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**SECTION B**  
(NN)

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# LOCAL SPORTS

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## Coaching:

### **ROBERT SMITH**

**Novi cross country (28 years)**

Most rewarding aspects of being a coach: When athletes become adults and become friends. Just recently I received a phone call and an e-mail from two of "my guys." There is a feeling of trust that extends far beyond the practice field. There is a relationship for life.

Most important characteristics it takes to be a successful coach: Having a passion for what you do. Coaching is not a job. It certainly isn't a way to make money. Coaching is a way of life.

Biggest negatives of coaching: Some of the biggest negatives with coaching are dealing with things that are not right but that I cannot correct. It is about restrictions, rules, regulations and red tape. I am happiest when I am simply out there with the athletes. I feel bogged down with jumping through the hoops that have seemed to be growing exponentially in the teaching and coaching profession.

Advice for someone thinking about becoming a coach: If you are going to coach, give 110 percent and you will get 110 percent from your athletes and parents. Be willing to change and willing to listen.

# Theisen's top 10 wishes

## for the upcoming prep season

BY JEFF THEISEN  
SPORTS WRITER

Bring it on!  
I'm sooo ready for fall sports to begin.

In a summer that has included a new house, a marriage and a full transformation of my coverage area for the paper ... I need some normalcy. And the familiar sights of football fields, volleyball courts and everything else in between will be the perfect cure.

The following are the top 10 things on my wish list for all the area teams.



PHOTO BY JOHN HEIDER | NOVI NEWS

Novi cross country runners jog along the Cass Benton trail last season.

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# Novi runners eye boys state title

## ■ Blaszczyk, cross country team looking to build on 2008 success

Novi's boy's cross country team ranked 13th in the state last season behind the speed of All-State junior Mike Blaszczyk. With Blaszczyk returning as a senior, the Wildcats have a strong foundation for building another successful season.

Blaszczyk was 19th in the state last season with a 5-kilometer time of 15 minutes and 45 seconds. Four other returning runners ran times in the 16-minute frame last season and should improve this year.

Seniors Dan Egner (16:32), Alex Minghine (16:48), Geoff Giese (16:48) and junior Joe Schubring (16:55) look to speed up and fill the roles left by graduating TJ Butler (16:29), Jake Carless (16:55) and Andrew Burkhardt (17:30), all three of which maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA and are headed to the University of Michigan this fall.

"I anticipate them closing the gap between them and Mike," said Robert Smith, who returns for his 28th season as Novi's coach. "What always concerns me is the risk of injury. If we lose a few key guys early in the season, it'll be tough. We ride these runners to the edge and sometimes they run off the edge."

Juniors Brett Giampa and Chase Conrad are also expected to contribute to the team's success.

**"What always concerns me is the risk of injury. If we lose a few key guys early in the season, it'll be tough. We ride these runners to the edge and sometimes they run off the edge."**

COACH ROBERT SMITH.

### NOVI BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

**Coach:** Robert Smith.

**Last year's record/accomplishments:** Won KLAA divisional meet, South Lyon Invitational, Anchor Bay Invitational, Spartan (MSU) Invitational. Undefeated in dual meets (5-0), 13th in the State

**Key returnees:** Senior Mike Blaszczyk (KLAA Divisional Champion, 19th in state)

**Biggest internal challenge:** Staying healthy

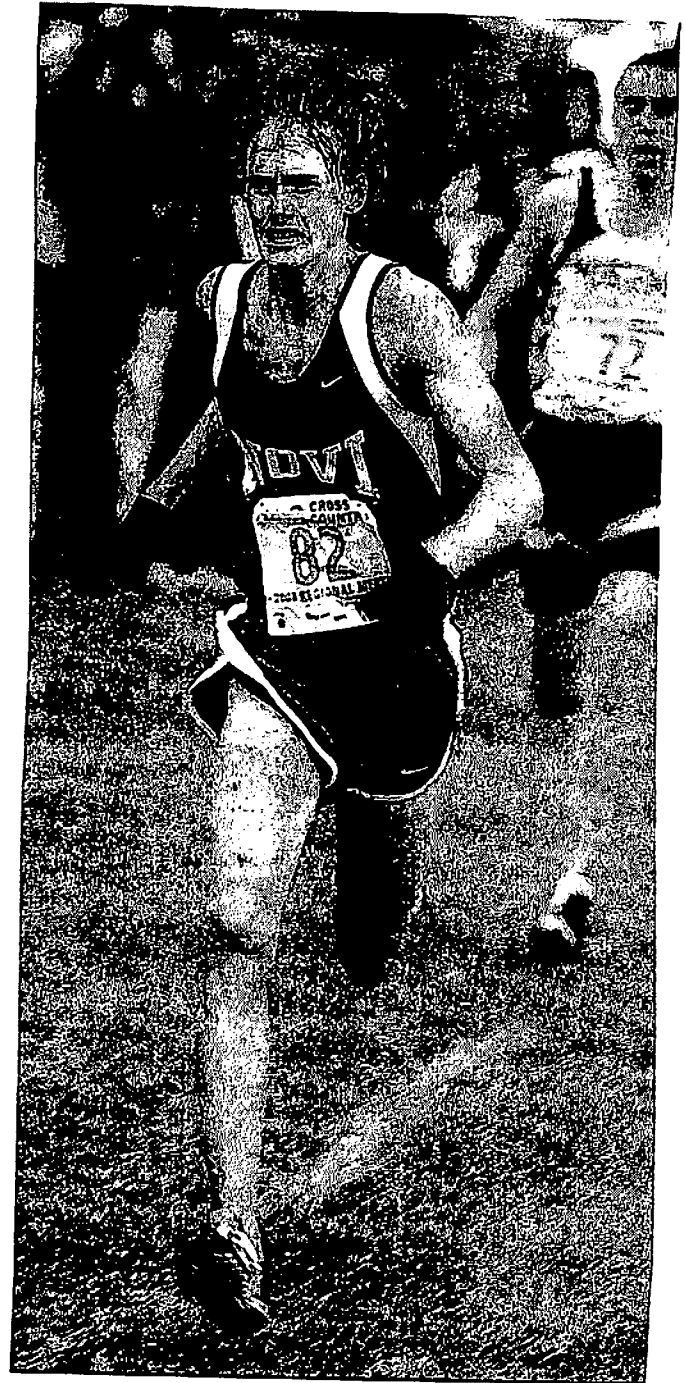
The Wildcats will look to build on a season that included winning the KLAA divisional meet, South Lyon Invitational, Anchor Bay Invitational and Spartan (MSU) Invitational, as well as going 5-0 in dual meets.

"I believe that we can challenge for both the KLAA divisional and conference title," Smith said. "Other top teams include Northville and South Lyon in the division. Plymouth and Canton will be among the challengers for the conference title."

Smith said the team is slightly ahead of last year's pace and, although he doesn't want to make too large of predictions, the team has adopted the motto "tradition is back" for the season, referencing the 1998 and 1999 state titles that were followed up by 2000 and 2006 state runner-up finishes. The 1998 state title was the first in any sport at Novi High School.

"We're looking to at least duplicate what we did last season. I'm looking at top 10 in state, if not better. It all depends on if we stay healthy," Smith said Aug. 22, noting the team has been in the state's top 10 rankings nine or 10 times. "We started 10 days ago. These guys came in ready to compete."

Both the boy's and girl's cross country teams will kick off the season 10 a.m. Saturday defending their title at the South Lyon Invitational before taking two weeks off to rev up for the first dual meet of the season, 4:30 p.m. Sept. 15 against South Lyon East at Cass Benton Park in Northville.



JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A Novi Wildcat competes in a regional cross country run in October of 2008.

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Mike Blaszczyk, Joe Schubring, Brett Giampa, Geoff Giese and Alex Minghine at the South Lyon Invitational.

## Wildcats repeat at South Lyon Invite

### Runners improve on last season despite wet course

The South Lyon Invitational kicked off the start of a promising 2009 season for Novi's boy's cross country squad.

The Wildcats successfully defended their 2008 title against 10 other teams at Island Lake State Park Saturday, racing through a cool air and damp course still drenched from last Friday's downpour.

The wet conditions didn't slow the runners down much, as senior Mike Blaszczyk led the way, finishing third overall on the 3.1-mile course in 16 minutes and 29 seconds, just 44 seconds off his All-State pace from last season.

Of the 77 varsity runners representing 11 schools in the season opener, Novi had five of its seven in the top 15.

Junior Joe Schubring wasn't far behind Blaszczyk, finishing sixth in 17:01, just six seconds off his state meet time from last season.

"Joe had an outstanding summer. He put in a lot of quality miles, and now he is enjoying the fruits of his labor," said coach Robert Smith.

Seniors Alex Minghine (17:11), Geoff Giese (17:21) and junior Brett Giampa (17:27) finished 10th, 12th and 15th to round out Novi's top five racers. Giampa's time was a personal best.

"Brett has really stepped up his game. He is running about 45 seconds faster than he did last year at this time," Smith said. "Alex ran the smartest

#### ON TAP

The Wildcat harriers improved on their team pace from last season's South Lyon Invitational, a promising note as the season continues at Cass Benton 5 p.m. Sept. 15 against the South Lyon East Cougars.

race of all of our guys today. Last year, he often started a little too slow. Today he ran his first mile more on pace for this time of the season."

Senior Dan Egner (17:36) and junior Chase Conräd (18:13) wrapped up the race for the Wildcats at 21st and 40th.

"Dan was a little off of his game today," Smith said. "Dan ran as our number two man many times for us last season. As he makes the transition from the 800 meters (spring track) to 3.1 miles, I am confident that he will return to challenge the rest of our top five. When that happens, we will be even more solid than we are right now."

Novi was solid enough to outpace Temperance Bedford by 21 points, earning a meet low 46. All of Novi's participating KLAA competition scored between 119 and 245, perhaps forecasting how Novi's race results will fare against some of their opposition.

Chris Jackett is a freelance writer and former Novi News staff writer.

## HIGH SCHOOL BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PREVIEW

## THE PURSUIT BEGINS

Kensington Lakes  
Activities Association

## LAKES CONFERENCE

Even though WALLED LAKE CENTRAL won the North Division title last season, a number of challengers could make the Vikings sweat this year.

But that won't matter to this seasoned group of veterans.

"I've got the biggest senior group I've ever had and the best leadership as a group, collectively," Central coach Justin Schumacher said. "They're a very competitive, mature group. They do a great job of making sure that things that need to get done get done."

Leading the way is Kyle Roche, a two-time state qualifier who'll be joined by Chad Norton. Mack Drees ran a 4:27 mile last year in track and Will Loomans, and Mike Wang will also help. All are seniors who'll be assisted by Tyler Watts and Dean Johnson.

"The success of our team is going to be dependent upon how well we run as a pack with Nos. 3 through 7," Schumacher said.

That's because LAKELAND will be hot on their heels.

"I've got a nice team coming back, a lot of young kids ... and I've got some good leadership," coach Randy Wilkins said.

Seniors Brent Rolfe and Stefan Morell, who've run in three state meets and are shooting for a fourth, lead the way.

"It's nice to have a couple of veterans like that who know what it takes to be successful," Wilkins said.

Garret Zuk, Craig Dudley, Brendon Colver and Ryan Carrigan, all sophomores, are the heart of the Eagles' future, and Sean Carrigan will split time between soccer and cross country Lakeland, with only two misses in the last 27 years as a state qualifier, is counting on another state meet appearance.

With at least four quality runners returning, WATERFORD MOTT hopes to last as long as it can. Junior Scott Albaugh is a returning state qualifier, while seniors Hayden Schaeffer, Josh Robinson and Ian Hackbarth bring leadership. "We're hoping to improve on our fifth-place finish," Mott coach Ryan Robinson said.

WALLED LAKE WESTERN's Kosei Yajima will be the Warriors' leading runner, with help from Jordan Frane and Evan Yezbick. Freshman Mitchell Schnaible is set to contribute. But the Warriors' youth will be a disadvantage. "I'm building for the future," Western coach Chris Inch said. "Our team will have to learn to grow."

WALLED LAKE NORTHERN has about 25 athletes and Knights coach Jeff McNeil is feeling groovy. "I have the depth this year," said McNeil, who'll start with seniors Sam Parlette and Chris Platt, who is back from injury. Austin Nell, Casey Routledge and Adam Zientarski give depth the Knights have rarely had. "We've had a young team in the past," McNeil said, "but now they're grown up."

WATERFORD KETTERING still needs experience but will feature Alex Katona, last year's Lakes Conference runner-up to Roche.

In the West Division, Pinckney and newcomer Grand Blanc will field competitive teams but MILFORD will be right with them.

