

Photo by JOHN HEIDER/Novi News

Novi cross country runners jog along the Cass Benton trail in a time trial against Livonia Churchill.

Running against new opponents

By Jeff Theisen
SPORTS WRITER

Traditions are big with Novi cross country. The Wildcat runners take pride in passing the torch from one great class to another.

Evidence may be found with several graduated runners from Novi's storied past continuing to run with the current team in early-season practices.

But last year's team was not able to make the state meet, something that had been a staple in the past.

The Wildcats lost a pair of top runners from last year's team, but

they return a host of others that will try to keep Novi mentioned as one of the top teams in the state.

Returnees Mike Blaszczyk (captain), Jake Carless (captain), TJ Butler (captain), Lucas Barnes and Dan Egner lead a host of runners that will try to get the Wildcats back to the elite race of the year. Andrew Burkhardt is the fourth captain.

"I haven't been this excited in a long, long time," said Robert Smith as he begins his 28th year as head coach. "Barnes ran in the state meet as a freshman. All the other guys have been on a team that has been on a team that has

Cross Country

Aug. 23	South Lyon Invite	Away	9:30 a.m.
Sept. 9	S. Lyon East	Away	4 p.m.
Sept. 12	Spartan Invite	MSU	TBA
Sept. 13	WL Western Invite	Willis Park	9 a.m.
Sept. 16	Northville	Home	5 p.m.
Sept. 19	Anchor Bay Invite (boys only)	Away	4:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	Salem	Away	4:25 p.m.
Sept. 30	Liv. Stevenson	Home	4:25 p.m.
Oct. 4	Oak County at Kensington - Possom Hollow	TBA	TBA
Oct. 7	South Lyon	Home	6:10 p.m.
Oct. 11	Gabriel Rich. invite (girls only)	Away	1 p.m.
Oct. 14	KLAA Central	Away	4 p.m.
Oct. 18	KLAA Conference	Away	10 a.m.
Oct. 25	Regional	TBA	TBA
Nov. 1	States	Mich. Int. Speedway	TBA

been as high as second in the state. They know what it feels like and tastes like.

"That experience is huge. We're banking on that to carry us over."

The breakout of the new league puts Novi in the Kensington Conference, away from former

KVC and state powerhouses Pinckney (state champs) and Milford (sixth at state).

But that doesn't mean anything is going to come easy for them.

X-Country

continued from front

Standing in the way of a division title will be rival Northville.

"Last year, Northville really kicked it up a notch last year," Smith said. "We've been running with Northville for 30 years. We've really enjoyed the rivalry. The Northville program is very similar to ours."

Also in the new division is former KVC foe South Lyon along with Salem, Stevenson and new school South Lyon East.

"I'm hoping that we don't take anybody for granted," Smith said. "Stevenson, Salem, South Lyon and Northville are all very formidable. We will still be racing some great teams. It's not a soft league by any means. It's competitive, but also competitive at the state level."

Smith said dedication, superior conditioning and experience are the biggest strengths of the team. He said team goals include win-

BY THE NUMBERS

COACH: Robert Smith

28th year

LAST YEAR: 5-2 in duals, won four invites

KEY RETURNES: Mike Blaszczyk, Jake Carless, TJ Butler, Lucas Barnes, Dan Egner

ning the inaugural KLAA division and conference titles. But he lists having fun, giving 100 percent and taking pride in the program as things that will contribute to the team's success.

Novi's first meet is Aug. 23 at the South Lyon Invite, which will have several top teams from the area.

"It's a nice test early," Smith said. "It will tell us where we stand."

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HIGH SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY

Wildcats stake claim at Spartan Invite

By MARVIN GOODWIN
Of The Oakland Press

EAST LANSING — While some may have believed Novi had faded away among the top boys cross country teams, the Wildcats made their presence known at Friday's Spartan Invitational at Forest Akers East Golf Course.

Mike Blaszczyk placed second, leading five runners among the top 30 finishers, as the Wildcats won the Green Division title with 100 points.

Novi, which won its second straight Spartan Invitational title, highlighted a strong showing by Oakland County athletes at one of the state's largest cross country meets.

Troy's Mike Atchoo won the Green Division individual title, leading the Colts to third place; Megan Goethals of Rochester won the girls Elite Division title; Waterford Kettering's Alex Katona placed third in the boys White Division race and Stoney Creek, Novi and Farmington were second, third and fourth respectively in the girls Green Division race.

Blaszczyk came in at 16:12 for the five-kilometer course, finishing a second behind Atchoo. But teammates Dan Egner (19th), Alex Minghine (21st), Joe Schubring (28th) and Thomas



The Oakland Press/MARVIN GOODWIN

Troy's Mike Atchoo (right) gets a high-five from a Troy Athens runner after winning the individual title in the Green Division at the Spartan Invitational.

Butler (30th) all finished within 12 seconds of each other.

"It's huge," said Novi coach Robert Smith who, in the last four years at the Spartan Invitational, coached the Wildcats to three firsts and a second-place finish. "There's 41 teams here and this is one of the premier meets in the state.

The Wildcats also uncovered newfound depth on the squad. All of their top seven runners

were among the first 55 finishers, considerably ahead of other squads. Only the top five runners score.

"We had one boy who didn't run today and another one banged up," said Smith, "but I know when we're healthy we're a darn good team. Now we've proven we're a deep team (too). We had some boys that stepped up and filled the holes."

Smith said the Wildcats, a

traditional state meet participant, did not qualify for state last year and may have been under the radar. But they are no longer.

Atchoo, among the lead pack the entire race, shook off Blaszczyk in the final strides in a thrilling finish.

