. 6, Petoskey, 222. 7, Corunna, 281. 8, Three Rivers, 283. 9, St. Clair, 299. 10, Fremont, 300.

Individual results

1, Landon Peacock, Cedar Springs, 15:09.50. 2, Patrick Grosskopf, Corunna, 15:18.55. 3, Van Tate, Petoskey, 15:24.80. 4, Dan Jackson, Dexter, 15:30.40. 5, Ian Girard, Chelsea, 15:38.20. 6, Mitchell Hoffman, St. Johns, 15:38.80. 7, Addis Habtewold, St. Clair, 15:40.55. 8, Bobby Aprill, Dexter, 15:41.65. 9, Simon Nyang, Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern, 15:42.40. 10, Patrick Liederbach, Petoskey, 15:51.75.

DIVISION 3

Team standings

1, Williamston, 78. 2, Grand Rapids West Catholic, 83. 3, Jackson Lumen Christi, 187. 4, Lansing Catholic Central, 223. 5, Erie Mason, 224. 6, Kalkaska, 259. 7, Carson City-Crystal, 267. 8, Benzie Central, 269. 9, Hillsdale, 301. 10, Shepherd, 311.

Individual results

1, Maverick Darling, Ovid-Elsie, 15:49.9. 2, Matthew Lutzke, Williamston, 15:50.5. 3, Mike Mayday, Hanover-Horton, 15:51.3. 4, Nick Tecca, Parchment, 15:52.1. 5, Paul Grieve, Kalkaska, 15:52.3. 6, Kyle Smith, Lake Fenton, 15:53.2. 7, Ryan Scott, Grand Rapids West Catholic, 15:57.5. 8, Brandon Griffin, Erie Mason, 15:57.6. 9, Aaron Simoneau, Manistee, 16:00.1. 10, Devon Duffo, Carson City-Crystal, 16:04.5.

DIVISION 4

Team standings

1, St. Louis, 127. 2, Bellevue, 165. 3, Bear Lake, 167. 4, Grand Rapids Covenant Christian, 191. 5, Vandercook Lake, 194. 6, Hesperia, 217. 7, Pottersville, 226. 8, Pittsford, 275. 9, Mendon, 286. 10, Hudson, 300.

Individual results

1, Matthew Hanko, Grand Rapids Covenant Christian, 16:14.7. 2, Loren Milbrath, Saginaw Michigan Lutheran Seminary, 16:17.3. 3, Mike Glinski, Sand Creek, 16:22.5. 4, Alex Harris, Royal Oak Shrine, 16:27.1. 5, Nick Swisher, Bear Lake, 16:30.4. 6, Brett Domeyer, Bath, 16:35.7. 7, Josh Groenwald, Bear Lake, 16:39.0. 8, Peter Hamp, Ann Arbor Greenhills, 16:40.5. 9, John Koser, Hudson, 16:41.9. 10, Cody Hoffman, Bellevue, 16:42.0.

Girls

DIVISION 1

Team standings

1, Clarkston, 123. 2, Okemos, 138. 3, Rockford, 140. 4, Livonia Churchill, 215. 5, Traverse City Central, 220. 6, Rochester Adams, 256. 7, Saline, 272. 8, Grand Haven, 275. 9, Livonia Stevenson, 284. 10, Highland-Milford, 335.

Individual results

1, Eileen Creutz, Saline, 17:41.0. 2, Katie Haines, Rockford, 17:47.3. 3, Becca Addison, Grand Haven, 17:54.1. 4, Jenny Morgan, Clarkston, 17:54.6. 5, Courtney Calka, Livonia Stevenson, 17:55.6. 6, Stephanie Morgan, Clarkston, 17:56.4. 7, Rachel Patterson, Rochester Adams, 18:00.7. 8, Emily Langenberg, Grand Ledge, 18:05.5. 9, Carlie Green, Highland-Milford, 18:07.2. 10, Danielle Dakroub, Okemos, 18:11.2.

DIVISION 2

Team standings

1, Grand Rapids Christian, 108. 2, Grand Rapids South Christian, 164. 3, Grand Rapids Forest Hills North, 218. 4, East Lansing, 237. 5, Chelsea, 242. 6, Gaylord, 252. 7, Dexter, 256. 8, Ortonville-Brandon, 263. 9, Milan, 284. 10, East Grand Rapids, 302.

