

Runners On Mark For Super Saturday

By Jim Thomas

Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

And after the seventh race, they'll rest. That's right, seven district and sectional high school cross country races are scheduled for Saturday at Jefferson Barracks Park.

No mere traffic cop will be sufficient to keep track of the goings on. Small-school host Herculanum will be aided by a staff of 51 workers serving as clerks, starters, referees, timers, typists, scorers, crowd monitors, parking officials... you name it.

"I think I have enough people working that I won't have to worry about administration," says Herculanum Coach Bud McMillin.

The Blackcats are playing host to five of the day's seven races: three district meets for Class 3A boys teams, a Class 1A-2A boys district and a Class 1A-3A girls district.

The folks in Class 4A will be on hand as well, with one boys and one girls sectional race scheduled.

The madness begins with the Class 4A boys sectional at 10 a.m. and ends with the Class 1A-3A girls district at 1:30 p.m. When the dust settles at about 2 p.m., 48 boys teams and 39 girls teams will have competed for berths in the Missouri championships Nov. 3 in Jefferson City.

What amounts to Super Saturday in cross country is not limited to Jefferson Barracks, either. All told, area teams in Missouri and Illinois will be involved in 16 district, sectional or regional races.

In Missouri, the boys meet has been divided into three classes for the first time. A first-ever state champion will be crowned in Class 1A-2A, which has Coach Robert Wills of Class 2A Crystal City practically jumping for joy.

"That's the only way we'd have a chance to do much," Wills said. "I wish they would have done it a couple years ago for us."

The Hornets, led by junior Tim Keller, may have state title aspirations, but they really don't know what to expect. The top 13 finishers in last year's Class 1A-3A meet were 3A teams.

"It's going to be fun in a way, because nobody knows anything about anybody else," Wills said.

That will not be the case in the new Class 3A meet, where everyone will be gunning for Herculanum. The Blackcats boys program is a dynasty in every sense of the word with, seven straight state titles in small-school competition. The Herculanum girls are working on a dynasty of their own with two straight state titles.

Although no one's betting against the Blackcats, the

Cross Country Poll

The high school cross country rankings by the Post-Dispatch board of coaches: Norm Armstrong, Belleville West; John Dean, Edwardsville; Ron Jorgenson, Prep North; Phil Kershner, Lutheran South; Dave Lehmann, St. Charles; Tom McCracken, Lindbergh; Ira Price, Lebanon; Jim Schmuck, Parkway South; Robert Wills, Crystal City; Bill Wirtz, Ritenour. First-place votes in parentheses; total poll points.

BOYS

1. Francis Howell (5)	94
2. Lincoln (5)	92
3. DeSmet	82
4. Lindbergh	59
5. Parkway West	53
6. Northwest-House Springs	47
7. Hazelwood Central	44
8. Parkway South	42
9. Hazelwood East	16
10. Herculanum	8

Second Ten

11. Eureka	7	(Tie) Lebanon	1
12. Granite City	3	(Tie) Lutheran S.	1
13. Belleville West	2	(Tie) SLUH	1
14. (Tie) Wentzville	1	(Tie) Principia	1
(Tie) Fox	1	(Tie) E. St. Louis	1

GIRLS

1. Lindbergh (9)	99
2. Lincoln (1)	89
3. Lafayette	78
4. Francis Howell	62
5. Eureka	61
6. Hazelwood Central	44
7. Herculanum	38
8. Granite City	28
9. Parkway South	26
10. McCluer	13

Second Ten

11. Kirkwood	9	(Tie) De Soto	1
12. (Tie) Hazel. W.	1	(Tie) Festus	1
(Tie) O'Fallon	1	(Tie) Lutheran S.	1
(Tie) Bell. West	1	(Tie) Collinsville	1
(Tie) St. Dominic	1	(Tie) Parkway C.	1

"I would say if someone was going to do it, this would be the year," said one area coach. But the same coach also noted: "They always have a way of pulling it out."

Herculanum lost to Wentzville's boys by one point in last weekend's Clayton Invitational but ran without three of its top six runners. First-year Coach Bud McMillin rested brothers Mike and Eric Foster, normally the team's top two runners, and No. 6 runner Frank Hosselkus.

In the girls division, McMillin rested Lesley Dugan and Lisa Portell at Clayton. Dugan was injured during the track season last spring and has been slow to rebound this fall.

McMillin said things were looking good for both his boys and girls teams. "Everybody is basically healthy. Attitude is extremely good," he said. "They run and act like winners — which they are. If anybody's going to count us out, I think they're counting us out too early."

COMPLETE LIST of sites and teams competing in Saturday's