"I was with the leaders all the way, and the last 200 meters, I just sprinted," smiled the junior, whose teammate James Yau came in 16th. "It's real exciting. Last year I got third, and I was hoping I'd do well again."

Meanwhile Goethals, who won the OAA Red Jamboree last Tuesday, took her racing to another level, as she clocked a sizzling 17:39 on a damp course.

Grand Blanc's Gabrielle Anzalone, who placed fourth at the Division 1 state meet last year, went to the front and stayed until Goethals, who was several seconds behind, slowly reeled her in.

"A little after the two-mile mark, that's when I decided to go," said Goethals, who was still wary despite taking charge. "I thought she (Anzalone) was going to shoot by me at the end. When I crossed the line, I felt like I was going to pass out, but I feel good now. I didn't think I could win it. I was so excited. I've never won something like

this before, so this is really cool."

Anzalone said she felt physically well but couldn't respond to Goethals's move. "I just told myself don't give up and just push through it," said Anzalone, who clocked 17:56. "I got a season PR and I broke 18 minutes, which is what I wanted to do."

Katona pointed to his bandaged lower leg, moments after his race.

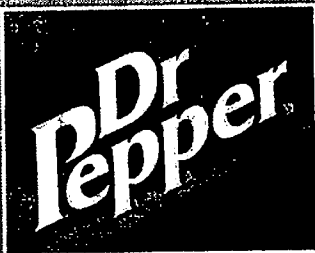
"I've got two big gashes there," said the junior, who also plays soccer. "(But) I'm not complaining about a third-place finish."

Cally Macumber placed fifth and Lindsay Hilton ninth to lead Rochester Adams to fourth place in the girls Elite Division race, and Troy's Grace Green and Michelle Moriset led the Colts to fifth place.

Stoney Creek's Kelly Taylor, who finished ninth, led the Cougars to their highest finish at the meet in the Green Division, and Novi's Elle Robinson placed seventh to lead the Wildcats.

Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook Kingswood's Daniel Suber placed fifth in the boys Green Division race.

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ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



Football

Robert Bolden, Orchard Lake St. Mary's

In an overtime loss at Warren De La Salle last Friday, the Eaglets' junior quarterback went 16-of-26 passing for 239 yards and two touchdowns.



Football

Kevin Muma, Troy

A senior quarterback/kicker for the Coits, Muma had a touchdown pass and a touchdown run, kicked two field goals and handled the extra-point duties in a 55-12 win at Oak Park last Friday.



Volleyball

Amanda Swann, Rochester

The Falcons' senior had 28 kills and 20 digs in a match against North Farmington last Thursday, and had 14 kills in a three-set win over Auburn Hills Avondale on Tuesday.



Volleyball

Anya Cekauskas, Birmingham Seaholm

A junior libero for the Wolves, Coates had 154 digs and 14 aces this past Saturday during the Elite Sports Tournament to lead Clarkston to the tournament title.



Girls' golf

Christine Meier, Rochester

A junior for the Falcons, Meier shot a 72 on Wednesday at Pontiac Country Club to earn medalist honors at the Oakland County Division I tournament.



Boy cross country

Mike Blaszczyk, Novi

Last week, the junior took first place at the Anchor Bay Invitational, leading the Wildcats to the team title as he clocked 16:59 for the five-kilometer course at Stony Creek Metropark. Blaszczyk also took first the previous week in the Green Division race at the Spartan Invitational in East Lansing, leading Novi to the team title.



Girls cross country

Grace Green, Troy

After an injury that wiped out her track season, the senior is slowly returning to the form that made her a top-10 finisher at last year's state meet. Green placed fourth in the OAA I Jamboree No. 2, helping the Coits finish first out of nine teams. Green clocked 19:32 for the five-kilometer course at Stony Creek Metropark.

HIGH SCHOOL STATE FINALS

Goethals completes undefeated season

By MARVIN GOODWIN
Of The Oakland Press

BROOKLYN — Even as the victories began mounting, Megan Goethals of Rochester High School still felt she'd eventually get ambushed.

But that day has yet to come, as Goethals completed an

CROSS COUNTRY

unbeaten season by capturing the Division 1 individual state title Saturday at Michigan International Speedway.

Goethals topped a strong group of contenders, including last year's defending state champion, Shannon Osika of Waterford Mott, who was second.

The slender junior completed the five-kilometer course in 17:10.1, the fastest time of all the division runners and believed to be the fastest ever by a high school female on the course.

"I didn't think it was going to last (victories)," she said. "I was just really surprised I was able

to keep it up the whole season. It just feels so good."

Grand Blanc's Gabrielle Anzalone was the early leader and Osika followed a few seconds behind until Goethals and Osika overhauled Anzalone and made it a two-person race the last mile.

Osika was taken to the limit by the blistering final mile as Goethals took control.

"I stayed with her as long as I could," said Osika, who burning with pain, felt like giving up. "I didn't want those mental thoughts to get to me, so I knew if I couldn't get a state title, I could get a really good time."

She did, running a personal best 17:17. But, "that was the worst I felt after a race ever," she said.

Cally Macumber (sixth) and Lindsey Hilton (10th) were top finishers for Rochester Adams; Kristen Smith (ninth) and Natalie Smith (23rd) led Clarkston and Lindsay Clark (12th) and Julia Valencia (23rd) led Walled Lake Western.



The Oakland Press/MARVIN GOODWIN

Waterford Mott's Shannon Osika (left) and Rochester's Megan Goethals battled it out for the Division 1 girls title Saturday. Goethals came out on top, finishing in 17:10.1.