"We have six of seven which return from state last year," Mavs coach Brian Salyers said.

That includes seniors Nate Huff, who placed 13th at state, and Nick Burt, who has run in three state finals. Junior Shawn Shove has run in two state finals and Nate Benton and Dylan Danowski will also contribute, along with freshman Paul Ausum.

Milford placed 16th at state last year, not typical for a traditional Mavericks squad.

"Last year, we were moderately pleased, the first time since 1997 we haven't finished in the top 10 at state," said Salyers, whose Mavs seek to rectify that situation this season.

## KENSINGTON CONFERENCE

Few area teams can match NOVI's strong tradition, which includes an annual appearance at the state meet — the Wildcats were 13th last year — and a Central Division title to go with Spartan and Anchor Bay Invitational crowns. And guess what? The Wildcats are back for more.

"We have four guys who were in the state meet last year who ran in the 16s," Novi coach Robert Smith said.

Senior Mike Blaszczyk, who clocked 15:45 at state, is the leading Wildcat and he'll have support from seniors Dan Egner, Geoff Giese and Alex Minghini. Juniors Brett Giampa, Chase Conrad and Steve Pravato complete a seasoned squad.

"We're relatively young, we only have six seniors," Smith said.

Meanwhile, Scott Smith, Robert Smith's brother, is doing double duty for SOUTH LYON and SOUTH LYON EAST, entering its third season, as coach for both teams.

"We train together, but compete separately," Scott Smith said. "It's a different experience."

Seniors Robbie Kulie, Jordan Schaefer, Andy Stone, Luke Rondon, Jacob Uratehko and Chase Brisbois are key runners for South Lyon, although Junior Blake Yard may be the best of some 35 kids out for the team.

"We're definitely deeper than last year," said Smith, who is still trying to nurture the young Cougars. Spencer Leyson and Tyler Foley will be the key runners for East with help from David Hanson, Darrick Popp, Matt Darr, Riley McKenzie and Jacob Schneider.

"It's a team that has a new conscience about it, the result of athletes maturing and having some experience under their belts," said Scott Smith, who has a dilemma approaching.

"We're in the same division, so one of our five dual meets is against each other. It's going to be some fun dynamics."

10 years ago ...  
Cats were still on  
the prowl

Novi's boys capped off their strong season by winning the Class A state title, as the Wildcats scored 68 points to finish ahead of runner-up Rockford (90). Clarkston's boys were fourth, Milford was seventh and Lake Orion was ninth. Four of the top finishers were from Oakland County, with Todd Mobley of Walled Lake Central placing second in 15:25. Tim Moore of Novi was third (15:27), Tom Greenless of Milford was fourth (15:40) and Pat Klein of Lakeland was fifth (15:40).

Rockford's Dathan Flitzenhein, who recently broke the American record for the 5,000-meter run, placed first in 15:05. The best was yet to come, since he was only a junior.

Selected 2009 key  
cross country dates

DATE	MEET	SITE
Sept. 12	Rico/WB Invite	Kensington Metropk
Sept. 18	Spartan Invite	East Lansing
Sept. 19	Holy Invite	Davidsburg
Sept. 26	Shamrock Invite	Cass Benton Park
Oct. 3	Mott Classic	Hess-Hathaway Park
Oct. 10	Oakland County Regionals	Kensington Metropk
Oct. 30-31	Regionals	Various sites
Nov. 7	State meet	Michigan Speedway

## Boys top 10 teams

1. **NOVI CATHOLIC CENTRAL** — Shamrocks have depth and desire, but coach says nothing is promised.
2. **TROY** — Colts' 1-2 punch will carry them far.
3. **MILFORD** — Mavericks will cause opposing teams problems.
4. **NOVI** — Wildcats never rebuild, they just reload.
5. **LAKELAND** — Eagles have landed with more depth than in the past.
6. **WALLED LAKE CENTRAL** — Vikings are fine, but could have problems conquering their division.
7. **CLARKSTON** — Improved Wolves likely to surpass last year's efforts.
8. **LAKE ORION** — Slightly down Dragons can still breathe fire.
9. **ROYAL OAK** — Ravens will show they can run, too.
10. **ROCHESTER ADAMS** — Although Highlanders have slipped a few rungs, they can still race.

## Top 30 individuals

1. **MIKE ATCHOO, TROY** — Senior will contend for an individual state title.
2. **KYLE ROCHE, WALLED LAKE CENTRAL** — If healthy, can race with anybody in the state.
3. **SEAN BONE, LAKE ORION** — Bad to the bone when he nears the finish line.
4. **NATE HUFF, MILFORD** — Watch him in the lead pack of top runners in the KLA.
5. **MIKE BLASZCZYK, NOVI** — Passion to get better will carry him far.
6. **RICARDO GALINDO, NOVI CATHOLIC CENTRAL** — The front-runner who makes Shamrocks shine.
7. **ALEX KATONA, WATERFORD KETTERING** — Gutsy senior not afraid to push the pace.
8. **JAMES YAU, TROY** — Senior aims to close the gap on front-running teammate.
9. **SCOTT ALBAUGH, WATERFORD MOTT** — As confidence grows, so does his performances.
10. **VICTOR ALLEN, SOUTHFIELD CHRISTIAN** — Needs races against larger schools to keep him sharp.
11. **MITCHELL DALE, OAKLAND CHRISTIAN** — Earned a state medal in soccer and cross country last season.
12. **CHRIS GRIFFIN, ROCHESTER ADAMS** — Ready to be the lead runner for Highlanders.
13. **STEFAN MORELL, LAKELAND** — Eagles' flight will depend upon his front-running ability.
14. **BLAKE YARD, SOUTH LYON** — Could be breakout year for rising junior.
15. **CHAD NORTON, WALLED LAKE CENTRAL** — Coming off solid track season.
16. **AUSTIN ZEBROWSKI, NOVI CATHOLIC CENTRAL** — Shamrocks can shine if he improves consistency.
17. **THOMAS BUTLER, NOVI** — Only one piece of a strong Wildcats squad.
18. **SAM PARLETTE, WALLED LAKE NORTHERN** — There's more to come from this improving junior.
19. **DAN EGNER, NOVI** — Another part of the Wildcats' tight pack.
20. **KOUSEI YAJIMA, WALLED LAKE WESTERN** — Will be the lead runner for Warriors.
21. **THEO KEMPF, ROYAL OAK** — Has to be ready to run every race.
22. **BRAD LORANT, NOTRE DAME PREP** — Senior seeks another trip to state meet.
23. **JOHN-PAUL ZEBROWSKI, NOVI CATHOLIC CENTRAL** — Along with twin brother, there's a double dose of ability.
24. **VIKTOR PUSKORIUS, CATHOLIC CENTRAL** — Still nursing injury which could threaten his season.
25. **JACK HOWARD, BIRMINGHAM SEAHOLM** — Sophomore expected to move up this season.
26. **ANTHONY PERROTTA, BLOOMFIELD HILLS LAHSER** — Knights' success hinge on his ability to finish strong.
27. **NICK BURT, MILFORD** — Tough senior ready to step up his game.
28. **CHRISTIAN BONZHEIM, CLARKSTON** — Has to believe he can race with top runners.
29. **CHRIS BURNS, NOTRE DAME PREP** — Second stanza of Irish's strong 1-2 combination.
30. **NATHAN ZIOLKO, LAKE ORION** — Will get a slow start this season because of injury.

# CROSS COUNTRY



## BOYS

NAME	SCHOOL	YEAR
Blake Allison	Harrison	Senior
Mike Atchoo	Troy	Senior
Sean Bone	Lake Orion	Senior
Jake Hord	Linden	Senior
Nate Huff	Highland-Milford	Senior
Omar Kaddurah	Grand Blanc	Junior
Nathan Karr	Pioneer	Senior
Paul Lewis	Albion	Senior
Kyle Roche	Walled Lake Central	Senior
Kyle Stacks	Concord	Senior

## GIRLS

NAME	SCHOOL	YEAR
Gabrielle Anzalone	Grand Blanc	Junior
Lindsay Clark	Walled Lake Western	Junior
Megan Goethals	Rochester	Senior
Devan John	Allendale	Senior
Sara Kroll	Livonia Churchill	Senior
Shannon Osika	Waterford Mott	Junior
Taylor Pogue	Goodrich	Senior
Amanda Southwell	Livonia Churchill	Senior
Jordain Tomecek	Milan	Senior
Allison White	Midland Dow	Senior

## prime-time players

### MIKE ATCHOO

The Troy senior was just four seconds from a Division 1 state crown last year and was 18 seconds from qualifying for a trip to Foot Locker Nationals, finishing 17th at the Midwest Regional.

### KYLE STACKS

Following his impressive fourth-place finish at the Division 4 meet last fall, Stacks is the top returning runner in the division and will be the runner to beat this year.

### MEGAN GOETHALS

A surprise third-place finish at last year's Foot Locker Nationals has vaulted Goethals, the defending Division 1 state champ, to the list of potential national champions this season.

### SHANNON OSIKA

Osika won the Division 1 state meet as a freshman and finished seven seconds behind Goethals for second last season. She was also 25th at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional.

## coach's take

### AN AREA COACH ON SARA KROLL

"She had a really good track season (in the spring). She really proved she's one of those runners who is not afraid of the pain."



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## OTHER TOP RUNNERS

### BOYS

NAME	SCHOOL	YEAR
Victor Allen	Southfield Christian	Jr.
Michael Blaszczyk	Novi	Sr.
Zach Carpenter	Whitmore Lake	Sr.
Ben Carruthers	Dexter	Sr.
Mike Darnell	Carlson	Sr.
Joe Duff	Grand Haven	Jr.
Nathaniel Ellsworth	Heritage	Sr.
Ricardo Galindo	Detroit Catholic Central	Sr.
Matt Hoshal	East Lansing	Sr.
Alex Katona	Waterford Kettering	Sr.
Adam Kern	Pioneer	Sr.
Nick Kern	Pioneer	Sr.
Braundan Sage	Linden	Sr.
Tommy Valade	Temperance Bedford	Sr.
Austin Whitelaw	Monroe	Jr.

### GIRLS

NAME	SCHOOL	YEAR
Marina Aguilera	Monroe	So.
Lindsey Berdette	Hanover-Horton	So.
Annie-Norah Beveridge	Huron	Jr.
Kate Carter	Saline	Sr.
Elizabeth Kingshott	Brighton	So.
Alex Leptich	Saline	Sr.
Megan McPherson	Livonia Franklin	Jr.
Melinda Palinkas	Saranac	Sr.
Cassie Peterson	Byron Center	Jr.
Brittany Slinker	Dundee	So.
Natalie Smith	Clarkston	So.
Jennifer Snelgrove	Grand Ledge	Sr.
Rachael Stell	Grandville	Sr.
Julia Valencia	Walled Lake Western	So.
All Wiersma	Allendale	So.

# Are our runners performing well

www.theoaklandpress.com SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 19 2009

## at Spartan Invite

By MARVIN GOODWIN  
Of The Oakland Press

**EAST LANSING** — Novi cross country coach Robert Smith, still recuperating from a recent serious bicycle accident, wasn't able to join his squad at Friday's Spartan Invitational at Forest Akers Golf Course.

But despite his absence, the scrappy Wildcats took matters into their own hands.

Mike Blaszczyk took second place in the five-kilometer race, leading five Wildcats among the top 30 finishers as Novi handily won the Green Division title. The Wildcats finished with 86 points, placing ahead of runner-up Forest Hills Eastern (152) and Okemos (163).

Meanwhile, Mike Atchoo of Troy placed first in the Elite Division, pacing the Colts to a second-place finish, and Megan Goethals of Rochester won the girls Elite Division title — her second straight Spartan Invitational title — with her trademark second-half surge. Troy's girls finished fourth in a high caliber meet featuring many of the state's top teams.

After Blaszczyk, who clocked 16:14, Novi's runners finished within 12 seconds of each other as Alex Minghine (16th), Geoffrey Glese (17th), Joe Schubring (23rd) and Dan Egner (28th) stayed in close contact.

"We tried working on our pack for our second through five runners," Blaszczyk said. "(And) we won it (Green Division) last year, so that (winning) was our main goal. We also wanted to bring home the trophy for our coach. We talked to him after the meet ... (and) he was very happy for us. He knows what we're capable of ... and he cares about each and every one of us. Our prayers are with him."

In the Elite Division, Troy (159) was second behind Pinckney (124), which was fine with Colts coach Eric Prowse.

"I'm really happy with the way the guys performed," he said. "Our approach was to be aggressive. They're going to get real good experience out of that."

