

Heinle has made great strides

Brighton senior overcomes knee injury to win cross country title

By LEO ROTH
Times-Union

Brighton High's Tim Heinle is the youngest of cardiologist Dr. Robert Heinle's six sons. But he doesn't take to the sport of cross country because his father is in the business of helping hearts.

"All of my brothers have run cross country or track," Tim says. "It's not something we do for health reasons. We do it for the competition."

Ah, the competition. Tim Heinle's heart and legs are into doing their best, which means, more times than not, finishing first.

Capping a high school career that had modest beginnings, Heinle will compete in Saturday's state meet at Saratoga State Park as Section 5's top individual qualifier in the Class A (large school) race.

Heinle won last week's Section 5 Class AA title, ahead of Churchville-Chili's Bob King, Irondequoit's Terry Dutton and Brighton teammate Phil Levinson, the other individual state qualifiers.

Although Heinle finished first, Brighton lost the team title to neighborhood rival McQuaid by seven points, the second year in a row the Barons have battled the Knights to the wire only to fall short.

"It's too bad we lost," Heinle says. "I'd trade that individual title in a second for the team trophy. We put two runners in the top four. It's amazing we didn't win. But you have to give McQuaid credit."

You have to give Heinle credit for his perseverance.

"So often I say to myself 'Why am I running cross country?'" Heinle says. "But it's so much easier being on a good team. When I look back on my sophomore year, I wonder why I ever stood with it."

As a sophomore, he placed 56th in the Monroe County Coaches Invitational in a time

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

of 17:34. Last year he was seventh in 16:11.9. This year, he was first in 15:51.4.

His progress in the sectional meet is similar — sophomore year, 72nd (18:08), last year, fifth (17:17), this year, first (16:15).

"I've paid my dues," says Heinle, who began running in the seventh grade. "I know what's it like to be way far back in a race. But as the team got better here, I got better."

Mix talented workout partners, natural ability and a lot of heart and you have Tim Heinle.

"He has made himself what he is because he dedicates himself," Brighton Coach Art Nelson says. "In a race, the best way to describe him is gutsy. He never gives up."

That factor makes Heinle the area's most consistent performer. He's known for excelling on hills and narrow parts of courses, using his 5-10, 115-pound frame to his advantage.

"He never runs a bad race," McQuaid Coach Bob Bradley says. "He's a very smart runner who paces himself well . . . In the sectionals, he moved very well in the tough part of the course and when King challenged, he put a move on him and won the race right there. He's very impressive."

What has Heinle's closest friends — his teammates — buzzing is the fact Heinle spent the summer on crutches. Last June, he injured knee ligaments "horsing around in chemistry lab," and underwent arthroscopic surgery. He couldn't run until early August. A month and a half later, he finished second in the Newark Invitational.

"That was an amazing comeback," Levinson says. "He doesn't get enough credit for it. I had doubts he would be back. We all had doubts about the team."

"Tim, he's the backbone. I look up to him. In

the sectionals, I just wanted to stay with him."

Heinle, an A-average student, plans to run cross country and track in college, possibly at a Division I school. He holds Brighton's 3,200 meter record (9:32.0). As for this weekend, a top-10 finish is his goal.

"I'm still thinking of the team," Heinle says. "We were ranked No. 1 in the state and we got beat. We want to have a good representation down there."

It's practically guaranteed.

□ **NOTES** — McQuaid is a favorite to capture the Class A team title. Its main competition is Section 9's Monroe-Woodbury, ranked No. 1 in the state, and Section 11's William Floyd, No. 10.

"I think we have a good shot to win it," says Bradley, whose team is No. 3. "I've thought that all year."

Chris Lyboldt, Scott Patterson, Rob Smille, Steve Rapp and Dave Warth are the Knights' top five.

Monroe-Woodbury is led by junior sensation John Troutman. Individually, Williamsville North senior Ron Markezich, who won the state title as a sophomore, is the favorite. He held the course record at Saratoga (15:14) until Kerry Boyle of Albany's Christian Brothers Academy broke it this year (15:04).

□ **HILTON** WILL be Section 5's representative in the Class B meet. Overlooked during the McQuaid-Brighton battle was the Cadets' impressive 38-49 victory over defending champ Victor in the Class A sectional race.

It was Coach Jim Shoemaker's first sectional title in his three years as coach, and first sectional title of any kind for a Hilton boys' team in 25 years. Presenting Shoemaker with the Section 5 trophy was Richard Kishlar, Shoemaker's coach at Greece Arcadia. During Shoemaker's junior and senior years ('74, '75), the Titans were sectional and state champions.

"I had a pretty good teacher," says Shoemaker, whose dual record is 45-10. "He taught me a lot about running but more about working with kids."

Hilton's top man is senior Al Mullan, last weekend's overall champ. The Cadets' other top scorers are sophomore Ray Eichmann, junior Doug Staunton and seniors Jeff Merkle and Tim Wallace.

The individual qualifiers are Dansville's Dave Redding, Athena's Mike Rush and Victor's Ben Wiley and Scott Knapp.

□ **Sodus**, led by Xavier Olicherrieta and Chris Osborne, will compete in the Class C race.