On the boys side, Lake Orion placed fourth with 186 points, Novi Detroit Catholic Central was sixth (243) and Rochester Adams (11th) and Novi (13th)

followed behind state champ Ann Arbor Pioneer, who scored 82 points.

Troy's Mike Atchoo placed second in 15:22, Brother Rice's

Mike Murphy was third (15:23) and Rochester's Kenny Laskowski placed fifth (15:29) behind winner Stephen Walker of Midland Dow, who finished in 15:18.

Atchoo had Walker in his sights in the final stretch but couldn't close.

"I was feeling tired, (but) I got my second wind," said Atchoo, who felt good about his effort.

"It was brutal," Murphy said of the final stretch, "but I'm pretty pleased. I gave it all I could. I'm glad it's over."

Laskowski bettered his previous best by some 10 seconds.

"I didn't see this coming at all," said the senior, who let the race come to him. "It kind of hit me at the 1½ mile mark I could count the people in front of me."

Lake Orion was missing Doug Mack, the Dragons' fourth runner who was out with a hip flexor.

"Basically, we all had to dig deeper," said Jeremiah Hargett, who placed 12th behind

teammates Sean Bone (10th) and Ryan Ziolkko (11th) as all finished within two seconds of each other.

Ricardo Galindo, who placed 22nd, led Catholic Central, expected to be one of the contenders.

"We ran OK, it's just everybody ran better," Shamrocks coach Tony Magni said. "I think we just got caught up in the moment. (But) we had a great year."

Milford's Nate Huff placed 14th (15:43), Walled Lake Central's Kyle Roche was 18th, Novi's Mike Blaszczyk was 19th, Mike Reimann of Rochester Adams was 25th and Waterford Kettering's Alex Katona was 35th.

In Division 2, Cranbrook-Kingswood's Daniel Suber placed 15th in 15:56. In Division 4, Southfield Christian's Victor Allen finished ninth in 16:06 and Mitchell Dale of Oakland Christian was 15th (16:25).

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Novi XC team third at conference finals

BY JEFF THEISEN
SPORTS WRITER

The Wildcat cross country team placed third at the KLAA Conference meet Saturday at Possum Hollow.

Plymouth edged Canton by three points with 54. Novi was third at 72, with Northville fourth at 93.

Mike Blaszczyk finished second overall in 16:22.

Rounding out the Wildcat scoring were TJ Butler in 10th (17:13), Dan Egner in 18th (17:22), Geoffrey Giese in 20th (17:24) and Alex Minghine in 22nd (17:33).

On Oct. 14, Novi boys cross country ran to first place at the KLAA Central Division meet at Cass Benton.

The Wildcats scored 31 points to finish well ahead of Northville with 49. South Lyon was third with 71, followed by Salem with 87, Stevenson with 127 and South Lyon East with 187.

Blaszczyk finished first in 16:15. Butler was next in fourth

in 16:53, followed by Egner in fifth, Jacob Carless in ninth and Minghine in 12th.



The Novi boys cross country team stands together after winning the KLAA Central Division meet.

CC 6th at XC State; Novi 13th

BY JEFF THEISEN
SPORTS WRITER

Catholic Central and Novi proved to be two very good teams at Saturday's state meet at Michigan International Speedway.

The Shamrocks placed sixth, while the Wildcats finished 13th.

Ann Arbor Pioneer took home the title with 82 points, followed by Saginaw Heritage (145), Bay City Western (185), Lake Orion (186), Ann Arbor Huron (228) and CC (243). Novi had 349 points.

Novi's Mike Blaszczyk finished 19th in 15:45.1 to capture All-State status.

"All-State is amazing," he said. "It's what I've been working for all year. I stayed fast all race."

As just a junior, Blaszczyk is already looking forward to his senior season.

"It taught me a lot for next year," he said. "This was a dress rehearsal."

Novi head coach Robert Smith knew what it meant to Blaszczyk to crack the top 30.

"He was not to be denied All-State," Smith said. "He made his move early. He lost a couple of places, but it was nice to have a couple of places to lose."

Rounding out the scoring for Novi were TJ Butler in 62nd (16:29.3), Dan Egner in 68th (16:32.9), Geoffrey Giese in 100th (16:48.2) and Joe Schubring in 104th (16:50.4).

Also running for Novi were Jacob Carless (115th) and Alex Minghine (126).

With just two seniors in the seven runners that ran at state, Smith is fired up for next year.

"The future looks really bright for Novi," he said. "Our junior class is very strong and the sophomores are progressing."



PHOTOS BY JEFF THEISEN/NOVI NEWS

CC's Andrew Garcia-Garrison runs the final stretch at Saturday's state finals at Michigan International Speedway.



Novi's Alex Minghine runs the final few meters of the state finals Saturday at Michigan International Speedway.

Calculating Catholic Central takes Huron Meadows regional

By MARVIN GOODWIN
Of The Oakland Press

BRIGHTON — A last-minute subtraction added up to a more difficult journey for Novi Detroit Catholic Central's cross country team.

But the Shamrocks didn't depend on luck. They reached down deeper into a depth-laden lineup to help pull out a victory at the Division 1 Region 6 cross country championship Friday at Huron Meadows Metropark.

Catholic Central finished with 49 points to place ahead of Pinckney (58), a three-time defending state champion, and Novi (87), as all earned qualifying berths to next week's state cross country championships. The top three teams and top 15 individuals qualify for the state meet, to be held Nov. 1 at Michigan International Speedway.

On the girls side, Brighton, whose Liz Kingshott placed third to lead five teammates in the top 14, won with 48. Pinckney was second with 65 and Novi was third with 88 as all qualified for state. Courtney Calka of Livonia Stevenson won in 17:47.8.