Atchoo clocked 15:38, the fastest time of the day, with teammates James Yau (ninth), William Yau (25th), Wilson Pines (60th) and Brad Pienta (64th) following, in a race of nearly 180 runners.

"My goal was to go out hard and string out the pack," said Atchoo, who won by 17 seconds and addressed the contributions of the senior-dominated lineup. "It's a lot easier to be successful as a team. You're all working together."

Milford's Nate Huff placed

10th in the Elite Division, to lead the Mavs to a 10th place finish, and Lahser's Anthony Perrotta finished ninth in the Green Division in 16:47, two places ahead of Waterford Kettering's Alex Katona.

Goethals, the defending Division 1 state champ and ranked among the nation's leading prep athletes, ran with a front pack that included Churchill's Sara Kroll, Grand Blanc's Gabrielle Anzalone and Saline's Alex Leptich until just over a mile remaining.

"That's when I really started to push it," said Goethals, who quickly separated herself from the group, strained for the finish line and clocked a scorching 17:22 to finish 30 seconds ahead of Kroll. "I feel really good because I was 17 seconds slower (last year). It feels like the state meet because there's definitely a lot of competition here."

Troy's Michelle Moriset placed seventh in 18:24, and Rochester's Brook Handler finished 11th in 18:42. Birmingham Seaholm's Mallory Wilberding placed 14th in 18:53, as the Maples finished 14th overall.



The Oakland Press/MARVIN GOODWIN

Mike Blaszczyk (2738) of Novi High School rounds the bend in the final mile of the Green Division race at the Spartan Invitational, as Hascett's Ian Hanccke joins him on Friday at Forest Akers Golf Course. Blaszczyk placed second behind Hanccke, but the Wildcats won the Green Division title.



# Wildcats three-peat

Hometown Weeklies | Thursday, October 1, 2009

## at Spartan Invite

### Novi boys running over competition

BY CHRIS JACKETT  
CORRESPONDENT

In five years of competing at the Spartan Invitational in East Lansing, Novi's boys cross country team has never finished worse than second place. Their most recent trip earned them a third straight title, their fourth in the five visits.

"We're firing on all cylinders right now, we're staying healthy and we're running well," said coach Robert Smith. "We're cruising through the season right now. Things are going smoothly, almost eerily smooth. The whole team is improving at the same rate."

The Wildcats outran 42 other teams in the Green Division on Sept. 18, finishing with 86 points, 66 points ahead of second-place Forest Hills Eastern.

The squad was led by senior Mike Blaszczyk, who finished second overall in 16 minutes and 14 seconds. His teammates weren't far behind, as Novi's next five

best runners' times were within a 20-second window and each finished within the top 40.

"That's our style of running and it works out real well for us," Smith said of the pack strategy. "We have confidence in each other's abilities."

Following Blaszczyk was seniors Alex Minghine (16th, 16:59), Geoffrey Giese (17th, 17:01), junior Joe Schubring (23rd, 17:07), senior Dan Egner (28th, 17:11) and junior Brett Giampa (36th, career best of 17:19).

"(Giampa)'s really stepped up. He was barely varsity last year. He's really filling the holes well," Smith said.

Following the Spartan Invitational, the Wildcats hosted Northville Sept. 22 at Cass Benton. The Mustangs, who also performed well at the Spartan Invitational with a fourth-place finish, were no match for Novi, as the Wildcats won 16-42.

"I want to say how proud I am to come back and do well against Northville. A lot of times, you come back after a big win and get beat," Smith said. "Northville's a good team, but we really came to play that day."

Blaszczyk led the Wildcats with a dominating 16:49 time, a personal course best. He was a full 39 seconds ahead of Egner, who finished second with a personal course best of 17:28. Schubring (17:29), Giampa (17:30) and Giese (17:31) rounded out Novi's five point earners as the Wildcats swept the top four spots and Giese took sixth in a decision against Northville's Frank Griffiths, who also ran a 17:31 race to take fifth place and prevent the full sweep.

"We're in pretty good shape this year. We're healthier this year," Smith said. "We're undefeated no matter how you slice and dice it."

Novi also won the Anchor Bay Invitational last Friday with 24 points, beating out Dakota (69 points) and seven other teams. Blaszczyk took first overall in a season-best 16:14, while Egner took fourth with a career-best 16:31, Schubring fifth with a career-best 16:34, Giese sixth with a season-best 16:49, Giampa 10th with a career-best 16:55 and Chase Conrad 15th with a career-best 17:18.

"If we continue to have confidence, we'll continue to run well," Smith said. "This is a team that really clicks. They're going to do well the rest of the season."

Chris Jackett is a freelance writer and former Novi News staff writer.

#### ON TAP

Novi's runners now turn their eyes to Livonia Stevenson on Tuesday and the Oakland County Invitational Oct. 10, which Smith said would pit the Wildcats against some of its toughest competition of the season.

## HIGH SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY

## County meet turning 50

By MARVIN GOODWIN  
Of The Oakland Press

From modest beginnings a half-century ago to its current status as one of the state's premier events, the Oakland County cross country championships has not only survived, but thrived through the years. And as the county meet observes its 50th anniversary Saturday at Kensington Metropark, only a handful of current and former coaches have watched its evolution from then to now.

West Bloomfield coach Lee Averill and a pair of meet officials, Lou Marimonti and 98-year old Kermit Ambrose, are among those who go way back to the early days of the meet. All have coached teams which have won Oakland County titles.

Only 82 boys raced in the first county meet in 1960 — there were no state-sponsored girls athletics at the time — which was held at the Multi-Lakes Conservation Club in Commerce Township, close to the present-day Walled Lake Central High School.

"It wasn't a real big meet at the time," recalled Averill.

For what was supposed to be a 2-mile course, Steve Myers of Berkley won in the unusually fast time of 7:40, with Jim Nelson of Pontiac Central a step behind.

"They started the race ... and everybody was standing around and, all of a sudden, these people are coming in and the watches are around seven minutes," recalled Ambrose, who coached Birmingham Seaholm. "I don't know if they measured the course wrong or maybe the lead kid, maybe he cut off somewhere where he shouldn't have and everybody followed him."

Whatever the reason, the runners actually ran 1½ miles, according to reports. Seaholm, though, won the first meet title and the first of six it would eventually collect through the years.

Since then, the meet has been held at several sites, includ-



The Oakland Press file photo/MARVIN GOODWIN

Waterford Mott's Shannon Osika (left), and Rochester's Megan Goethals (right) are contenders to win the girls race at Saturday's 50th running of the Oakland County Championships.

### County meet

What: 50th annual Oakland County Cross Country Championships

Where: Kensington Metropark

When: Saturday

Time: Varsity girls at 10 a.m., varsity boys at 10:30 a.m., junior varsity girls 11 a.m., junior varsity boys 11:30 a.m.

Notes: Novi Detroit Catholic Central is the defending boys champ and Troy is defending girls champion. Rochester's Megan Goethals has a chance to break her own meet record of 17:55, and Troy's Mike Atchoo could challenge boys meet mark of 15:37.

ing Marshbank Park and at the Highland Lakes campus at Oakland Community College before arriving at Kensington Metropark, its current home since 1996. The girls Oakland County meet was first contested in 1976.

Milford, with eight titles, and Lakeland, with seven, have col-

lected the most Oakland County meet titles, with Brother Rice and Seaholm next with six apiece. But Milford is the only team which has won titles in four different decades, with four of those championships coming from 2001-04.

There have been highlights galore in those 50 years of racing, including dominating performances by Seaholm in the early years — the Maples recorded the lowest score (25 points) in 1963 — and Novi's commanding effort in 2000, when Chris Toloff set a then-course record (15:39) and teammates Tim Moore and Mark Avenius completed a sweep of the first three places en route to the team title. Moore broke the course record the following year with a 15:37, a fast time for a challenging course.

However, it's a time within reach of Troy's Mike Atchoo, last year's Oakland County meet and Division 1 state meet runner-up. Atchoo is unbeaten so far and no one has come

closer than eight seconds this season. But Lake Orion's Sean Bone and Walled Lake Central's Kyle Roche are able challengers, along with Catholic Central's Ricardo Galindo, who hopes to lead the Shamrocks to a second straight county championship.

On the girls side, Clarkston, Rochester Adams, Troy, Troy Athens and Milford have been among leading teams since the meet began. The girls, though, have provided their share of top-flight performances. Katie Boyles of Rochester Adams won four county titles from 1997-2000 and Rochester's Megan Goethals set a meet and course record in capturing last year's title.

Goethals, a nationally-ranked high school runner, will be a heavy favorite to win again with Waterford Mott's Shannon Osika and Troy's Michelle Moriset in the chase.

Some 600 boys and girls varsity athletes are expected to compete along with hundreds of junior varsity runners.

## RECENT TOP TIMES

### Oakland County top girls

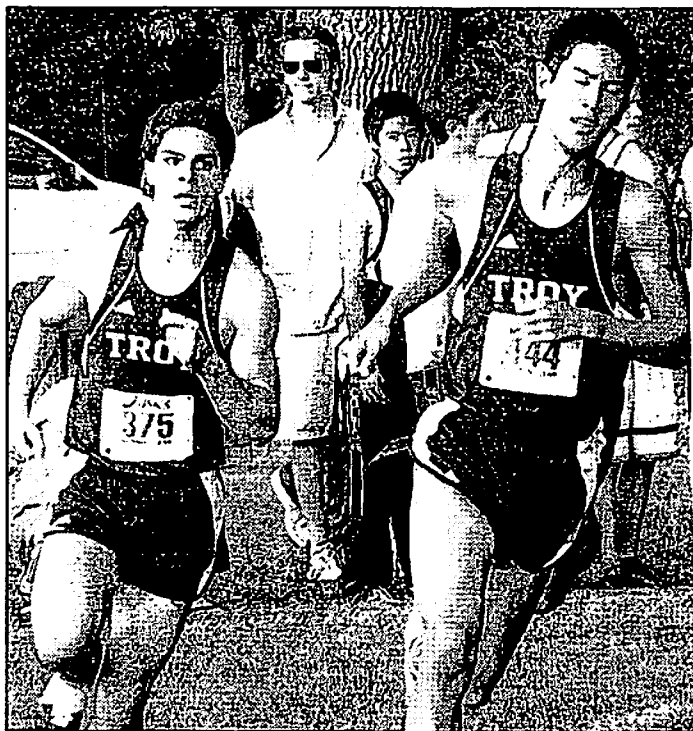
Here are the best girls Oakland County meet performers at the Kensington Metropark site since 1996:

Name	School	Time	Year
Megan Goethals	Rochester	17:55	2008
Shannon Osika	Waterford Mott	18:12	2008
Cally Macumber	Rochester Adams	18:23	2008
Erin LaFave	Bloomfield Lahser	18:31	2005
Katie Boyles	Rochester Adams	18:50	2000
Jenny Morgan	Clarkston	18:50	2005
Caitlin Clifford	Bloomfield Lahser	18:55	2003
Carlie Green	Milford	18:56	2006
Laura Rolf	RH Lutheran NW	18:57	2002
Nicole Hammer	Troy Athens	18:58	2006

### Oakland County top boys

Here are the best boys Oakland County meet performers at the Kensington Metropark site since 1996:

Name	School	Time	Year
Tim Moore	Novi	15:37	2001
Chris Toloff	Novi	15:39	2000
Ben Evans	Birm. Brother Rice	15:55	1998
John Black	Birm. Brother Rice	15:58	2004
Jordan Desilets	Lake Orion	16:00	1998
Todd Mobley	Walled Lake Central	16:00	1998
Seth Thibodeau	Milford	16:00	2003
Tom Greenless	Milford	16:06	1999
Dana Pitcock	Milford	16:06	2004
Kevin Avenius	Novi	16:09	1998
David Sager	Clarkston	16:09	1999
Dan DeRusha	Milford	16:09	2002



The Oakland Press file photo/MARVIN GOODWIN

Troy's Mike Atchoo (left) is undefeated this season and no one has come closer than eight seconds of his finish.