Individual results

1, Bekah Smeltzer, Monroe Jefferson, 17:44.0. 2, Erin LaFave, Bloomfield Hills Lahser, 17:44.0. 3, Brooke Eilers, Holland Christian, 17:55.8. 4, Jazmine Ford, Comstock Park, 18:00.9. 5, Thereseann Zimmerman, Gaylord, 18:15.0. 6, Amanda McKenzie, Chelsea, 18:17.3. 7, Andrea Schedlbauer, Caledonia, 18:20.5. 8, Jessica Armstrong, Wayland Union, 18:25.0. 9, Lori Burgess, Grand Rapids South Christian, 18:25.3. 10, Megan Josey, Spring Lake, 18:27.1.

DIVISION 3

Team standings

1, Goodrich, 118. 2, Jackson Lumen Christi, 147. 3, Hillsdale, 150. 4, Elk Rapids, 176. 5, East Jordan, 214. 6, Whitehall, 289. 7, Macomb Luther North, 290. 8, Kalamazoo Christian, 291. 9, Freeland, 307. 10, Otsego, 316.

Individual results
1, Mikal Beckmart, Newaygo, 18:03.6. 2, Kristi Werner, East Jordan, 18:27.4. 3, Aubree Danielson, Whitehall, 18:30.0. 4, Devyn Ramsey, Benzie Central, 18:39.7. 5, Kaitlin Omara, Goodrich, 18:44.4. 6, Yva Elhammer, Otsego, 18:44.7. 7, Kelsey Meyers, Goodrich, 18:51.2. 8, Bethany Hammer, Elk Rapids, 18:56.9. 9, Elizabeth Horcha, Durand, 18:57.5. 10, Kelsey Krych, Goodrich, 18:58.6.

DIVISION 4

Team standings

1, Big Rapids Crossroads Academy, 132. 2, Traverse City St. Francis, 159. 3, Ann Arbor Greenhills, 176. 4, Southfield Christian, 181. 5, Saginaw Valley Lutheran, 213. 6, Uby, 229. 7, Grand Rapids NorthPointe Christian, 240. 8, Hesperia, 246. 9, Hudson, 266. 10, Rogers City, 281.

Individual results

1, Marissa Treeco, Maple City Glen Lake, 17:57.2. 2, Kaylee Krefl, Rogers City, 18:36.6. 3, Kilee Kujacki, Uby, 18:37.1. 4, Alexa Glencer, Ann Arbor Greenhills, 18:37.3. 5, Rebecca Monroe, Big Rapids Crossroads Academy, 18:49.8. 6, Tricia Rozeboom, Saugatuck, 18:53.2. 7, Heather Strong, Fulton-Middleton, 19:02.0. 8, Kaitah Gerig, Sand Creek, 19:06.1. 9, Lacey Krefl, Rogers City, 19:06.5. 10, Rachel Ham, Hudson, 19:10.4.

Yes! Wildcats win regional title again!

For Novi coach Bob Smith, it's all about tradition.

He doesn't expect the runners on his boys cross country team to win every time they hit the course, but he expects them to try and to give their best no matter who they're running against.

That's what has made his program so successful and that's what helped push his boys team — picked by the critics as one of his "worst" teams ever — to win their second-straight regional title.

The victory, which found them finishing ahead of new neighbor Catholic Central as well as Plymouth Salem, Plymouth, Livonia Churchill and Northville, gives the Wildcats a berth to the state finals.

The Division-I state finals will once again be held at the Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn. There, the Wildcats are hoping to continue doing what has led them to some very successful runs at this point.

Novi ran well in some very ideal conditions at Schoolcraft College Saturday. They were led by Mike Wheat, who ran a 16:14 as the first of a very tight pack for the Wildcats. Alex Prasad, who has had an applaud-worthy season, ran a 16:27 while Scott Wagner nipped at his heels with a 16:35 and Luke Barnes

ran a 16:50. The fifth Novi harrier to cross the line was Josh Lumley with a 17:04 while Kenny MacDonough ran a 17:07.

The impressive times were also personal bests with Prasad, Barnes, MacDonough, Wagner and Wheat all running career-best races.

Joining Novi will be Northville's Jasen Turnbull and Nick Kolbow, who took sixth and 13th, respectively. Northville did not qualify for the finals as a team.