Shamrocks coach Tony Magni was challenged to solve the absence of John-Paul Zebrowski, the team's third runner, who moments before the race said he couldn't run because of a pain in his leg.

Even so, the deep Shamrocks had reserves on the roster who filled in the gaps.

"My eighth guy was my sixth runner today," Magni said of sophomore Mackenzie Boyd, who placed 24th.

Ricardo Galindo was second to lead Catholic Central, finishing in 15:53.4, just ahead of Novi's Mike Blasczyk, who finished in 15:53.8. Alex Toloff was fifth, Viktor Puskorius was 12th and Austin Zebrowski, John-Paul's twin brother, was 14th.

"They ran as a group and that's what we needed," said Magni, who had high expectations of his crew. "I thought we should qualify but it would be nice to win."

Pinckney's Matt Wines won in 15:41 as the Pirates could still be a factor in state competition.



SATURDAY OCTOBER 25 2008

The Oakland Press/MARVIN GOODWIN

Novi High School's Mike Blasczyk (82) and Ricardo Galindo of Novi Detroit Catholic Central (12) are side by side in the first quarter mile of the five-kilometer course at the Division 1 regional cross country meet Friday at Huron Meadows Metropark. Blasczyk placed third and Galindo was second, as both led their teams to state finals berths.

"This is a heckuva regional," signed Novi boys coach Robert Smith, who noted five of the teams which competed were at the state meet last year.

"I knew it was going to be tough from the start," Blasczyk said. "Last year we didn't qualify for states (and) it was a heartbreaker I knew I had to run fast the whole race. We were a really solid pack from two through five."

Thomas Butler (17th) and Daniel Egner (20th) were other top finishers for the Wildcats, who had a string of top-10 state finishes since 1998 halted last year. "It's nice to start the streak (again)," Smith said.

Walled Lake Western's Kosei

Yajima placed 10th to also qualify for state.

For the girls, Novi's Elle Robinson and the Wildcats were in suspense until they found out they made the cut.

But why was she smiling after crossing the finish line?

"Cause I broke the school record," beamed Robinson, who clocked 18:36.9 to place fifth. Teammate Abby Chandler (eighth) and Kelsey Hodge (12th) followed as Novi's top finishers.

Walled Lake Western, running one of its best races of the season, was edged out for the final qualifying spot with its fourth-place finish (110).

But Lindsay Clark, who

placed second in 18:12, and Julia Valencia, sixth in 18:47, earned state berths for the Warriors.

Clark, who felt a pain in her knee, held back at the start. But her 5:35 first mile was her fastest ever, "(and) I remembered to keep up my pace," she said.

North Farmington's Angela Wright placed 15th in 19:35.6, finishing a fraction of a second ahead of Northville's Gina McNamara, who came in at 19:36.

Kristina Rikkonen, who was 18th, led Farmington, which placed fifth.

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Sports

Runners excel in the classroom

Wednesday, November 26, 2008 6:02 AM EST

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Southfield Christian's boys and girls were capable on the cross country course as well as the classroom this past season.

The Eagles were the top boys and girls team academically in Division 4, according to the Michigan Interscholastic Track Coaches Association (MITCA) Academic All-State team. Southfield Christian's boys ranked first in Division 4 with a cumulative 3.822 grade-point average and the girls ranked first with a team average of 3.896.

Victor Allen of Southfield Christian had a 4.0, tied for first among Division 4 athletes, and Rachel Carter and Carmen Allen each had 4.0 GPAs, also tied for first. Anna Goike of Royal Oak Shrine also had a 4.0.

Oakland County athletes were represented in all four divisions.

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In Division 3, Shannon Morehouse of Clawson was tied for best GPA with a 4.0.

In Division 2, Kayla Gawlik of Bloomfield Hills Lahser joined 13 other athletes, each with 4.0 GPAs and Anthony Porretta, also of Lahser, had a 3.92 average for academic honors.

In Division 1, Lindsay Clark (Walled Lake Western), Grace Green (Troy), Christinia Cappricioso (West Bloomfield) and Lauren Kettle (Milford) each had 4.0 GPAs to earn academic all-state honors.

Troy's Michelle Moriset and Shelby Janutol, Rochester's Molly Pozolo and Brook Handler, and Lindsey Hilton of Rochester Adams each had averages of 3.833 or higher.

Among Division 1 boys, Mike Atchoo (Troy) and Mike Murphy (Birmingham Brother Rice) each had 4.0 GPAs along with Ricardo Galindo, Austin Zebrowski and John-Paul Zebrowski, all from Novi Detroit Catholic Central, who also had 4.00 averages. The Shamrocks had the top GPA (3.996) of all teams, with Novi (3.838) and Rochester (3.705) sixth and 10th best respectively.

Victor Puskorius (Catholic Central) had a 3.979 GPA while James Yau (Troy), Ken Laskowski (Rochester), Stefan Morell (Lakeland), and Novi's Thomas Butler and Michael Blaszczyk were other honorees, each with at least a 3.85 average.

HIGH SCHOOL BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

All-County Dream Team



The Oakland Press/TIM THOMPSON

The All-County boys cross country Dream Team is: (from left to right) Ryan Ziolko of Lake Orion, Mike Atchoo of Troy, Mike Murphy of Birmingham Brother Rice, Sean Bone of Lake Orion and Ken Laskowski of Rochester (not pictured).

■ Dragons Ziolk and Bone lead the quintet

By MARVIN GOODWIN
Of The Oakland Press

In the sprawling compound of Michigan International Speedway, the site of the annual state high school cross country meet, Ryan Ziolk of Lake Orion felt right at home.