# MARATHON 2009

## Scoreboard

### Men's results

#### MARATHON TOP FINISHERS

- Nicholas Stanko, 28, Haslett, 2:20:22
- Chad Johnson, 33, Rochester Hills, 2:20:53
- Matthew Fecht, 25, Warren, 2:27:46
- Peter Hogg, 27, Livonia, 2:32:16
- Henry Scullard, 46, Cambridge, MA, 2:36:51
- Ryan Vigil, 31, New Haven, CT, 2:40:46
- Eric Green, 41, Pontiac, 2:41:44
- Andrew Brackmann, 26, Dearborn, 2:43:41
- Edward McGovern, 34, Ypsilanti, 2:45:36
- Kevin Pline, 29, Plymouth, 2:45:37
- Brian Goodwin, 27, Dearborn Heights, 2:46:05
- Rich Power, 45, Rochester, 2:47:02
- Eric Sterbis, 31, Berkley, 2:48:02
- Steve Menovick, 40, Grand Ledge, 2:48:41
- Alex White, 25, Allston, MA, 2:49:03
- Michael Western, 30, Waverly, IA, 2:50:03
- Graham Saunders, 19, London, ON, 2:50:04
- Michael Waterson, 22, Benzonia, 2:50:22
- Shannon Falconer, 40, Windsor, ON, 2:50:44
- Julian Scott, 38, Toronto, ON, 2:51:00

#### AGE GROUP LEADERS

##### AGES 1 - 19

- Graham Siberry Saunders, London, ON, 2:50:04
- Philip Clark, Troy, 2:53:23
- Caleb Fogel, Ann Arbor, 3:06:40

##### AGES 20 - 24

- Michael Waterson, Benzonia, 2:50:22
- Nicholas Budryn, Wyandotte, 2:51:17
- James Fogel, Ann Arbor, 2:58:07

##### AGES 25 - 29

- Nicholas Stanko, Haslett, 2:20:22
- Matthew Fecht, Warren, 2:27:46
- Peter Hogg, Livonia, 2:32:16

##### AGES 30 - 34

- Chad Johnson, Rochester Hills, 2:20:53
- Ryan Vigil, New Haven, CT, 2:40:46
- Edward McGovern, Ypsilanti, 2:45:36

##### AGES 35 - 39

- Julian Scott, Toronto, ON, 2:51:00
- Brad Koch, Charlotte, NC, 2:54:30
- Mack Stillwagon III, Romulus, 2:54:54

##### AGES 40 - 44

- Eric Green, Pontiac, 2:41:44
- Steve Menovick, Grand Ledge, 2:48:41
- Shannon Falconer, Windsor, ON, 2:50:44

##### AGES 45 - 49

- Henry Scullard, Cambridge, MA, 2:36:51
- Rich Power, Rochester, 2:47:02
- Larry Gutierrez, Fenton, 2:59:39

##### AGES 50 - 54

- Maurice Fochesato, Windsor, ON, 3:09:26
- Michael Leski, Woodridge, 3:09:59
- Mark Connelly, Concord, OH, 3:10:25

##### AGES 55 - 59

- John Tarkowski, Northville, 3:14:08
- Doug Soliz, Allen Park, 3:14:44
- Mark Squires, Novi, 3:19:40

##### AGES 60 - 64

- Peter Matthias, Sheboygan, WI, 3:12:00
- Larry Parker, Eastpointe, 3:20:26
- Don Verne, Windsor, ON, 3:23:54

##### AGES 65 - 69

- Thomas Wascha, Burton, 3:57:37
- Rich Landsman, Summerville, SC, 4:00:47
- Wayne Zimmerman, Lake Orion, 4:11:16

##### AGES 70 - 74

- Gaylord Pius, Shaver Lake, CA, 3:44:21
- Benjamin McBride, Toledo, OH, 4:14:58
- Douglas Anderson, Bloomfield Hills, 4:46:55

##### AGES 75 & OVER

- John Kolmetz, Warren, 5:27:45
- Philip Carroll, Ann Arbor, 5:53:34
- Ralph Riddick, Spokane, WA, 6:06:50

### Women's results

#### MARATHON TOP FINISHERS

- Sarah Plaxton, 41, Highland, 2:57:09
- Ariella Gottfried, 22, Minneapolis, MN, 2:57:17
- Michelle Didion, 41, Laporte, IN, 2:58:29
- Dorothea Downey, 39, Grosse Pointe Par, 3:01:44
- Nicole Falvo, 34, Grand Blanc, 3:02:15
- Katie Fenstermaker, 26, South Bend, IN, 3:05:33
- Kirstie Kniaziew, 35, Leamington, ON, 3:09:24
- Nancy Schubring, 49, Novi, 3:10:11
- Anna Weisbrodt, 28, Detroit, 3:10:59
- Denise Dean, 33, Berkley, 3:13:49
- Stacey Kandas, 25, Mayville, 3:13:59
- Susan Quenneville, 42, Tecumseh, OH, 3:14:28
- Kelly McClure, 22, Mount Pleasant, 3:14:36
- Krys Brisk, 46, Milford, 3:15:05
- Amanda Rudert, 22, Mount Pleasant, 3:15:26
- Sara Plumstead, 32, Beverly Hills, 3:16:18
- Kate Chulski, 24, Canton, 3:17:59
- Mary Przepiora, 35, Bay City, 3:19:05
- Jaye Kendrick, 35, Kingsville, OH, 3:19:21
- Melissa Mancion, 25, Rochester Hills, 3:19:47

#### AGE GROUP LEADERS

##### AGES UP TO 19

- Jenna Boff, Ballwin, MO, 3:27:36
- Selina Paupert, Dryden, 3:44:58
- Kaitlyn Courville, Rochester, 3:54:51

##### AGES 20 - 24

- Ariella Gottfried, Minneapolis, MN, 2:57:17
- Kelly McClure, Mount Pleasant, 3:14:36
- Amanda Rudert, Mount Pleasant, 3:15:26
- Kate Chulski, Canton, 3:17:59
- Karen Meraw, Warren, 3:25:01

##### AGES 25 - 29

- Katie Fenstermaker, South Bend, IN, 3:05:33
- Anna Weisbrodt, Detroit, 3:10:59
- Stacey Kandas, Mayville, 3:13:59
- Melissa Mancion, Rochester Hills, 3:19:47
- Jennifer Kunst, Kimball, 3:21:28

##### AGES 30 - 34

- Nicole Falvo, Grand Blanc, 3:02:15
- Denise Dean, Berkley, 3:13:49
- Sara Plumstead, Beverly Hills, 3:16:18
- Yvonne Gilders, Athens, OH, 3:20:19
- Dana Tschannen, Brighton, 3:23:01

##### AGES 35 - 39

- Dorothea Downey, Grosse Pointe Par, 3:01:44
- Kirstie Kniaziew, Leamington, ON, 3:09:24
- Mary Przepiora, Bay City, 3:19:05

##### AGES 40 - 44

- Sarah Plaxton, Highland, 2:57:09
- Michelle Didion, Laporte, IN, 2:58:29
- Susan Quenneville, Tecumseh, OH, 3:14:28

##### AGES 45 - 49

- Nancy Schubring, Novi, 3:10:11
- Krys Brisk, Milford, 3:15:05
- Sabina Kano, New Brighton, PA, 3:27:47

##### AGES 50 - 54

- Kathleen Sievert, Leslie, 3:22:11
- Jocelyne Major, Vincent, OH, 3:27:02
- Pamela McClean, Lansing, 3:33:23

##### AGES 55 - 59

- Pamela Hagen, Rochester, 3:28:26
- Jane Krysinski, Grosse Pointe Far, 4:05:56
- Michelle Dvorak, Burton, 4:10:05

##### AGES 60 - 64

- Renee Vetterello, Saline, 4:46:17
- Gail Huck, South Lyon, 4:47:48
- Ellie Serras, Ann Arbor, 5:06:50
- Lois Berkowitz, Washington, 5:30:28
- Sandra Hines, Holt, 5:31:33

##### AGES 65 - 69

- Dale Magee, Ann Arbor, 4:54:00

BY CHRIS JACKETT  
CORRESPONDENT

## Boys Cross Country

Novi's boys cross country team took first place at the KLA A Kensington Conference meet held at Possum Hollow in Kensington Metro Part last Thursday.

Of the 12 teams' worth of runners, Novi had four place in the top four and all seven scorers place in the top 29 en route to earning 34 points, 29 ahead of second-place Plymouth.

Senior Mike Blaszczyk took first overall in a season-best 16 minutes and seven seconds. He was followed in fifth place by junior Joe Schubring (16:38) and senior Dan Egnor (16:39). All three were named to the All-Conference first team.

Juniors Brett Giampa had a career-best 16:44 to earn ninth place, followed by senior Geoffrey Giese's 16:50 13th-place finish, as both earned All-Conference second-team honors. Senior Alex Minghine (17th in 17:04 for All-Conference third team) and junior Chase Conrad (29th in 17:28) wrapped up the scoring for the Wildcats.

Twenty-three of Novi's 28 runners had personal course records as the Wildcats improved to 110-1 overall.

Novi's junior varsity runners also performed well, taking second place behind Northville. The JV runners were led by career bests from junior Garrett Murphy (fourth in 17:49), freshman Wesley Guenther (seventh in 18:01) and sophomore Eric Gardner (19th in 18:24).

The Wildcats will race in the Redford Union Invitational Friday to gear up for the state regional meet Saturday in Brighton.

## NOVI HIGH SCHOOL WRAPUP



COURTESY PHOTO

The Novi boys cross country team captured the Kensington Conference crown last Thursday with a score of 34 points, 29 ahead of second-place Plymouth.



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## Novi harriers qualify for states

### Wildcats, Blaszczyk take third at Regionals

NOVEMBER 5, 2009

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By Chris Jackett

CORRESPONDENT

The Wildcats' boys cross country team edged out host Brighton by three points last Friday at the Region 6 meet, earning the third and final spot at this Saturday's state meet at Michigan International Speedway.

As 14 teams gathered at Huron Meadows Metro Park, only the top three teams and top 15 individuals would come out with a bid for the state meet.

Novi's top seven runners all placed in the top 40 as the team earned 91 points to get past Brighton's 94 and Northville's 105. Pinckney and Detroit Catholic Central took the top two spots with scores of 39 and 41, respectively.

"I truly believe that Region 6-1 was the most difficult region in the state this year. Pinckney and Catholic Central are currently ranked as number two and three in the state. That left only one spot for three very good teams. We're arguably a top 10 team in the state," Novi coach Robert Smith said. "As you can see, we beat Brighton by the slimmest of margins. It was their home course, too. They didn't quite perform as well as they had in the past."

Had Brighton edged out Novi, the team would have still sent two of its seven runners to MIS, as senior Mike Blaszczyk and junior Joe Schubring both placed in the top 15 of 97 individuals. Blaszczyk took third place in a season-best 15 minutes and 54 seconds despite being ill, while Schubring took 15th with a career-best 16:21.

... was really sick, but even a sick Mike is capable of a good run. Joe's just came on like gangbusters the last few weeks," Smith said.

Pinckney took four of the top 10 spots and CC took three of the top 10, so Novi needed to find points quick.

### ON TAP

The Wildcats gear up for Saturday's state meet. The team finished 13th last season and will be competing individually in 15:45 as an All-State runner. "You have to get there and we do have to prove ourselves on the state meet," Smith said. "Blaszczyk is better now, and he wants to make a big splash next weekend in the tank and we know how to do that." (Blaszczyk) is better now, and he wants to make too many predictions. The Wildcats have a good chance of making a bid for the Lower Peninsula Finals for the state meet at 3 p.m. at MIS in Brooklyn, Mich. Tickets are available and can be purchased at [www.ticketleap.com](http://www.ticketleap.com).

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CC senior Ricardo Galindo took first in 15:32 and Pinckney senior Tanner Pesonen second in 15:33. Northville senior Frank Griffiths was close behind Blaszczyk, taking fourth in 16:00.

"We can run a better race, but we didn't succumb to any kind of pressure. There's no tomorrow if we don't win," Smith said.


After Schubring, senior Geoffrey Giese crossed the finish line 21 seconds later for a 16:42, 22nd-place finish. Junior Brett Giampa and senior Dan Egner both followed six seconds later, earning 25th and 26th, respectively.

Senior Alex Minghine took 30th in 16:56 and junior Chase Conrad finished in a career-best 17:17 to take 38th.

"Chase was just a very solid JV runner for us last season and stepped up with the big dogs," Smith said.

Chris Jackett is a freelance writer and former Novi News staff writer.

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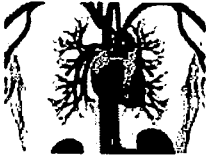


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# Novi harriers 10th at State Finals

BY CHRIS JACKETT  
CORRESPONDENT

Novi sent its cross country boys team and top girls individual to Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn, Mich. last Saturday and both returned home with a few great accomplishments under their belts.

The boys team, who qualified for States by finishing third in their region, finished 10th in Division I despite entering the day unranked and without even so much as an honorable mention in the post-regional polls.

"We were not ranked in the top 10 after Regionals. We made huge strides, pardon the pun. Our region went one, three, 10 this year," Novi coach Robert Smith said. "I'm very happy. Being a top-10 team in the state is huge. We consider ourselves an elite program every year. Any time you can go in there and not be a ranked team and come out top 10 is just great."