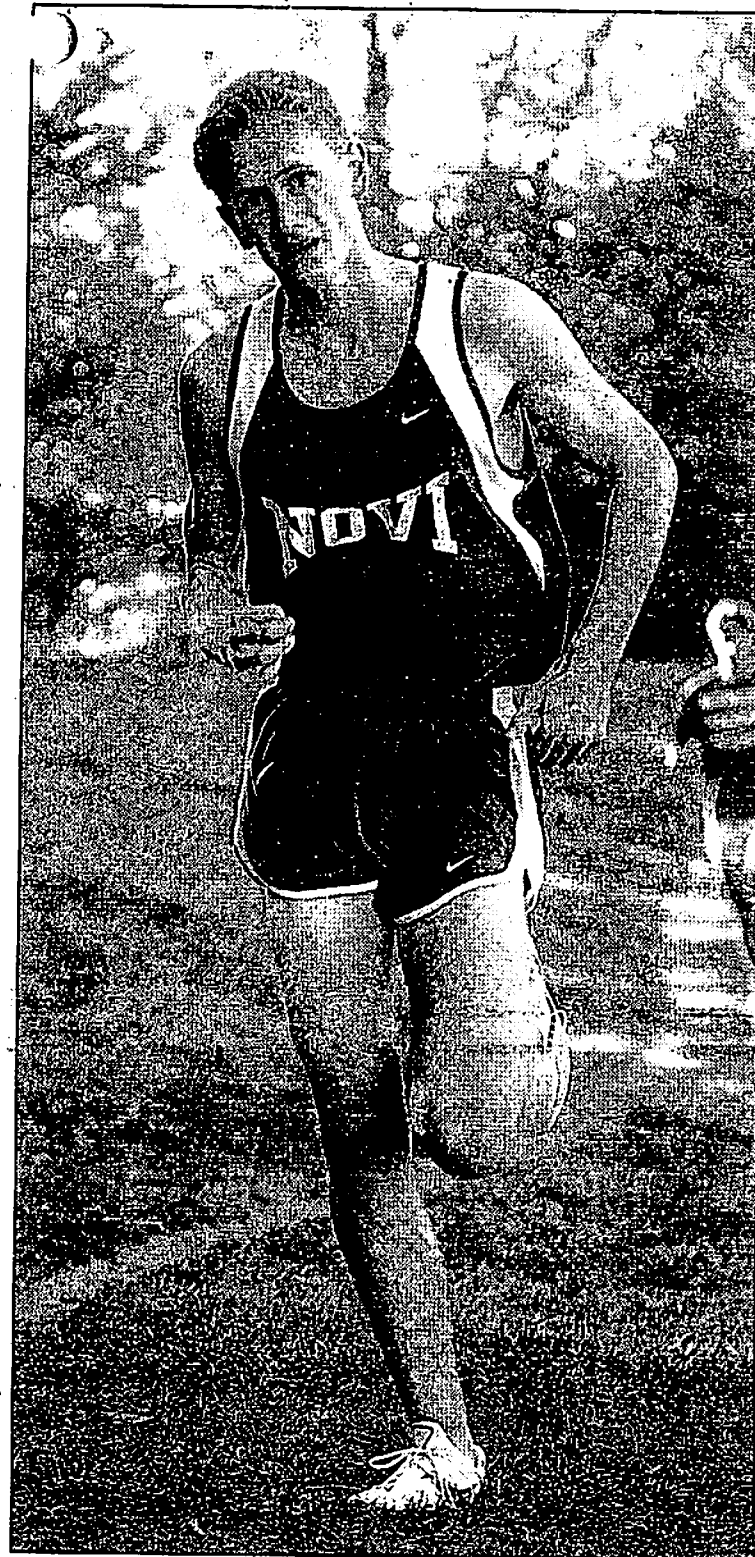


Photo by
JOHN
HEIDER

**Novi's
Scott
Wagner
runs at
Cass
Benton.**

This is Wildcat country

by Julie Kluka

Nearly 25 years ago, Robert Smith took over a struggling Novi boy's cross country team. Although it took another few seasons to record their first team win, Smith has now turned that fledgling team into a consistently winning program.

After recording a second place finish at the Kensington Valley Conference (KVC) league meet, the Wildcats won their MHSAA regional meet, qualifying the team for the MHSAA state finals. By winning the regional, Novi sends seven runners to the race, held the first weekend in November at the Michigan International Speedway (MIS) in Brooklyn, Mich.

"Our league record was 4-3, but teams we ran against are all (state) ranked teams," Smith commented on his team's dual meet finishes. "We seem to step up in October. We're feeling like we are on a roll right now," he added.

Novi is led by junior Mike Wheat, who has recorded the team's top time of 16:14 this year. Other runners participating in the state final race are juniors Alex Prasad, Scott Wagner and Kenny MacDonough, sophomores Josh Lumley and Mike Place and freshman Lukas Barnes.

Surprisingly, not one senior can be found on the Wildcat roster this 2005 season.

"We have no seniors at all, which is unusual," Smith admitted. "It's just one of those weird things. But it has been surprising and gratifying for this junior class to step it up and lead the way."