After all, the senior was making his third appearance at state, and "the experience is better each year," said Ziolk, who along with teammate Sean Bone helped lead Lake Orion to fourth place in the Division 1 race.



Laskowski

The pair was joined by Mike Murphy of Brother Rice, Ken Laskowski of Rochester and Mike Atchoo of Troy as the area's top quintet of cross country runners this season.

This distance Dream Team proved itself all season long with solid efforts against the best runners in the state.

For Bone, also making his third trip to state, the relatively flat course at MIS was a welcome site for the junior. "We hadn't done a lot of flat courses so it was nice," he said.

So close were their abilities that Ziolk and Bone often battled each other for placings. The pair led Lake Orion to the OAA Red Division title as well as regional and Holly Invitational titles while being among the top finishers in all their meets.

At Holly, Bone and Ziolk were second and fourth respectively, and at regionals, Bone

was runner-up, while Ziolk placed sixth.

"Ryan has been a part of basically two league championships and four regional championships," Lake Orion coach Stan Ford said, "and I think that speaks for itself, in some respects, where he's been and how he's contributed to the team."

Bone's competitiveness helped drive the Dragons.

"Sean being a junior, he is

what every coach hopes for," Ford said. "When he gets through with the season, he comes to me and asks what can I do to get better next year. He has a lot of drive and determination."

Likewise, so do Atchoo and Murphy, a pair of smiling, friendly, easy going students with high grade point averages — both are 4.0 grade point average students and both are academic all-state honorees

— who turn into relentless competitors when it comes to racing.

But it was a season-long development for Atchoo, according to coach Eric Prowse, which pushed him to the forefront.

"He was by no means ready to compete for the state title in September," said Prowse, "(but) he was able to learn something new about himself each time he raced."

Atchoo took second in the first OAA Red Jamboree, but convincingly won the next two jamborees. He added individual titles at the Algonac regional and Spartan Invitational meets, too, to go with his Division 1 race runner-up finish at the state cross country meet. In fact, Atchoo went from 31st at state last year to No. 2 this year as he was bearing down on eventual state champ Stephen Walker of Midland Dow.

"Once he was able to trust himself to contend with the lead pack, he was confident that he could finish with a strong kick if the race came down to that."

Indeed, with his school-record-setting 15:22.9 (clocking at state, he shaved nearly 40 seconds off his previous best state effort. Lots of speed and shorter-intensity workouts toward the end of the season helped, according to Atchoo. But lots of his mom's pasta didn't hurt either.

As for Murphy, who won Oakland County Catholic Central Invitational and Holly regional titles, he was bearing down on Atchoo at the state meet, but placed third in 15:23.2, a career best and just a fraction of a second behind Atchoo.

"I felt pretty strong at the end (and) I gave it all I could," said Murphy, who has already been accepted to the University of Michigan, but is also looking at several Ivy League schools.

Laskowski placed fourth in the OAA Red Jamborees Nos. 1 and 2, and was sixth in the championship jamboree. He placed 17th at the Oakland County meet, and was fifth at the Algonac regional where he clocked 15:40. But he improved that time at the Division 1 state meet when he came in fifth in 15:29.9, topping his previous career best. He used a simple formula at state. "I would just find a guy and stick with them and basically move up," said Laskowski, an academic all-state honoree who has a 3.8 grade point average.

"He set some goals for himself and worked hard this past summer and had a real nice season," Rochester coach Larry Adams said.

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Hargett



Huff



Katona



Galindo



Blasczyk



Reimann



Roche



Suber



Laglios



Dale

Bright future awaits this group

By MARVIN GOODWIN
Of The Oakland Press

One glance at the 2008 All-Oakland County cross country first and second teams and the conclusion is the best is yet to come. Only three seniors — Lake Orion's Jeremiah Hargett, Cranbrook-Kingswood's Daniel Suber and Mike Reimann of Rochester Adams — are on the squads with the remaining group comprised of juniors and one sophomore ready to race again next season.

Jeremiah Hargett, Lake Orion — Heeded his schoolpal's requests to come out and help the team and the senior's first season of cross country reaped the benefits. Hargett placed seventh and fifth, respectively, at OAA Red Jamboree Nos. 2 and 3, was fourth at the Algonac Regional and sparked at state with a 12th place finish in 15:39.6, just behind teammates Sean Bone and Ryan Ziolko.

Mike Blasczyk, Novi — The junior showed consistency and a will to compete in all his races. Blasczyk won the South Lyon and Anchor Bay invitationals, was KLAA Central division champ, and was runner-up in the KLAA Kensington Conference and Spartan invitationals. He was third at regionals and placed 19th at the Division 1 state meet in 15:45.1.

Nate Huff, Milford — Thrust into a leadership role after graduation losses, Huff responded, taking his place as the team's top runner. After finishing 11th at the KLAA Lakes Conference meet and 14th at the Oakland County meet, the junior placed fourth at the Holly regional,

then achieved his season's best at the state meet, where he placed 14th in 15:43.3.

Kyle Roche, Walled Lake Central — The junior lost months of training from a growth spurt which stressed his tendons and joints and erased his track season. He raced selectively this season — he didn't compete at the Oakland County meet — but had notable results elsewhere, including the Haslett Invitational where he placed third. Roche won the KLAA Lakes Conference meet, was regional runner-up and finished 18th at the Division 1 state meet, where he achieved a season best 15:44.5.