The Wildcats' regional partners, Detroit Catholic Central and Pinckney, took first and second with their respective top five runners averaging times of 16:12.4 and 16:33.7. Novi averaged 16:53.1 to finish 10th.

The team's theme this season was "tradition is back."



The 2009 Novi cross country team is all smiles after cracking the top-10 at the State Finals.

Including everything from eating certain foods, to workouts and drinking ice blue Gatorade during the week leading up to States, the Wildcats wanted to bring back a winning tradition as well and improve on their 13th-place finish from last year's state meet.

"The guys who really created the theme, I was really proud of them. They saw it as a chance to get back into elite status," Smith said. "The way I interpreted it was us being a top-10 team in the state because last year we were 13th. We've been top 10 in 10 of the last 12 years."

Novi was led by senior Mike Blaszczyk, who was looking to improve on his 2008 All-State 19th-place finish and personal best of 15:45. However, a strong

field and stronger wind kept Blaszczyk from repeating, as he finished 40th in 16:31.3, just 9.3 seconds behind the final All-State 30th spot.

"It was insanely windy. The weather was perfect; it was warm. The wind factor threw the whole field off. It caught me off guard," Blaszczyk said. "I ran my heart out for my last race at States."

Although the mid-60s temperature was unusually warm for November, the wind slowed everyone down, as the 30th position's 16:22 time was 25 seconds slower than the 2008 state cut of 15:57.

"When Mike came into the stadium, he was about 31st. He left nothing on the course. The wind finally just pushed him back," Smith said. "When an

athlete gives 100 percent, I'm 100 percent happy."

Although the wind kept the Wildcats from achieving any new personal records, the team's pack strategy continued to be effective, as junior Joe Schubring wasn't far behind Blaszczyk, finishing in 16:45.6 to claim 58th.

"The guys really have confidence in our system. Our pack times were about the same as normal," Smith said. "Joe Schubring made a difference in that pack time. Joe was not that far off from Mike. They could all see each other."

Senior Dan Egner (16:54.6) followed in 78th, senior Geoffrey Giese (17:01.1) in 82nd and senior Alex Minghine (17:12.6) wrapped up scoring with a 115th-place finish in the field of 237 runners.

"The times were slower across the board. The wind was horrible the last three-quarters of a mile," Smith said. "They're beating themselves up and they really shouldn't be. They raced extremely well. They battled. They really gave us our top-10 win."

Junior Brett Giampa (17:22.0) and Chase Conrad (17:36.0) finished 139th and 166th, respectively.

Troy senior Mike Atchoo won the individual competition in 15:28.5, while other local notables such as senior Ricardo

Galindo (CC) took third in 15:51.2 and senior Frank Griffiths (Northville) took 28th in 16:19.8.

Although the season is over, Blaszczyk said 10 of Novi's runners - including all seven runners from the state meet - are forming a unaffiliated club called Team Ivon (Novi spelled backwards) to compete in Sunday's AAU Cross Country State Championship in Rochester, hoping to qualify for the AAU National Cross Country Championships Dec. 6 in Orlando.



# CC's Galindo heads All-Area XC runners

BY CHRIS JACKETT  
CORRESPONDENT

No matter where CC senior Ricardo Galindo ran, he was always one of the biggest threats on the course. He's done so well that his third-place finish at the state meet was one of his worst placings of the season, although he did earn a 15:51 time and was racing against the best of Division I.

"Ricky Galindo put a lot of miles in this summer and wanted to improve from last year's state finals," coach Tony Magni said.

Last year, Galindo finished 26th in 15:52 at the state meet. Granted, the wind slowed the entire field down this year, but Galindo's determination to earn an All-State honor and lead his team to the Division I state title was undeniable, as he obtained both goals.

"Every runner from the bottom to the top pushed each other," Magni said. "He was the one over the summer who organized the guys. He never missed a day. He took charge."

In addition to his honors from the state meet, Galindo was also named to the All-Catholic team after winning the Catholic league meet in 16:07. His season-best was a 15:32 finish in a first-place regional win.

## FIRST TEAM

**Nate Huff, Milford**

With a personal best of 15:50, Huff took eighth at the Oakland County Invitational and fourth at both the KLAA Lakes Conference and regional meets before finishing fifth at the state finals in 16:01.

"A returning All-Stater, Nate saved his best for the state finals. Overcoming some early season injuries, Nate provided the up-front presence the team needed down the stretch," coach Brian Salyers said. "Nate's speed and strength separate him from his competition."

**Mike Blaszczyk, Novi**

Following up on his 15:45 All-State finish as a junior at last year's state finals, Blaszczyk continually led the Wildcats to victory this fall, posting his season-best 15:54 at this year's regional meet to earn third place. Recovering from an illness and held back by a windy final quarter mile at the state meet, he finished 40th overall in 16:31.

"Mike was the whole package: leader, scholar, front-runner and spiritual leader," said coach Robert Smith. "Mike was always putting the team first. Mike is old-school, which I consider a total compliment."

**Frank Griffiths, Northville**

Performing to his best in a 16:00, fourth-place finish at the regional meet, Northville's captain is a three-time state meet qualifier. He earned All-State status with a 28th-place finish this season in 16:19 and holds the third-fastest time at Northville's Cass Benton course in 16:29.

"Frank is one of the most impressive big race runners I've ever coached. He has a nose for the hardware and, when he runs with motivation, he is truly a force," said coach Chris Cronin. "I love coaching Frank because he listens. We might try something new in the first mile and Frank can do it. He is a rare talent. I will miss him on this team."

**Andrew Garcia-Garrison, CC**

"Andrew didn't have a very good track season last spring, so he came every day and tried to run with Ricky (Galindo). He never missed a day," coach Tony Magni said. "I challenged him after the regional. He didn't run a smart race, but he ran a good race."

The determination to improve earned Garcia-Garrison a 16:07 time at the state meet, good for 11th overall and an All-State honor among individuals. He was also named to the All-Catholic team after finishing third at the Catholic league meet in 16:26, improving further at the regional meet after a quick start landed him a 16:11, seventh-place finish leading into the state meet.

**Stefan Morell, Lakeland**

Hitting his best time early in the season with a 16:12 finish at the Jackson Invitational Sept. 26, Morell's 10th-place finish nearly repeated at the state meet when he earned All-State honors in 16:14, landing 18th overall.

"He's run varsity for four years. This was the first year in his four-year career we didn't make it (to States) as a team. He really built up his experience over four years on varsity," coach Randy Wilkins said. "He's our captain, our MVP and our best runner. He comes from a pretty good family of runners."

Thursday, November 19, 2009

### Blake Yard, South Lyon

With a season-best 16:13 at the regional meet in Brighton, Yard led the Lions throughout the year. He improved on his 2008 state finish by 45 spots to finish 51st in 16:41.6.

"Blake is a tough competitor, a hard worker and a team player. He was an exceptionally reliable front runner and he got steadily faster throughout the season," coach Scott Smith said.

### SECOND TEAM

Viktor Puskorius, CC

The Shamrock senior ran to All-State status by finishing 23rd overall at the State Finals. His finish of 16:17.4 also finished 14th in team scoring for the State Champs.

### Austin Zebrowski, CC

Austin ran in a tight back that helped the Shamrocks claim the 2009 State Championship. He finished 20th in team scoring and 31st overall, missing All-State by one place in 16:22.0.

### John-Paul Zebrowski, CC

John-Paul ran with his twin brother, finishing in 16:23.7 for 24th in team scoring and 36th overall at the State Finals. The Zebrowskis are juniors.

### Joe Schubring, Novi

The Novi junior finished second

for the Wildcats, earning 40th in team scoring and 58th overall (16:45.6) at the State Finals, helping Novi to a 10th-place finish.  
Dan Egner, Novi

Egner was next in for the Wildcats, claiming 58th in team scoring and 78th overall in 16:54.6 at the State Finals.

### Evan Smallman, Milford

The junior Maverick finished 38th in team scoring and 55th overall at the State Finals, helping Milford to a fourth-place finish.

### Nicholas Burt, Milford

The Milford senior ran close behind Smallman, capturing 60th overall and 42nd in team scoring for the fourth-place Mavs.

Chris Jackett is a freelance writer and former Novi News staff writer.



CC runners (l to r) Andrew Garcia-Garrison, Ricardo Galindo, John-Paul Zebrowski and Austin Zebrowski.

### ALL-AREA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

#### Player of the Year

Ricardo Galindo, CC senior

#### First Team

Ricardo Galindo, CC senior

Nate Huff, Milford senior

Mike Blaszczyk, Novi senior

Frank Griffiths, Northville senior

Andrew Garcia-Garrison, CC junior

Stefan Morell, Lakeland senior

Blake Yard, South Lyon junior

#### Second Team

Austin Zebrowski, CC junior

Viktor Puskorius, CC senior

John-Paul Zebrowski, CC junior

Joe Schubring, Novi junior

Dan Egner, Novi senior

Nicholas Burt, Milford senior

Evan Smallman, Milford junior

#### Honorable Mention

CC - Jr. Mackenzie Boyd

Lakeland - So. Garrett Zuk, So.

Ryan Carrigan

Milford - Sr. Johnathon Rabedeau

Jr. Dylan Danowski, Fr. Cody

Shavely, Jr. Nate Benton

Northville - So. Matt Sierra, Jr.

Trent Johnson, Jr. Christian

Guenther, Jr. Chad Cini

Novi - Sr. Geoff Giese, Jr. Brett

Giampa, Sr. Alex Minghine, Jr.

Chase Gonrad

South Lyon - Sr. Jacob Uratchko,

Sr. Robbie Kulie, Sr. Andy Stone

South Lyon East - Sr. Spencer

Layson, Jr. Tyler Foley

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## Wildcat Men's Cross Country wins the South Lyon Invitational

9/3/09

Last Saturday the Novi Men's Cross Country team traveled to Island Lake State Park to compete in the South Lyon Invitational. Eleven teams from across Michigan and Ohio accepted the invitation to race in their first competition of the season. It has been 9 months since their last race and there was a lot of anticipation in the air for the field of 77 harriers.

At the gun the field exploded towards the first turn 200 meters away. Soon the runners settled into their pace to complete the 3.1 mile course.

"I think that the front pack went out a little too fast" commented Coach Robert Smith. "A sub 5 minute mile is a bit too ambitious for a race in August."

The defending champion Wildcats hung on and won the race with a comfortable margin. In cross county the low score wins, and Novi's score was 46, twenty one points ahead of their nearest rival (Temperance Bedford).

Mike Blaszczyk paced Novi with a third place personal finish. His time of 16:29 proves that he is ready to compete at the front again this year. As a junior Blaszczyk was an all-state runner at the State Finals.

Junior Joe Schubring finished 6th with a time of 17:01. "Joe had an outstanding summer. He put in a lot of quality miles, and now he is enjoying the fruits of his labor" noted Coach Smith.

Alex Minghine was the third Wildcat to come across the finish line. "Alex ran the smartest race of all of our guys today" said Smith. "Last year he often started a little too slow. Today he ran his first mile more on pace for this time of the season". Alex raced to a 10th place finish with his time of 17:11.

Close behind Alex was Geoff Giese. "Geoff started the season injured last year. With him in the line-up we are a much better team". Giese came in 12th place; running 17:21.

Rounding out the top 5 (scorers) for the Wildcats was Brett Giampa. "Brett has really stepped up his game. He is running about 45 seconds faster than he did last year at this time. In fact, Brett ran a career best time of 17:27 to give him 12th place".

Dan Egner came in 6th for his team (21st overall) running 17:36. "Dan was a little off of his game today" commented Coach Smith. "Dan ran as our number 2 man many times for us last season. As he makes the transition from the 800 meters (spring track) to 3.1 miles I am confident that he will return to challenge the rest of our top 5. When that happens, we will be even more solid than we are right now".