Smith maintained that his squad is focused solely on the events that will take place in the next few days, mainly the MHSAA final. However, he reluctantly agreed that he should field a strong team next year as well.

Even though Novi lost its first league race to #1 ranked Pinckney, the Wildcats never lost confidence or sight of their goals. Smith said they've just been simmering beneath the surface, never quite ranked in the state but always listed in the



After recording a second place finish at the Kensington Valley Conference (KVC) league meet, the Wildcats won their MHSAA regional meet, qualifying the team for the MHSAA

honorable mention column.

"We've never really been out of the picture," said Smith. "We've been in striking distance the whole time, and we like that position."

One reason for Smith's success at the helm of this Wildcat cross country team is that he has always preached tradition and consistency. That, and he noted hard work goes a long way.

"Our moniker is that tradition never graduates," Smith explained. "We've developed a culture that is passed on year to year. You don't get to state finals without sacrifice and hard work, and our team is committed to those principles."

Smith also believes that his teams are successful because his athletes are self-driven individuals.

"I'm just there to fine-tune the motivation they already have," Smith said. "I'm simply building on that."

He was quick to point out that winning is a lot more fun than losing, though, and cross country athletes are a unique



bunch.

"They are self-driven, they like long-range gratification, and they don't seek fame and glory because they don't get much."

Come rain or shine, Smith's Wildcat squad is certainly focused on the weekend.

"Weather is not really an issue. A lot of teams like it cool, and ours is no exception," he added. "We also train in preparation for warm weather. Temperature doesn't really impact our performance. Cold weather is a welcome relief for athletes."

One might also say that Smith is a welcome relief for his own athletes. He even manages to keep in touch with ex-runners and give them pep talks before their own big races, after they've moved on from Novi.

"That's kind of the fun part of coaching," he said. "You get to impact a kid's life."

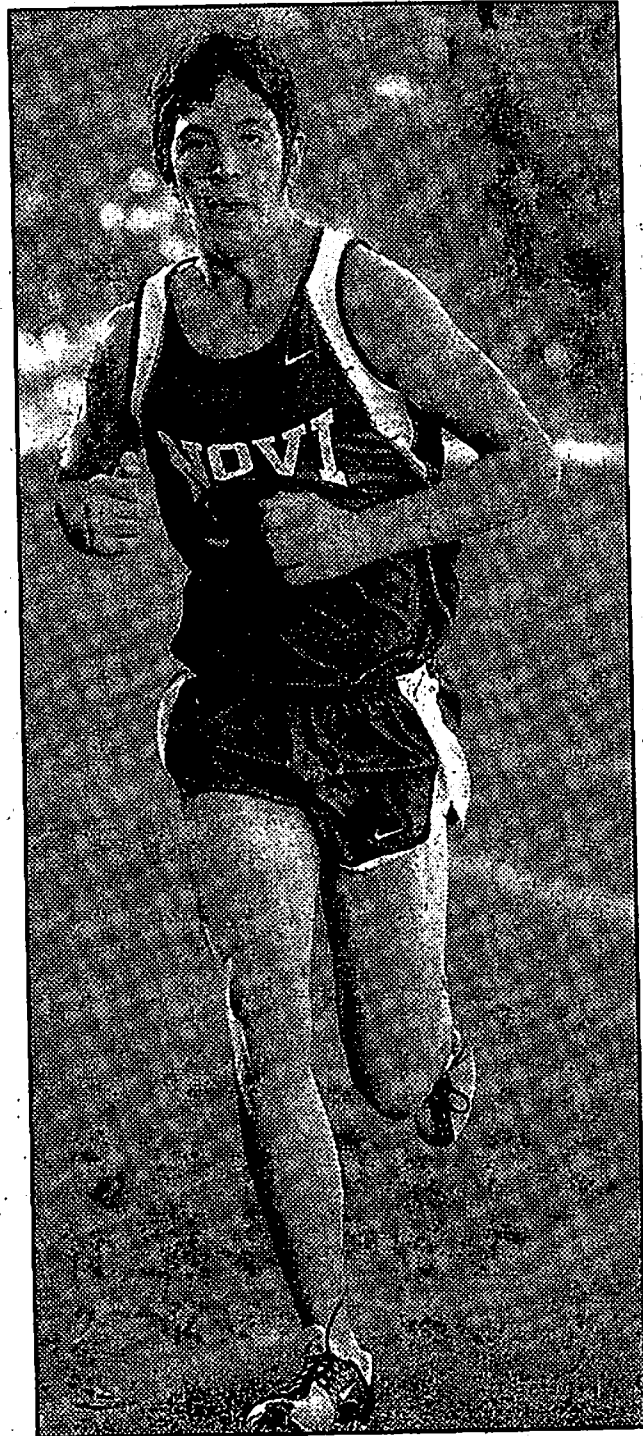


RUNNIN' WILDCATS

Members of the Novi High School cross-country team gathered around their regional championship trophy after prevailing at the Division 1 regional meet last week. The Wildcats will compete at the state meet Saturday at Michigan International Speedway.