Mike Reimann, Rochester Adams — A two-time All-County selection, the senior was the Highlanders' leading runner all season. After finishing sixth in each of the first two OAA Red Division jamborees, he placed second in the final jamboree. He placed fifth at the Catholic Central Invitational. Reimann continued to rev it up at regionals, placing third, and found his way to 25th place at the Division 1 state meet, where he clocked a season-best 15:49.2.

Second team

Alex Katona, Waterford Kettering — Even though he had to split time with soccer, the junior still was among the area's leaders. He placed eighth at the Oakland County meet, third at the Spartan Invitational, third at regionals and 35th at the Division 1 state finals with a season-best 16:02. Wasn't afraid to set the pace with an aggressive style that made him a contender in most meets.

Ricardo Galindo, Novi Detroit Catholic Central — Junior helped lead the Shamrocks to one of their

Boys All-Oakland County Dream Team

Name	School	Year	State Place	Best Time
Mike Atchoo	Troy	Junior	2nd	15:22.9
Sean Bone	Lake Orion	Junior	10th	15:37.8
Ken Laskowski	Rochester	Senior	5th	15:29.9
Mike Murphy	Birm. Brother Rice	Senior	3rd	15:23.2
Ryan Ziolko	Lake Orion	Senior	11th	15:38.8

Boys All-Oakland County First Team

Name	School	Year	State Place	Best Time
Michael Blasczyk	Novi	Junior	19th	15:45
Jeremiah Hargett	Lake Orion	Senior	12th	15:39
Nate Huff	Milford	Junior	14th	15:43
Mike Reimann	Rochester Adams	Senior	25th	15:49
Kyle Roche	WL Central	Junior	18th	15:44

Boys All-Oakland County Second Team

Name	School	Year	State Place	Best Time
Alex Katona	Waterford Kettering	Junior	35th	16:02
Ricardo Galindo	Catholic Central	Junior	26th	15:52
Daniel Suber	BH Cranbrook-Kingswood	Senior	15th*	15:56
Brendan Laglios	Holly	Senior	42nd	16:10
Mitchell Dale	AH Oakland Christian	Junior	15th**	16:25

*Division 2
**Division 4

Honorable mention

Victor Adan (Oakland Christian); Alex Lindsay (Rochester Adams); Alex Toloff (Catholic Central); Jeff Kuhl (Clarkston); Viktor Puskorius (Catholic Central); Stefan Moreil (Lakeland); James Yau (Troy); Christian Berzhelm (Clarkston); Chris Griffin (Rochester Adams); Scott Albaugh (Waterford Main); Chad Norton (Walled Lake Central).

best seasons in years. He placed sixth at the Oakland County meet and seventh at the Catholic Central Invitational. He was Brighton Division 1 regional runner-up, placed fourth at the Catholic League meet and was the Sparta Invitational winner. Galindo finished 26th at the Division 1 state meet with a 15:52.8 clocking.

Daniel Suber, Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook-Kingswood — A three-time state qualifier, Suber's best race came at the state meet where he placed 15th in the Division 2 race with a time of 15:56. Suber placed fifth in the Spartan Invitational Green race and fifth at the Division 2 regional at Holly. The senior has been the Cranes' leading runner the past two seasons.

Brendan Laglios, Holly — First season of cross country was a dandy for the senior, who took seventh at the Flint Metro meet and 13th at regionals before placing 42nd at the Division 1 state meet. Laglios showed consistency as the team's leading runner all season.

Mitchell Dale, Auburn Hills Oakland Christian — The junior split time between soccer and cross country with notable results. He notched regional and league titles as well as won the Holly Invitational crown in the Division 5 race. Dale placed 15th at the Oakland County meet and was 15th at the Division 4 state meet. Was also a member of the Division 4 state championship soccer team.

Leading the pack

CO-COACH OF THE YEAR — Tony Magni
Novi Detroit Catholic Central coach Tony Magni knows there are no short cuts to success. So the Shamrocks' performances this past season, which included winning Catholic League, Oakland County and regional titles, had a common foundation.

"It was a lot of hard work over the summer and it carried over into the fall," said Magni, who has coached cross country at Catholic Central 38 years. Magni, who has 43 years of coaching experience overall,

advocated staying focused as a team while as individuals, maintaining contact throughout races. "We really didn't have any outstanding individual runners (so) we tried to stay together as a group."

The Shamrocks, who placed sixth at state, also had runner-up finishes at the West Bloomfield and Holly Invitationals. They were also recognized by the Michigan Interscholastic Track Coaches Association (MITCA) as the state's top academic team with a cumulative 3.996 grade point average.

Magni got hooked on running at the old Detroit St. Anthony High School, where former Royal Oak Shrine athletic director Lou Marimonti was coaching. Magni, a graduate of University of Detroit, had coaching stints at several schools, including Orchard Lake St. Mary's, before settling in at Catholic Central.



Magni



Ford

CO-COACH OF THE YEAR — Stan Ford

For coaches, some seasons can be more challenging than others. For Lake Orion coach Stan Ford, the 2008 edition of the Dragons was a delightful group which achieved much during the season.

"It was a lot of fun," said Ford, an Eastern Michigan University alumnus who has coached the Dragons for 27 years. "They were very receptive to communicating about practices and as a group had contributions to the type of things we did because they were an experi-

enced group."

Lake Orion won all three OAA Red Jamborees, and added Holly Invitational and regional titles before placing fourth at the Division 1 state meet, the highest finish of any area team. Among area teams, only Novi Detroit Catholic Central was able to beat the Dragons, who conversely had victories over the Shamrocks. But even the Dragons had their peculiarities.

"They were procrastinators when it came to getting to the starting line," Ford laughed. "As a coach that drove me crazy."