Junior Chase Conrad was the 7th runner for Novi in the varsity race. Chase ran an 18:13 for 40th place. Last year Chase did not even finish this race due to an injury,

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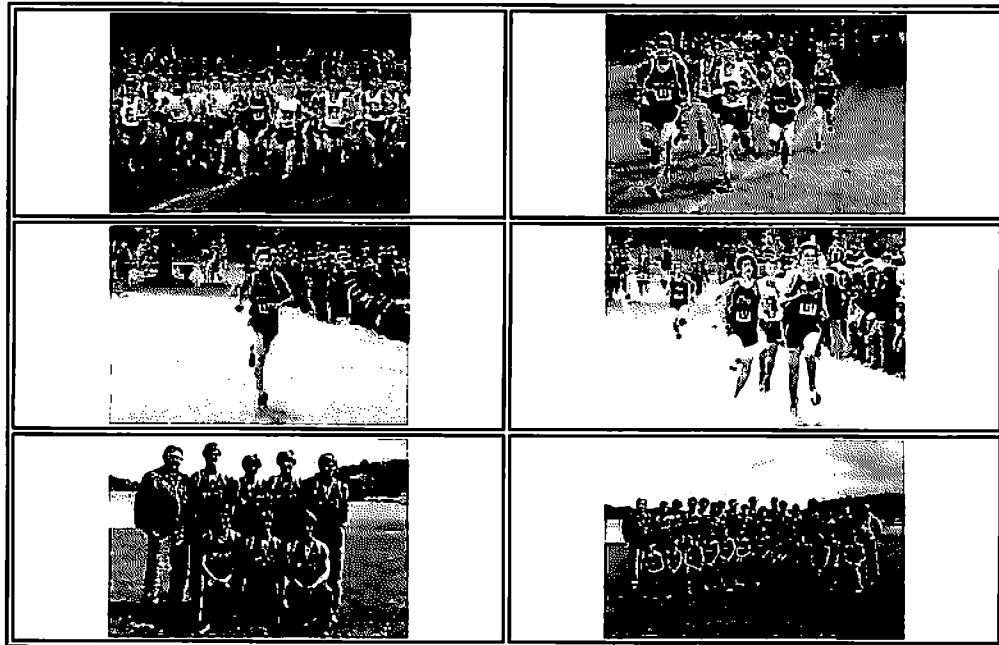
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so it sure was nice to get him back in the line-up. Overall, the Wildcat junior varsity squad also did an outstanding job. Garrett Murphy led the charges with a 5th place finish. His time of 18:21 proved to be a career pr (personal record) by almost half a minute.

Other top times in the race include Steve Pravato in 19:01, Ben Jenkins (freshman) in 19:02, Travis Trainor (19:04), Eric Gardner (19:43), Mark Wagner (19:49) and Kevin Hanlon (20:09).

The Wildcats will have two weeks until their next competition when they take on the South Lyon East Cougars at Cass Benton on Tuesday September 15. Race time is 5 pm.



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## Wildcat Cross Country wins the Anchor Bay Invitational

Michigan's top cheerleader cheers Wildcats to big victory  
9/27/09

The "Top 7" of Novi Men's Cross Country team traveled to Stoney Creek Metro park to compete in the Anchor Bay Invitational Friday

afternoon. The 'Cats took first place, and were cheered on by the state's top cheerleader: Nicole Blaszczyk, Miss Michigan 2009 and Novi Wildcat Senior Mike Blaszczyk's older sister.

How did Mike finish on Friday? He took first place in a field of 9 schools attending the meet, leading Novi to a solid first place victory. Also finishing in the top ten for Novi were Egner, Schubring, Giese, Minghine and Giampa.

On Saturday, the remaining 'Cats ran in the Walled Lake Western Invitational. Novi's freshmen and sophomores took first place, lead by Jenkins, Trainor, Lee and Gardner in the top ten. The Wildcat juniors and senior took a respectable third place at the event, even without the "Top 7" runners.

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**Rochester's Goethals continues domination at county cross country meet**

**Troy girls, Catholic Central boys win team titles**

By MARVIN GOODWIN

Of The Oakland Press

MILFORD — Rochester's Megan Goethals continued to widen the gap between herself and the rest of the area runners.

Running with the authority and passion of a national-class athlete, Goethals took first place at the Oakland County cross country championships, smashing the course record while leaving a stellar field of challengers in her wake.

Goethals clocked 17:40.25 for the hilly, five-kilometer layout, breaking her own course and Oakland County meet record of 17:55 at the Kensington site. No other Oakland County girl has broken 18 minutes on the course.

Novi Detroit Catholic Central's boys and Troy's girls each won



The start of the race was as close as the field got to Rochester's Megan Goethals (second from left), who quickly distanced herself from the rest of the field to capture the individual title at the Oakland County cross country championships held Saturday, Oct. 10, 2009 at Kensington Metropark. (The Oakland Press/Marvin Goodwin).

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their second straight meet titles, while Mike Atchoo of Troy ran the third fastest Oakland County meet time at the Kensington site, winning in 15:54.

Troy's girls scored 110 points to sneak past rising Birmingham Seaholm, who finished with 112. Lakeland was third with 192 and Waterford Mott followed with 194.

For the boys, the Shamrocks, with five finishers in the top 25, won with 101 points with Novi placing second with 122 and Lake Orion (126), Milford (134), Troy (165) and Lakeland (200) following.

Ricardo Galindo (third), Andrew Garcia-Garrison (10th), Viktor Puskorius (14th), Austin Zebrowski (16th) and John-Paul Zebrowski (25th), returning from an injury, led the way for Catholic Central.

"I think having John-Paul coming back lifted our spirits," Shamrocks coach Tony Magni said. "It was the first time he raced in three weeks. We just ran as a unit and off we went."

So did Novi, whose Mike Blaszczyk (12th), Joe Schubring (23rd) and Dan Egnor (27th) led the Wildcats. Coach Bob Smith, who only recently returned from a serious accident where he suffered a lacerated spleen, a separated shoulder and broken ribs. "I was shooting for a top five, so second was a pleasant surprise," he said. "Our fifth man (Brett Giampa) was 31st, (so) he was the unsung hero."

Atchoo, who has yet to lose a race this season, led virtually from the start. A large chase pack, which included teammate James Yau, Galindo, Lake Orion's Sean Bone and Notre Dame Prep's Chris Burns, was still in contact midway through the race.

Atchoo, still mindful of the runners chasing him, forged on as he continued his own pace.

"You never really know how close they are to you ... or if they're gaining on you," Atchoo said. "So you just have to keep running hard."

He did, fending off Bone, who had the only real chance to stay close in the last mile. "I was just thinking 'hold on to Mike and you'll have a good race,'" said the senior, who was second in 16:04.

Burns wound up fourth, Mott's Scott Albaugh was fifth, Walled Lake Central's Kyle Roche was seventh and Milford's Nate Huff was eighth, leading the Mavs to a fourth place finish.

On the girls front, Goethals, who usually bides her time until the last mile, pressed the pace from the start, per coach Larry Adams' orders. Waterford Mott's Shannon Osika and Troy's Michelle Moriset, a pair of All-State athletes, were the closest challengers and they were fighting for second place some 25 seconds behind midway through the race. Meanwhile Goethals, setting a relentless pace, continued to widen the gap. "It felt good to be able to let loose like that," said the senior, who won by nearly 50 seconds. "It really got hard the last mile because I didn't have anybody with me to push me up those hills."

Moriset was second in 18:29 and Osika came in at 18:44.

"I always go out with Shannon and Megan and see how long I can last," smiled Moriset, who handled the winning trophy. "It was a really good day to run. I'm proud of everyone on our team."

Indeed, the Colts had Sammy Johnson (15th), Julia Dinverno (16th), Madison Pines (30th) and a gallant effort by Katie Shaheen, the Colts' fifth runner.

"She had an asthma attack coming off that hill," said Troy coach Matt Richardson, whose Colts have won the last two county meet titles by a total of five points. "She lost some spots but she hung tough. She saved us."

Although Seaholm coach Jeff Devantier lamented the close loss, he was also encouraged.

"You can't be displeased in the way they ran when you have four girls in the top 19 in this competition," he said. "That's fantastic."

Triplets Mallory Wilberding (fourth), Tess Wilberding (sixth) and Aubrey Wilberding (14th) and Alex Mathews (19th), trying to work her way back into shape following an injury, led the Maples, while Lakeland continues its venture into unknown territory. "For us to finish third, incredible," he said. "We've never been third."

Bloomfield Hills Lahser had the top finishing boys and girls squads for Division 2-, 3- and 4-sized schools.

E-mail Marvin Goodwin at [marvin.goodwin@oakpress.com](mailto:marvin.goodwin@oakpress.com)

#### Girls cross country

#### Oakland County Championship

(at Kensington Metropark)

TEAMS — 1. Troy 110; Birmingham Seaholm 112; 3. Lakeland 192; 4. Waterford Mott 194; 5. Rochester Adams 199; 6. Milford 201; 7. Walled Lake Western 210; 8. Novi 211; 9. Clarkston 218; 10. Stoney Creek 299; 11. Rochester 300; 12. North Farmington 320; 13. Lake Orion 334; 14. Oxford 368; 15. Bloomfield Hills Lahser 373; 16. Birmingham Marian 465; 17. Walled Lake Northern 466; 18. Farmington 473; 19. Troy Athens 493; 20. Pontiac Notre Dame Prep 555; 21. Walled Lake Central 571; 22. Waterford Kettering 593; 23. West Bloomfield 613; 24. Detroit Country Day 678; 25. Bloomfield Hills Andover 684; 26. South Lyon East 787; 27. Birmingham Groves 787; 28. Royal Oak 790; 29. Berkley 812; 30. Oakland Christian 926; 31. South Lyon 993.

INDIVIDUALS — 1. Megan Goethals (Rochester) 17:40.25, 2. Michelle Moriset (Troy) 18:29, 3. Shannon Osika (Waterford Mott) 18:44, 4.



Mallory Wilberding (Birmingham Seaholm) 19:12, 5. Brook Handler (Rochester) 19:20, 6. Tess Wilberding (Birmingham Seaholm) 19:25, 7. Jamie Morrissey (Rochester Adams) 19:26, 8. Julia Valencia (Walled Lake Western) 19:27, 9. Lauren Kettle (Milford) 19:28, 10. Jackie Mullins (Novi) 19:33, 11. Sarah Johnson (Rochester Adams) 19:39, 12. Brooke Kovacic (Oxford) 19:42, 13. Natalie Smith (Clarkston) 19:43, 14. Aubrey Wilberding (Seaholm) 19:45, 15. Sammy Johnson (Troy) 19:46, 16. Julia Dinverno (Troy) 19:57, 17. Morgan Bridgewater (Lakeland) 19:59, 18. Gabby DeFlorio (Farmington) 20:09, 19. Alex Mathews (Birmingham Seaholm) 20:15, 20. Lindsay Clark (Walled Lake Western) 20:23, 21. Kelsey Young (Walled Lake Western) 20:26, 22. Brooke McMahon (Novi) 20:27, 23. Laura Sabourin (Birmingham Groves) 20:28, 24. Kayla Gawlik (Bloomfield Hills Lahser) 20:29, 25. Reighan Fisher (Lakeland) 20:29, 26. Christie Goodwin (North Farmington) 20:32, 27. Lauren Gagnon (Waterford Mott) 20:32, 28. Angela Wright (North Farmington) 20:35, 29. Raechel Moore (Lakeland) 20:44, 30. Madison Pines (Troy) 20:45.

#### Boys cross country

#### Oakland County Championship

(at Kensington Metropark)

TEAMS — 1. Novi Detroit Catholic Central 101; 2. Novi 122; 3. Lake Orion 126; 4. Milford 134; 5. Troy 165; 6. Lakeland 200; 7. Rochester Adams 233; 8. Brother Rice 241; 9. Walled Lake Northern 281; 10. Clarkston 306; 11. South Lyon 306; 12. Waterford Mott 355; 13. Birmingham Seaholm 356; 14. Royal Oak 416; 15. Walled Lake Central 425; 16. Oxford 439; 17. Farmington 468; 18. Bloomfield Hills Lahser 497; 19. Stoney Creek 524; 20. South Lyone East 564; 21. West Bloomfield 592; 22. Rochester 644; 23. Troy Athens 669; 24. North Farmington 675; 25. Stoney Creek 693; 26. Birmingham Groves 763; 27. Orchard Lake St. Mary's 772; 28. Walled Lake Western 784; 29. Cranbrook-Kingswood 796; 30. Pontiac Notre Dame Prep 836; 31. Waterford Kettering 882; 32. Hazel Park 882; 33. Detroit Country Day 956; 34. Clawson 999; 35. Bloomfield Hills Andover 1,025; 36. Berkley 1,067.