Photo by
JOHN HEIDER/
Novi News

**Novi cross
country
runner
Mike
Wheat fin-
ished first
for the
Wildcats
during
their meet
with
Milford.**



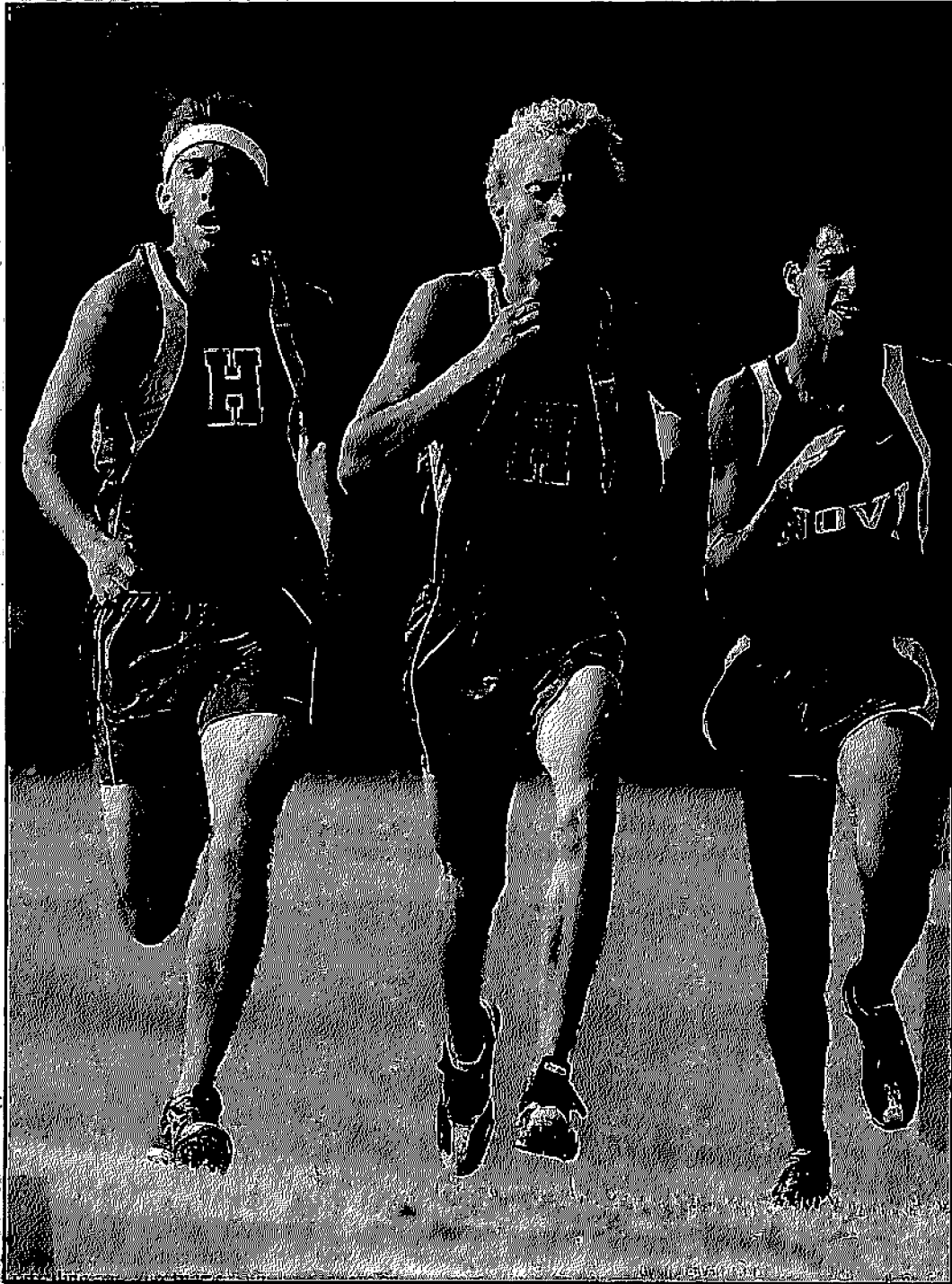


Photo by GILLIS BENEDICT/DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

Highlanders Brian Marcinkowski (left) and Logan Hatfield (center) battle Novi's Alex Prasad down the stretch Tuesday. Marcinkowski finished second, Prasad third and Hatfield fourth.

