

Changes in Training Hope to Bring Harriers Success

by Tim Probst
Prep News Reporter

Many new faces dominate the top group of the 1992 SLUH cross country team. Because the team graduated seven of its top nine runners from last year, head coach Jim Linhares is looking for a new core group of lead runners.

But Linhares is quick to say "this is not a rebuilding season," asserting that "even though we may have to rebuild part of our team for the first month, this whole season is not a rebuilding time."

Linhares is nevertheless realistic in his outlook on the season. "We have to face up to the fact that we are behind on talent as compared to other years," he acknowledged. "But if people are willing to see themselves as varsity runners, we will go to state."

The biggest problem the team faces may be finding someone to replace All-State runner Sean Lock, who led the Harriers to an eighth place finish at the state meet last year.

Top runners this year seem to include senior Tim Probst, junior Ray Griner, and sophomore Kevin Myers. Also performing well are seniors Matt Dougherty, Gene Marshall, and Mike Russo, juniors Chris Jones and Jack Kennebeck, and sophomores Tom Flanagan and Pat Hamel.

"The freshmen, too, are very good looking, including four or five with experience in running," noted Linhares. Joel Brown, Ben Fanson, and Shannon Yates have looked strong in early practices.

The captains for this year's team are Tim Probst, Matt Dougherty, and Gene Marshall, who will be leading a squad of 64 runners, one of the largest teams in the state.

The trio seeks a group effort in trying to reach the state meet, for as Linhares pointed out, "we lost a lot of experienced seniors, [but] with a team effort, we have a chance to make state."

Linhares is very happy with his team's attitude. "The attitude of the team is great. There are a lot of guys excited to be out for the team."

Dougherty said, "Even with the recent heat spell, the team morale has been good and we're looking forward to a chance to compete."

In an effort to guide his team to another strong performance at the state meet, Linhares is planning some changes in training. He intends not to wait until the end of the season for speed workouts; they will be introduced in the first few weeks.

In addition, Linhares plans to run these workouts on grass rather than on concrete in order to minimize leg injuries that come from pounding

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on concrete. He will also be more conservative in workouts for those whose mileage coming into the season was low.

The last change is the emphasis on upper body strength developed by doing calisthenics before and after practice. This extra strength is especially helpful in the latter parts of the 3.1 mile race when fatigue sets in.

The team's first chance to compete will be on September 9 against Parkway South and Vianney.

The alignment for the varsity team for the first race (the top 7 runners qualify for varsity) will be determined this Saturday at the intrasquad meet in Forest Park.

Assisting Linhares with coaching this year will be Fr. Jim Goeke, S.J., Mr. Charles Merriott, and Mr. Tom Flanagan.

When asked about their outlook on the season, Goeke and Merriott said, "There will be a lot of feeling our way through the first three or four meets, then we will take off and surprise some people."