INDIVIDUALS — 1. Mike Atchoo (Troy) 15:54.44, 2. Sean Bone (Lake Orion) 16:04, 3. Ricardo Galindo (Catholic Central) 16:12, 4. Chris Burns (Notre Dame Prep) 16:18, 5. Scott Albaugh (Waterford Mott) 16:22, 6. Kyle Roche (Walled Lake Central) 16:23, 7. James Yau (Troy) 16:28, 8. Nate Huff (Milford) 16:29, 9. Nathan Ziolk (Lake Orion) 16:33, 10. Andrew Garcia-Garrison (Catholic Central) 16:34, 11. Victor Allen (Southfield Christian) 16:38, 12. Mike Blaszczyk (Novi) 16:42, 13. Chris Platt (Walled Lake Northern) 16:46, 14. Viktor Puskorius (Catholic Central) 16:47, 15. Kousei Yajima (Walled Lake Western) 16:51, 16. Austin Zebrowski (Catholic Central) 16:51, 17. Chad Norton (Walled Lake Central) 16:52, 18. T.J. Carey (Lake Orion) 16:53, 19. Stefan Morell (Lakeland) 16:57, 20. Nick Burt (Milford) 17:00, 21. Sam Parlette (Walled Lake Northern) 17:01, 22. Steve Biebelhausen (Rochester Adams) 17:02, 23. Joe Schubring (Novi) 17:04, 24. Casey Routledge (Walled Lake Northern) 17:05, 25. John-Paul Zebrowski (Catholic

Central) 17:07, 26. Evan Smallman (Milford) 17:08, 27. Dan Egner (Novi) 17:09, 28. Jack Howard (Birmingham Seaholm) 17:10, 29. Geoffrey Giese (Novi) 17:13, 30. Garrett Zuk (Lakeland) 17:13.

**Last Updated:** 10/10/2009 7:33:06 PM EST

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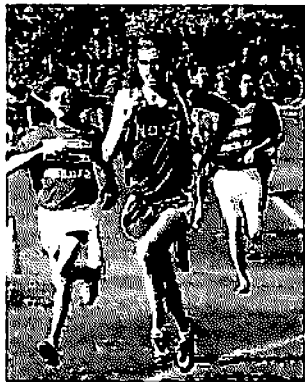
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## Novi Men's Cross County takes 2nd place at Oakland County Meet - of 36 schools!

10/12/09

At Kensington Metro Park on Saturday, the Wildcats took second place overall in a field of 36 schools in the annual Oakland County Meet, bringing their record to an amazing 97-1 for the season.

Novi Catholic Central was first, Lake Orion third and Milford fourth.

The top five 'Cats were Blaszczyk (16:42), Schubring (17:04), Egner (17:09), Giese (17:13) and Giampa (17:16).

A complete list of schools and scores appears at the bottom of this article.



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1 Catholic Central	68
2 Novi	122
3 Lake Orion	126
4 Milford	134
5 Troy	165
6 Lakeland	200
7 Rochester Adams	233
8 Brother Rice	241
9 Walled Lake Northern	281
10 Clarkston	306
11 South Lyon	306
12 Waterford Mott	355

# Novi High School Wrapup

OCTOBER 15, 2009

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## Boys Cross Country

Novi's boy's cross country ran to a second place finish at the 36-team Oakland County Invitational last Saturday at Kensington Metro Park, improving to 97-1 on the season. Novi earned 122 points, four ahead of Lake Orion, but 54 points back from champions Detroit Catholic Central.

Senior Mike Blaszczyk, who took 12th individually in 16 minutes and 42 seconds, led the Wildcats. Junior Joe Schubring followed in 17:04 for 23rd, senior Dan Egner 17:09 for 27th, senior Geoffrey Giese 17:13 for 29th, junior Brett Giampa 17:16 for 31st and senior Alex Minghine wrapped up Novi's scoring in 17:27 for 42nd place.

Troy's Mike Atchoo took first individually in 15:54.

The team moved to 4-0 in dual meets by running over Livonia Stevenson 25-44 Oct. 6.

Novi split the top five with Stevenson, but their pack strategy won the meet as Egner, Giese, Schubring, Giampa and junior Chase Conrad took third through seventh places as all five runners finished in 18:07 or 18:08. Stevenson's Matt Williams (17:43) and Joe Urso (17:48) took first and second place, while the Spartans' third runner ran an 18:39 5K.

The team will travel to the Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard Invitational this Saturday before the KLAA conference championship takes place next Thursday.

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## Novi Men's Cross County finishes regular season undefeated; crowned KLAA Divisional Champs!

10/12/09

The Wildcats defeated South Lyon 19-40 on Tuesday afternoon to finish the regular (dual) season undefeated. The win also secured the Wildcats' first place status in the KLAA Division.

Finishing in the top 10 for Novi was Dan Egner (16:39), Alex Minghine (16:57), Joe Schubring (17:15), Mike Blaszczyk (17:15) Brett Giampa (17:24) and Chase Conrad (17:27).



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## Wildcat Men's Cross Country wins KLAA conference title

10/23/09

The Novi Men's Cross Country Team won the KLAA Conference Championship Thursday in convincing fashion. The 'Cats earned just 34 points in securing the win. Second place was almost double that - Plymouth finished with 63 points. Rounding out the top five was Canton (66 points), Northville (67) and South Lyon (139).

Novi's Mike Blaszczyk was the overall medalist with a personal season-best time of 16:07. Joe Schubring (5th in 16:38) and Dan Egner (6th in 16:39) also earned First-Team All-Conference honors.

Brett Giampa (9th in 16:44) and Geoff Giese (13th in 16:50) earned Second-Team All-Conference honors.

Alex Minghine's time of 17:04 gave him 17th place and Third-Team All-Conference honors, and Chase Conrad rounded out the varsity squad with a very respectable 29th place finish (17:28).

Impressively, 23 of the 28 Novi athletes who raced yesterday had a season best personal record.

The Wildcats are are now an amazing 110-1 for the season.



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## Novi captures cross country KLAA Conference title

BY JEFF THEISEN  
SPORTS WRITER  
• OCTOBER 22, 2009

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Novi Wildcats placed all five scoring runners in the top 13 to score 34 points during Thursday's meet at Possum Hollow in Kensington Park.

Novi senior Mike Blaszczyk was also the overall winner, finishing in 16:07. He held off Northville's Frank Griffiths (16:10) down the stretch.

Three teams were extremely bunched up for the next three spots. Plymouth won out with 63, followed by Canton with 66 and Northville with 67. The top four teams put plenty of distance on South Lyon with 139 points for fifth.

The remaining spots were Churchill (193), Stevenson (208), Salem (223), South Lyon East (236), Franklin (262), John Glenn (360) and Wayne (385).

Read much more about the meet in Thursday's sports sections.

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# Ahead of the pack Novi boys run away with Kensington crown

OCTOBER 25, 2009

## GANNETT NEWS SERVICE

Novi used a pack-running philosophy to near perfection in winning the KLAA Kensington Conference boys cross country title Thursday at Kensington Metropark.

Novi placed all five scoring runners in the top 13 to score 34 points during Thursday's meet at Possum Hollow course.

Wildcat senior Mike Blaszczyk was also the overall winner, finishing in 16:07 on the challenging 5,000-meter course. He went to the lead early and held off Northville's Frank Griffiths (16:10) down the stretch.

"My plan was to out a little faster, I learned my lesson at Oakland County (meet)," Blaszczyk said. "If you got to run with the top guys, you've got to go fast in the first mile. I tried to punch it in and relax and stay focused in the second mile, and take it home. "It was a good race, perfect weather. I love this."

Rounding out the scoring for Novi were Joe Schubring, fifth (16:38); Dan Egner, sixth (16:39); Brett Giampa, ninth (16:44) and Geoff Giese, 13th (16:50).

"We ran with our strength - our depth," Novi coach Robert Smith said. "They know each other's strengths and weaknesses. If they're weak in a certain spot, there's another fellow there to pick them up. If they're strong in another spot, then another just goes for the ride and gets pulled through."

Three teams were extremely bunched up for the next three spots.


Plymouth won out with 63, followed by Canton (66) and Northville (67). The top four teams put plenty of distance on South Lyon with 139 points for fifth.

"I respect those guys - Northville, Plymouth and Canton," Smith said. "On any given day it could be them, but today it was us. It's a good way to kick of the next week for regionals."

Plymouth's Joe Porcari finished third (16:30), while teammate Matt Neumann took sixth (16:36).

Also cracking the top 15 for the Wildcats were Warren Buzzard in 11th (16:46) and Derek Gielarowski in 14th (16:53).





Plymouth coach Jon Mikosz thought his team didn't have its best day, but things are looking good toward the end of the year. "I thought we might be up a lower in there with overall score, but overall we had a pretty good day," he said. "It just shows how many good teams from the state are in this one area.

"I kind of had a feeling maybe we had a little bit of an off day today. We haven't had one all year, so this is kind of our one off meet. I'm feeling pretty confident now that we got this one out of the way."

Rounding out the rest of the team scores were Livonia Churchill (193), Livonia Stevenson (208), Salem (223), South Lyon East (236), Livonia Franklin (262), Westland John Glenn (360) and Wayne Memorial (385).



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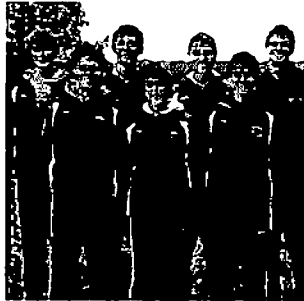
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## Novi Men's Cross Country takes third in a very tough regional competition

11/01/09

Regionals in this part of the state are never easy, even for a very good team. This year was no exception.

Going into regionals undefeated, Novi faced two of the top three ranked schools in the state - Pinckney and Catholic Central. That meant finishing in the top three, and thus moving on to the state meet, would be tough.

Novi finished third behind Pinckney and Catholic Central to make state finals once again this year. Brighton was edged out, finishing in fourth place.

For the Wildcats, the top finishers were Mike Blaszczyk (15:54), Joe Schubring (16:21), Geoffrey Giese (16:42), Brett Giampa (16:48), Dan Egner (16:48), Alex Minghine (16:56) and Chase Conrad (17:17).

Next up for the 'Cats is State Finals next weekend, Saturday, November 7th at the Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn, Michigan.

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## Catholic Central, Novi advance to state cross country meet

By MARVIN GOODWIN  
Of The Oakland Press

BRIGHTON — A regional title was in grasp of the Novi Detroit Catholic Central cross country team at Friday's Division 1 regional at Huron Meadows Metropark. But the pesky Pirates of Pinckney were saboteurs extraordinaire, surging in the latter part of the race to capture the crown by a mere two points on a drizzly afternoon.

Pinckney scored 39 points and Catholic Central had 41. But the drama continued for the third and final qualifying spot for next week's state meet and Novi, which scored 91 points, squeaked past Brighton (93).

The Shamrocks' Ricky Galindo ran down Pinckney's Tanner Pesonen in the final 100 meters, clocking 15:32.3 for the five-kilometer course to win the regional title. Pesonen was a step behind in 15:33.

On the girls side, Pinckney (54), Northville (71) and Brighton (81) edged out fourth-place finisher Walled Lake Western (90) for the qualifying



Novi Detroit Catholic Central's Ricky Galindo (left) rounds the bend with other leaders of the pack, including Novi's Mike Blaszczyk (73) and Pinckney's Tanner Pesonen (95) at the Division 1 cross country regional held Friday, Oct. 30, 2009 at Huron Meadows Metropark near Brighton. (The Oakland Press/Marvin Goodwin).

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berths.

Western's Lindsay Clark won the regional title, edging runner-up Jackie Mullins of Novi, who finished ahead of Julia Valencia of Western, as all three led the top 15 individuals who automatically qualify for the state meet.

The trio was locked in a tight race for much of the course until Clark and Mullins eased ahead of Valencia. Clark, though, went ahead with about 300 meters to go and powered through the finish line in 18:26.9, with Mullins (18:27.9) and Valencia (18:38.9) following.

"It was nerve-wracking the whole time," said Clark, smiling broadly despite her tired legs. "I was thinking the whole time, not to let her (Mullins) go. I kept telling myself I was going to do it, (and) don't stop."

Mullins recalled the battle, which left her breathless at the end.

"It was the hardest race I've ever run," said the freshman, who lost to Valencia in two previous races and now appears to be closing the gap.

"It was hard," Valencia said, "but I'm just looking forward to states."

Farmington's Gabby Deflorio clocked 18:50 in finishing fourth, while Western's Kelsey Young (13th) and Farmington's Olivia Salinas also earned state-qualifying berths.

For the boys, the Shamrocks looked strong early with Galindo, Andrew Garcia-Garrison and Austin Zebrowski leading the pack for the first mile. Pinckney's runners began working their way up through the latter stages of the race. Both teams had five runners among the top 16, but Pinckney had three runners ahead of Garcia-Garrison, the Shamrocks' second runner, who finished eighth.

"We ran tough, but we didn't run smart," Shamrocks coach Tony Magni said. "Pinckney ran a super race, and Viktor (Puskorius) came out of nowhere. (But) the thing is to qualify, and if you win it, it's a bonus."

Puskorius was 12th, and John-Paul Zebrowski 13th for the Shamrocks.

Galindo gave up the lead to Pesonen in the final mile, but still stayed on his heels.