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Photo submitted

Novi's running team placed 11th at the USATF Junior Olympic Championships in Mechanicsville, Va.

Novi squad fares well

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Eight local runners fared well recently at the USATF Junior Olympic Championships in Mechanicsville, Va. Mike Blaszczyk, Chase Conrad, Dan Egner, Geoff Glese, Brett Giampa, Alex Minghine and Garrett Murphy, all from Novi, ran as a team in the intermediate boys division (ages 15-16) and placed 11th nationally. The squad geared up for nationals by placing second in the state level competition held in Northville and third in regional competition held in Canton, Ohio.

"What makes this team special is that they chose to run together as a group of local runners when virtually every other team competing were all-star teams that cherry-picked the best runners from a large geographical area," said David Egner, the team coach. "The fact that we finished 11th in the nation is a testimony to the

quality of their high school cross country program and the commitment of these young men to train hard for six weeks after the high school season ended."

Leading the way for Team Ivor was Mike Blaszczyk, who earned All-American honors by finishing 14th in the field of 213 runners with a time of 16:34 for the five-kilometer course. Blaszczyk was the first Michigan runner to cross the finish line. Dan Egner finished 57th (17:21), Minghine 77th (17:32), Glese 82nd (17:32), Giampa 160th (18:29), Murphy 161st (18:30) and Conrad 165th (18:36).

Running unattached in the young men's division (ages 17-18) was Josh Lumley, who had a time of 17:34 to place 66th in the field of 135 runners. Lumley, a freshman at the University of Michigan, is a member of the Michigan Running Club.

Novi's Blaszczyk runs to front of pack

BY JEFF THEISEN
SPORTS WRITER

When the frontrunners at any meet came to the finish line that Novi was competing at, Wildcat junior Mike Blaszczyk would be involved.

His season was littered with top finishes, including first overall at the South Lyon Invite, won the Anchor Bay invite, finished first at the KLAA Central meet, second at the KLAA Conference meet and third at the Brighton regional. He finished 19th at the state meet, earning All-State honors.

"Mike displayed tremendous growth this past season," Novi head coach Robert Smith said. "He quickly assumed the leadership role, and he relished being the front-runner on the team.

"Mike knows how important it is for a team to have someone up front in every race representing our team. He took that role seriously, but just as important, he worked with the coaching staff to encourage the entire

team to step up and be the best that they can be."

Mike ranks third in the Novi Cass Benton top times for juniors, behind eventual state champion Tim Moore (2000) and State Runner-up Chris Toloff (1999).

ALL-AREA FIRST TEAM

Ricardo Galindo, CC junior
Galindo finished the year strong. He placed second overall at the tough Brighton regional before finishing All-State in 26th at the state meet.

Galindo didn't go out for the team until his sophomore season when he did not make the soccer team. A couple of years of dedication and he became

ALL-AREA CROSS COUNTRY

Runner of the Year

Mike Blaszczyk, Novi junior

First Team

TJ Butler, Novi senior

Ricardo Galindo, CC junior

Alex Toloff, CC senior

Frank Griffiths, Northville junior

Nate Huff, Milford junior

Stefan Morell, Lakeland junior

Second Team

Northville senior Jack Dalton, Novi

junior Dan Egner, CC sophomore

Austin Zebrowski, CC sophomore

Andrew Garcia-Garrison, CC junior

Victor Puskorius, Milford junior

Nick Burth, Milford sophomore

Shawn Shove, Lakeland junior

Brent Rolfe and South Lyon sophomore Blake Yard.

Honorable Mention

Lakeland senior Parker Snavelly,

Lakeland junior Brent Rolfe,

Novi junior Alex Minghine, Novi

sophomore Joe Schubring, Novi

junior Geoff Giese, Novi senior

Jacob Carless, Northville sophomore

Trent Johnson, senior Jeff

Girbach, CC sophomore John-

Paul Zebrowski and senior Scott

Hoffman, South Lyon senior

Robert Swain, South Lyon senior

Cameron Meyer, South Lyon junior

Robbie Kulie, South Lyon East

junior, Spencer Layson and South

Lyon East junior David Hansen.

All-Catholic, All-City and All-State.

"I knew he had the potential to do it," CC head coach Tony Magni said.

Alex Toloff, CC senior

Toloff didn't have his best run at state, but his steady runs throughout the year land him on the All-Area First Team. He finished fifth at the Brighton regional before ending the year in 58th at the state meet.

"He's one of the better runners in the county," Magni

said. "Unfortunately, he just didn't have a good run at the state finals again.

"He was our No. 1 runner all year. We are where we are because of Alex Toloff."

Toloff made All-City honors for the third-straight year.

Frank Griffiths, Northville junior

Griffiths finished the season on fire. After finishing fourth at the KLAA Conference meet, he ran his best race of the year to finish fourth at the Brighton regional. He placed 53rd at the state meet.

"Frank emerged as one of the areas top runners in 2008 with his efforts down the stretch," coach Chris Cronin said. "Frank was selected to be a captain for 2009."

Nate Huff, Milford junior

Huff turned in the top placing at state for all the runners on the All-Area First Team, finishing in 14th. He also placed fourth at the Holly regional.

Stefan Morell, Lakeland junior

Morrell finished next after Huff at regionals, claiming fifth place. He went on to finish 74th at state.

TJ Butler, Novi senior

Butler could usually be found running with teammate Blaszczyk somewhere near the front. He was injured early in the year, but fought back to the No. 2 man.

He ran his best time (16:29) at the state meet to finish in 88th. He finished 17th at the regionals to help secure a state birth for the Wildcats.