Highlanders boys fall to Novi

HIGH SCHOOLS

CROSS COUNTRY

Training has Mavs ready for success

A rigorous training camp in the Upper Peninsula might do wonders for Milford's boys cross country team. For seven days, the Mavs enjoyed gorgeous scenery while prepping for the coming season. "It was beautiful for us," coach Brian Salyers said. "Cool at night, nice during the day."

The Mavs returned to Oakland County with the intention of competing, but with less to work with than in the past. Four of the top seven runners from last year's state championship team are competing at Division I universities and another — Nick Andersen — transferred to Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook Kingswood. "Our team is considerably different this year," said Salyers, who has two straight state titles in the book.

A third, though, might be a long shot.

HERE ARE THE TOP 10 BOYS TEAMS IN THE COUNTY:

1. Lake Orion — The Dragons were regional champs, OAA I runners-up and placed seventh at the Division 1 state meet last year. But coach Stan Ford believes this squad can top those efforts. Returnees Rob Shmeusks, Drew Collette, Jason Lawton and Matt Dufresne give Lake Orion a solid group with experience. Freshman Doug Mack and sophomore Kyle Lawton are promising contributors.
2. Bloomfield Hills Lahser — With at least a top-four finish at the Division 2 state meet the last four years, the Knights have a tradition to uphold. Led by three-time All-State runner Mike Chulck, and four others with big-meet experience, including Nick Krol, Joey Grace, Charlie Najt and Iraan Allarakhia, Lahser should keep the tradition alive. Jon Adler and Jordan Jones also will help. "I think our guys are extremely excited about the season," said Lahser coach Nick Stratton, who has led the Knights to four straight league titles, including a 27-0 league dual-meet record during that span.
3. Novi — Just like many other top Kensington Valley Conference teams, graduation losses took their toll on the Wildcats. But count on the defending conference champs to be in contention again. Alex Prasad, Scott Wagner, Kenny MacDonough and Mike Wheat will contribute along with Bobby Watts, one of only three seniors on the team. Josh Lumley and Lucas Barnes are showing promise, along with Steve Fannon, a gifted quarter-miler. "Even though our guys are relatively young, they're seasoned," coach Robert Smith said.
4. Walled Lake Central — The Vikings are poised to make an impact among area teams. They finished sixth at the Division 1 state meet last year and four of their top five return, including

Oakland County top boys runners

1. Mike Chulck, Bloomfield Hills Lahser — Knights' leading runner the last three seasons.
2. Luke Helman, Lakeland — Can he continue his steady improvement?
3. Sean Maxwell, Walled Lake Central — Could spark another rise by the Vikings.
4. Nick Andersen, Cranbrook-Kingswood — Sophomore has big-meet experience and big-time potential.
5. Dave Demres, Rochester Adams — Feeling he's got a good season in him.
6. Rob Shmeusks, Lake Orion — Chance to be the Dragons' front-runner.
7. Todd Boonzaar, Walled Lake Western — Hoping to build on success of last year.
8. Andrew Keller, South Lyon — The Lions' front-runner will key team effort.
9. Ross Teach, Stoney Creek — Could be ready for a breakout season.
10. Tony Sanfilippo, Walled Lake Central — Can only get better with running partner.

Best of rest: Ted Howard (Birmingham Seaholm); Mikhey Maves (Walled Lake Northern); Matt Picou (Milford); Adam Richmond (Oxford); Dan Welch (Lakeland); Ross Solansky (Berkeley); Anthony Wile (Brother Rice).

Sean Maxwell, Tony Sanfilippo, Scott Stevens and Jake Hill. However, the Vikings finished with only six runners on the squad last season, leaving them vulnerable to injuries. Unless they get more runners, they'll be walking a tightrope this season.

5. Lakeland — The Eagles stay competitive by tussling in the Kensington Valley Conference, one of the toughest distance-running loops in the Midwest. Dan Welch, Luke Helman and Chris Follick form a solid returning trio for the Eagles, who'll need help from a youthful supporting crew to challenge for the league title and more.