"I couldn't give him an indication that I was tired or hurting," he said.

So Galindo fought to stay with Pesonen, and as the finish line neared, he felt more inspired with a strong sprint that closed the deal.

"It's always exciting running against Tanner ... (and) it's always exciting to have a close race like that," he said.

Novi coach Robert Smith breathed a sigh of relief after discovering the Wildcats were in.

"Ahhh, we made it," smiled the veteran mentor.

Mike Blasczyk was third in 15:54 to lead Novi, whose Joe Schubring (15th), Geoffrey Giese (22nd), Brett Giampa (25th) and Dan Egner (26th) rounded out their scoring.

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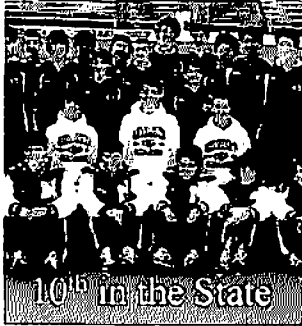
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## Wildcats finish in Top 10 at State Finals for the tenth time in the past twelve years

11/10/09

For the tenth time in the past twelve years, the Wildcats finished in the top ten in the state at State Finals. The annual event is held at the Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn, Michigan.

Representing Novi High School was Mike Blaszczyk (16:31), Joe Schubring (16:45), Dan Egner (16:54), Geoffrey Giese (17:01), Alex Minghine (17:12), Brett Giampa (17:22) and Chase Conrad (17:36).

The top ten teams this year were:

1	Catholic Central	68
2	Ann Arbor Pioneer	96
3	Pinckney	155
4	Milford	167
5	Rockford	228
6	Saginaw Heritage	234
7	Lake Orion	263
8	Troy	264
9	Saline	266
10	Novi	281

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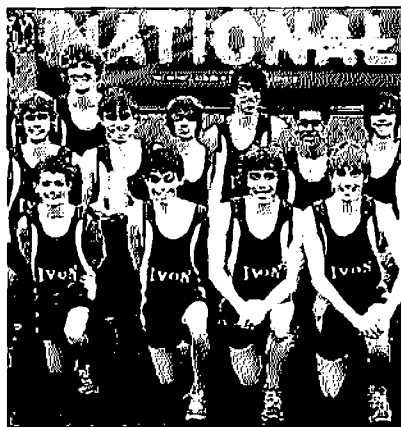
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late November.

## Novi Men's Cross Country team wins National Title

12/8/09

Fourteen athletes from the Novi area traveled to Orlando Florida recently and competed in the AAU Cross Country National Championships. All are members of the AAU Club named Team Ivon (Novi spelled backwards). Team Ivon earned the right to compete at Nationals by placing in the Michigan AAU State meet held

In the Young Men Division (17-18 years old) Team Ivon had five athletes competing; just enough to be considered a full team. This group of athletes won the National Championship for their age division by beating the Westside (Louisville, Kentucky) Track Club by the closest of margins. Ivon scored 27; compared to 28 for Westside (low score wins). In addition, all five athletes from Team Ivon earned All-American honors by placing in the Top 25 finishers.

Ivon was paced by Mike Blaszczyk, who came in second overall. Mike's time was 16:14 on the 5K course. Overall results:

2nd Mike Blaszczyk 16:14  
12th Dan Egner 17:09  
16th Geoff Giese 17:16  
21st Alex Minghine 17:51  
25th Chase Conrad 18:29

Seven Ivon athletes ran in the Intermediate Division (15-16 year olds) Joe Schubring lead the way for the club by placing 11th overall. Team Ivon came in 5th with a team score of 95 points. (The Central Florida Gliders won the Intermediate race with 44 points.) Overall results:

11th Joe Schubring 17:08  
12th Brett Giampa 17:12  
41st Steve Pravato 18:25  
42nd Ryan Tgiros 18:26  
48th Eric Gardner 18:42  
52nd Chris Vera-Burgos 18:56  
63rd Michael Benkarski 19:34

In the Youth Division, Team Ivon had two representatives. Ben Jenkins came in 38th in the 4K race (15:04) while Brennan Giese came in 70th (16:23).

"Having our Young Men win the National Team Title was an exceptional way to cap off the season" said Ivon Coach Dave Egner. "The fact that we were able to have 7 out of our 14 athletes earn All-American status demonstrates their full commitment to training and preparation. I could not be more proud of each and every member of Team Ivon".

All of the runners are also members of the 2009 Novi High School's Men's Cross Country Team, and trained under veteran head coach Robert Smith.

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KAREN MINGHINE

All 14 members of Team Ivon, which spanned three age divisions, traveled to Orlando last weekend for the AAU National Cross Country Championships.

Hometown Weeklies | Thursday, December 10, 2009

# Novi runners win AAU national title

## Harriers run through competition in Orlando

BY CHRIS JACKETT  
CORRESPONDENT

Although the boys cross country season ended for Novi's high school team last month, several team members have been conditioning on their own to compete in an unaffiliated event through Amateur Athletic Union competition.

The effort really paid off, as the five team members that made up the Young Men's Division team came away with an AAU Cross Country National Championship in Orlando, Fla. last Saturday, edging out the Westside Track Club (Louisville, Ky.) by a score of 27-28.

Racing under the name Team Ivon (Novi spelled backwards), all five team members in the 17-18 age group earned All-American honors by finishing in the top 25 overall individuals. For team scoring, all five finished in the top nine.

Senior Mike Blaszczyk led Ivon with a second-place overall finish in 16 minutes and 14 seconds. Senior Dan Egner followed with a 12th-

place finish in 17:09 and senior Geoff Giese was close behind, finishing 16th in 17:16. Senior Alex Minghine finished 21st in 17:51 and junior Chase Conrad was 25th in 18:29.

Team Ivon also had seven runners in the Intermediate Division (ages 15-16). Junior Joe Schubring led the way with an 11th-place finish in 17:08 as the Intermediate team came in fifth place with a team score of 95 points, unable to catch the Central Florida Gliders, who won the division with 44 points.

Junior Brett Giampa was right behind Schubring, finishing 12th in 17:12. Steve Pravato finished 41st in 18:25, Ryan Tgiros was 42nd in 18:26, Eric Gardner 48th in 18:42, Chris Vera-Burgos 52nd in 18:56 and Michael Benkarski 63rd in 19:34.

"Having our Young Men win the national team title was an exceptional way to cap off the season," Ivon coach Dave Egner said.

"The fact that we were able to have seven out of our 14 athletes earn All-American

## RUNNERS

FROM PAGE B1

status demonstrates their full commitment to training and preparation. I could not be more proud of each and every member of Team Ivon."

The team also had two representatives in the Youth Division (ages 13-14). Five were required for team scoring, but Ben Jenkins and Brennan Giese performed well in individual efforts. Jenkins came in 38th in the shorter 4K race in 15:04 while Brennan Giese came in 70th in 16:23.

Following the successful race, which ended around 11 a.m. Saturday, the team celebrated with a trip at Disney World.

Chris Jackett is a freelance writer and former Novi News staff writer.



TERRY PRASAD

Novi High School alumni Josh Lumley, TJ Butler, Alex Prasad, Scott Wagner and Peter Andrews stand with Novi coach Robert Smith Nov. 14 after the five former Wildcats competed with the University of Michigan running club for the NIRCA National Championship. The team placed third overall.

# Wildcat alums run to collegiate honors

BY CHRIS JACKETT  
CORRESPONDENT

When high school athletes graduate, many don't transition into collegiate athletes or even continue recreationally. Many of Novi's boys cross country grads have made the transition just fine though.

Kenny MacDonough, a 2007 graduate, recently led a number of successful collegiate performances from former Wildcats. A junior on the Olivet Nazarene University (Ill.) team, MacDonough earned All-American honors Nov. 21 when he placed 20th of 323 runners at the NAA Cross Country Nationals in Vancouver, Wash. with an 8k time of 25 minutes and 42 seconds.

"The race was not exactly how I thought it would be. It was not hilly, but it was sloppy and wet from raining all week," MacDonough said, who was about 60th place after the first mile, which he ran in 4:53. "I just wasn't expecting that many people to go out that fast. I was also concerned with our team. We had never been on a course

that small. People were throwing elbows."

His time ended up leading the Tigers to an 11th place NAA finish among 32 teams. Silas Kisorio, a sophomore from Oklahoma Christian, won the overall race in 24:23.

"The All-American honor was great. I just wanted to get it to score as few points as I could so we could get a low team score," MacDonough said.

Although he was short of the 24:51 personal record he set in Wisconsin a few weeks prior, MacDonough said he couldn't have hoped for any better on the mucky Vancouver course and that he and his teammates left it all on the course. He also said the lessons he learned on Novi's cross country team continue to help him as a runner.

"Coach (Rob) Smith was a huge help just providing the base knowledge on how to run. He taught me what he calls 'battle and war.' If someone wins the battle up the hill, but you peak, you can win the war," MacDonough said. "I miss running at Novi a whole lot, but I love the

program here."

MacDonough said it was a huge weight off his shoulders to earn All-American honors his junior year, so he can focus on getting his team into the top 10 next fall. He hopes to have current Novi senior Mike Blaszczyk running by his side as a freshman next season.

"I like him personally because he runs like me, a nice and skinny long-distance runner," MacDonough said.

Other former Wildcats had success without leaving the state. Alex Prasad, another 2007 Novi alum, led a group of former Wildcats running with University of Michigan-Ann Arbor's club running team, called Mrun, at Eagle Crest Golf Course in Ypsilanti on Nov. 14. Prasad's time of 27:03 was third on the Mrun team and 23rd overall, earning him NIRCA second-team All-American honors.

"Considering my struggles this season with various injuries, I'm very pleased with my race. Couldn't





## Speaking of Sports

by Alex Prasad

### Moving On Up: Blaszczyk and Egner Take Their Show on the Road

March 14, 2010

It's not every day that a Novi High School sports program sends an athlete on to intercollegiate competition. But over the past week Novi Cross Country has had not one but two of its runner ink letters of intent to compete at the next level: Mike Blaszczyk and Dan Egner.

(Cronyism alert: as you know I've been intimately involved with Novi Cross Country for about seven years now, and further both Mike and Dan (left) are close friends. I don't think either of these realities has shrouded my judgment that this is a story worth telling however.)

Mike, the brother of Miss Michigan, Nicole Blaszczyk, will be headed to St. Francis, an NAIA school southwest of Chicago in Joliet. There he'll run for Drew Ludtke, long time director of Wolverine Cross Country Camp, which Novi attends annually during the last week of July. Mike thinks that played a key role in his recruitment. Familiarity with Ludtke made Mike feel "more at home" with St. Francis. It's worth noting that Mike's decision came down to two conference rivals, St. Francis and Olivet Nazarene University, in Bourbonnais, Illinois. He had a personal connection with UNO as well; Kenny MacDonough, Mike's former teammate at Novi, is currently the Tigers top runner.



Mike hopes to study marketing at St. Francis, and has a team first attitude towards his future at St. Francis. When I asked him what goals he had for his collegiate running career, the first thing he mentioned was getting his team to cross country nationals. Coming from such a strong high school program, it's no wonder Mike's goal is to replicate that team success at the next level.

Dan is headed just down M-14 to Eastern Michigan, and says proximity was the number one factor for him. Also, Dan is excited about the Animation Simulation and Gaming Major offered at Eastern. Mike ran cross country and track all four of his years at Novi, but Dan took a much more interesting path to becoming a collegiate runner. He played both basketball and baseball his freshman year, before making the unorthodox switch to cross country and track starting his sophomore year. If he could go back and redo high school, changing anything, he says he would have definitely ran his freshman year in both the fall and spring. Dan has been told that he'll redshirt his first year, and already has his eyes set on a spot on the varsity team of a program with 6 track national championships to its name.

While they took very different routes their present status as leaders of the Novi Cross Country and Track squads, there is one thing that both Mike and Dan agree on: the importance of Coach Smith in their running, and personal, lives. Mike "can't express how grateful" he is to have had Smith as a coach, and says he just calls him coach because "he's the only coach to me." Mike explains his commitment to running by saying running for Smith was "almost like trying to make your father proud...he gave me the inspiration to never give up." Dan too says Smith has made a huge impact in his life. "Smith really changed the way I see the world. He helped me learn how to work hard in everything I do. He is the best coach I have ever had in any sport."

In talking to Mike and Dan, I can see the immense value that sports have added to their life. The lessons they've learned from Coach Smith, and through running, now affect their daily non-athletic lives. I'd argue those are life lessons that may not have been taught without sports. I guess it's just another reason to be thankful we live in America, one of the only countries in the world that combine sports with school.