"TJ was a major reason for the success of the 2008 Wildcats," Smith said. "He was recognized at our team banquet as our Athlete of the Year."

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Fast and Furious

Yunbo Nie
Staff Writer

They came running down the curved track, in a uniform mass. The Mens Cross Country Team moved their feet with the swiftness of a hare, yet with the silence of the wind. The only thing audible was the drumming of their sneakers hitting the ground.

As they turned the corner, the group gradually stretched into a long line and extended until it circumscribed the whole field, spinning like a wheel with thin tires.

Every day the team trains from 2:00 p.m. until around 5:00 p.m., often coupling running with work out sessions in the weight room. It is through these long and exhausting training that the team earned its 5-0 record so far.

"Hard work is our key to being better," head coach Robert Smith said. "We want to qualify for state finals and win our division this year."

The hard work has already paid off and at the Spartan Invitational, where the team took first out of 40 teams.

In order for the team to continue its current success, Smith emphasized the strong points of the team that will help carry it to its goals.

"Our strengths consist of good senior-captain leadership, dedication, and natural talent," Smith said.

While the team is optimistic about its strong points, certain weak areas must also be taken

into account. This is important for maintaining the core fabric of the team and ensuring that it doesn't fall apart.

"We are somewhat weak because of a lack of experience in some of our younger athletes," Smith said.

Captain Andrew Burkhardt explained more about their training process, the scene behind the constant drumming of their shoes on the track.

"To help members develop the endurance necessary, we do mile clubs throughout the summer," he said.

The purpose of mile clubs is so students can train and condition for the running routines in the fall.

"We also have captain's practices, and the first few weeks of fall are every challenging so [members] can get used to the rest of the season," Burkhardt said.

In captain's practices, members run with people of their own pace so that no one feels left behind.

Jacob Carless, another captain of the team, tries his best to maintain the uniformity of the team when it comes to achieving.

He spoke about an important goal for the team this year: place top ten in the state.

"Last year was the first time in ten years that we didn't place top ten in the state," he said, "This year, we hope to not only place top ten, but continue our streak again."

With teamwork and determination, the team hopes to achieve their goals one step at a time.

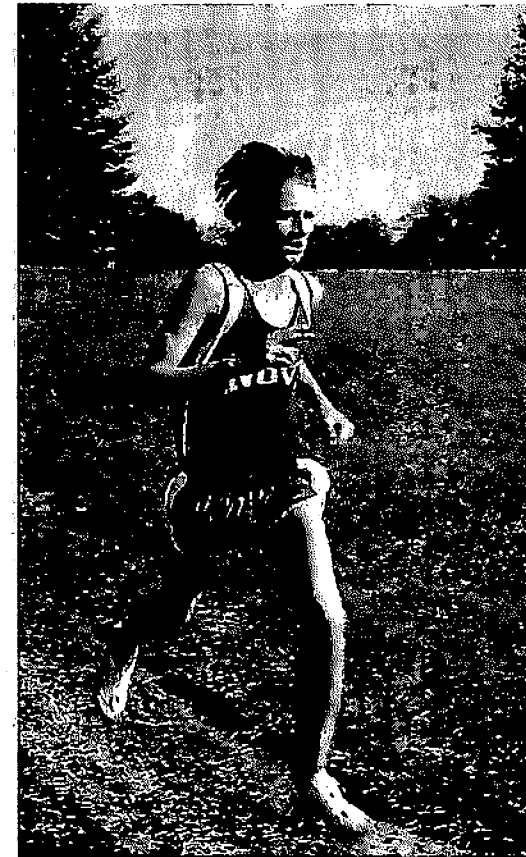


Photo by T. Szczygiel/Yearbook
Junior Mike Blaszczyk runs at a meet earlier this season. Blaszczyk was a standout athlete who helped take the team to States.



"Shoeless Joe" Schubring

Joe Schubring ran a second best time of 16:50 at the Cross Country State Meet Nov. 1. But the most impressive part is, the sophomore ran the last mile of the race with out one shoe.

"When I was running right at the beginning of the race someone clipped my shoe," Schubring said.

His shoe was half on for the majority of the race, but around the second mile, it came off for good and Schubring kicked it in to the woods.

His time at States was only two seconds off his previous best which he ran at Regionals. Schubring should be able to improve his times next year, especially when he's running with both shoes.

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Novi Boys Cross Country competes in State Finals for 10th time in 11 years

11/3/08

The 2008 Men's Cross Country Team finished off the season on a high note. Saturday, they came in 13th in the field of 27 of the best teams in the State of Michigan.

Wildcat Junior Mike Blaszczyk led the way with a season best time of 15:45, placing him 19th overall. Being in the top 30 means that Mike has received All-State status.

Also finishing strong were TJ Butler (16:29), Dan Egner (16:32), Geoffrey Giese (16:48), Joe Schubring (16:50), Jake Carless (16:55), and Alex Minghine (17:02).

Novi's top four finishers all set career personal bests at the meet.

Joe Schubring had the heel of one of his shoes stepped on during the first quarter-mile of the race. It remained half on his foot until the 2.5 mile mark. Joe ran the last half mile with only one shoe on and still managed to run his second fastest time ever.

Jake Carless capped off a great 4-year career by breaking the 17:00 minute barrier for the first time.

Alternates to the state meet were Andrew Burkhardt, Brett Giampa, and Zach Rothermel.

Coach Smith noted following the meet, "I am very proud of this team! They worked very hard to achieve this lofty goal. This marks 10 times in 11 years that the Men's Cross Country Team has qualified for the State Finals."