6. Milford — Despite their losses, the Mavs always are competitive. Matt Picou, the team's No. 5 runner at states last year, returns along with Matt Tulpa. Devin McKeown also will help, and Rob Paulson made huge improvements from last season. Sophomore Andrew McKeachie will try cross country for the first time, and Bob Felgley and Steve Fuelling will help. "We're actually going to be OK," Salyers said. "It's how much our sophomores are going to come around."

7. Novi Detroit Catholic Central — Only four years removed from a Division 1 state title, the Shamrocks were denied an appearance at states last season for the first time in some 20 years, according to coach Tony Magni. That's enough incentive for this year's group. "They don't want to be the team that doesn't go again," Magni said. Seniors Mike Nienhaus, David Champagne and A.J. Huber will lead a squad with some 40 athletes.

8. Troy Athens — The Red Hawks figure to leap from sixth at last year's OAA I league meet into the group of top contending teams, according to coach Mike Stallsmith. But Athens will need juniors Jason Luitbrand, Matt Shaheen and Chris Taasen to step to the forefront. Neal Duggan is in "phenomenal shape," according to Stallsmith, and, with senior Eric Brunning, the pair could form a solid 1-2 punch.

9. Clarkston — The Wolves' surprise trip to states last year could be the confidence booster the squad needs. Seniors Hazen Brennan and Edward Brennan will help, along with Chris Anderson, Andrew Chaffee and Nick Lamora complete the returnees with state-meet experience. Expect Clarkston's climb in the OAA I to continue.

10. Rochester Adams — The first sign of a Highlander uprising was a victory by junior Dave Demres at the Adams Invitational. If seniors Brad Anderson and Kevin Patterson, expected to be big contributors, can catch up to Demres, the Highlanders can be among the league's leaders. Ellett Backes and Joe Urda also should help.

— MARVIN GOODWIN

place Ann Arbor Pioneer graduated its top two. Overall, 26 of the 80 state runners from 2004 were seniors. "The best team in the state is not where we've been as last year, but the lower teams are better," Smith said. "There would be a great sea-son... It's really going to be a great sea-son... It's still early, and you can't tell who the favorites are going to be. They will depend on a young lineup who the favorites are going to be." They will depend on a young lineup who the favorites are going to be.

EE/Detroit Free Press

ast Pontiac 57-30 victory.

), Detroit-Finney ren Martin enior guard for Pershing y West scored 1). e 60, Detroit ard Janelle and grabbed 12 ce (4-0, 3-0 ana Mitchell

, Detroit City 38: orded 24 points tt 16 for West-

. Milan 44: red 23 points 11 for Airport. is and Nicole r Milan (0-3,

oe Jefferson 31: oks scored 13 center Michelle d Chelsea) for Grosse Ile r Kate Wigman (2-4, 0-1).

Mega

Dearborn Edsel Ford 56, Highland Park 40: Sophomore center Michelle Boettger scored 12 points, freshman Michelle Gaedke 11 and senior forward Molly Machak 10 for Edsel Ford (3-1). Junior forward Roxanne Childs had 18 for Highland Park.

Redford Thurston 50, Ypsilanti Willow Run 49: Senior guard Chloe Booker scored 23 points, including the winning free throw with 2.2 seconds left in the game, for Thurston (1-3). Junior T.J. Cunningham added 14. Kenita Harold scored 14 for Willow Run (2-2).

Redford Union 50, Dearborn Heights Annapolis 46: Senior guard Janice Godboldo scored 22 points for Redford Union (1-4). Andrea York scored 15 and Melissa Deptula 11 for Annapolis (0-5).

River Rouge 50, Lincoln Park 37: Jessica McKeith scored 12 points for Rouge. Laura Flannery scored 19 for Lincoln Park.

Taylor Kennedy 45, Ecorse 15: Sophomore center Samantha Calh and freshman guard Kourtney Davis each scored 11 points for Kennedy (2-3). Ecorse is 0-4.

Taylor Truman 46, Wyandotte Roosevelt 42: Senior forward Janelle Harris scored 16 points and had 19 rebounds for Truman (4-1). Wyandotte is 0-5.

Metro

Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook Kingswood 27, Harper Woods 23: Junior guard Ashleigh Green scored nine points for Kingswood (2-3, 1-0). Harper Woods is 0-6, 0-1.

Clawson 47, Marcomb Lutheran

Randall Hurst scored 27 points for West Bloomfield (5-0, 2-0 Div. I).

Others

Allen Park Cabrini 54, Warren Zoe Christian 27: Junior forward Nikki Fernandez scored seven points for Cabrini (5-1). Ten different players scored for Cabrini. Gabrielle Savillsby had 10 points for Christian (2-2).

Birmingham Detroit Country Day 70, Brighton 46: Senior guard Walker Price had 17 points for Country Day (6-0). Junior forward Chelsea Albert had 14 for Brighton (2-2).

Birmingham Marian 51, St. Clair 47: Brigid Mulroy scored 28 points for Marian (5-0). Megan Johnson scored 14 and Kelsey Rood 10 for St. Clair (4-2).

Dearborn 46, Livonia Churchill 43: Junior Mallery Tarrant and senior forward Jessica Welton each scored 13 points for Dearborn. Junior guard Stephanie Bradshaw scored 17 for Churchill (2-4).

Detroit Urban Lutheran 37, Canton Agape Christian 30: Valerie Watkins scored 13 points for Urban Lutheran (1-4). Brianna Chrenko scored 21 for Agape Christian (1-3).

Flint Northern 52, Canton 39: Senior guard Takeya Fortner had 16 points, 10 rebounds and three steals for Northern (4-2). Lisa Ealy scored 17 points for Canton.

Garden City 51, Westland Glenn 41: Senior Melissa Forma scored 13 points and senior Lindsay Fletemier 11 for Garden City (3-2). Junior Brittney Brown scored 15 and senior Jennifer Swartz 10 for Glenn (3-2).

Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett 58, Royal Oak Shrine 49: Senior



KIRTHMON F. DOZIER/Detroit Free Press

Novi coach Bob Smith outlines the Hudson Mills Metropark course before the Wildcats ran against Pinckney in a Kensington Valley Conference meet. Pinckney won, 17-43.

Novi strives to keep pace in season of changes at top

CROSS-COUNTRY

By WRIGHT WILSON
FREE PRESS SPECIAL WRITER

At first glance it appears the Novi cross-country team is as green as the singlets the Wildcats wear.

After finishing fourth at last year's Division 1 state meet, the Wildcats lost two all-state runners to graduation. Their third and fourth runners were also seniors, and their fifth man, who would have been a junior this season, moved to California. Three others in the team's top 10 also graduated, leaving Novi with two runners who have significant varsity experience.

But coach Robert Smith is optimistic heading into Saturday's Walled Lake Western Invitational.

"We only have three seniors on a squad of 32, which on paper would be alarming, but I am pleasantly surprised with our returning guys," he said. "The junior class stepped up; they did their homework in the summer and came in ready to go. They don't want to be the team that lets our tradition down, and so far they've exceeded all expectations."

Novi's theme is "tradition never graduates," and the team hopes to post its eighth consecutive top-10 finish at state. The Wildcats began the streak with Class A state championships in 1998 and 1999.

They will depend on a young lineup

in 2005. Four of Novi's five captains are juniors: Rick Manza, Alex Prasad, Scott Wagner and Mike Wheat, joining senior Steve Fannon. Only Wheat and senior Bobby Watts ran at the state meet. Sophomore Josh Lumley and freshman Lukas Barnes are also among the team's top runners.

"You can tell just from being around the guys on this team that they don't take anything for granted," Wagner said following Novi's 24-31 victory over Howell on Tuesday, which made the Wildcats 1-1 in dual meets. "We had two guys, myself included, put in 600 miles over the summer, and four or five guys 500 miles, and we also went up to a cross-country camp. We know we're going to have to pick it up to keep pace with what we've done the past few years."

Novi isn't the only 2004 contender in this spot. State champion Milford and runner-up Pinckney graduated their top three runners. (Pinckney beat Novi last week in a dual meet.)

Third-place Ann Arbor Huron returns only one of its top seven. Fifth-place Ann Arbor Pioneer graduated its top two. Overall, 26 of the 30 all-state runners from 2004 were seniors.

"The best team in the state is nowhere near as good as last year, but the lower teams are better," Smith said. "Where we would fit is difficult to tell. It's really going to be a great season. ... It's still early, and you can't tell who the favorites are going to be."

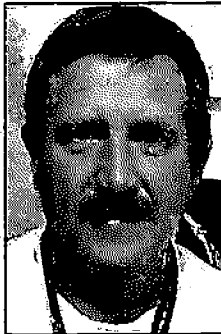
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Novi High School

P.E. teacher chosen for halls of fame

MEGAN WALLEN
Staff Writer

Weight-training teacher, Boys Cross Country and Track coach Bob Smith was just inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame at South Lyon High School and Alma College.



Smith set a record of 48.7 seconds in the 440-yd. dash that still stands today. He also won four Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA) Championships in three events: the triple jump, 440-yd. dash and 400-meter dash. In 1977 and 1978, he qualified for the NCAA Championships, and in 1978 was named the MIAA Most Valuable Runner.