

Cross Country Rolls to State, Sectional Titles

by Dale Ladd "Lance Joke"

Going into the Section V Championships at Stuart Park in Newark, McQuaid's harriers were expecting no less than a repeat performance of last year's victory. The team leader, junior Adam Reitz, was anticipating an individual title as well.

When the Knights went head-to-head with the Section's best, over a muddy course and in near-freezing temperatures, both expectations were fulfilled. Reitz won the race in 16:47, leading McQuaid to the all-time best score in the history of the Sectional meet. In the team race, Fairport, ranked 2nd in the Section, took the race out fast, hoping to pull off the upset.

The task proved over their heads as they soon faded to 3rd place behind Webster. Meanwhile, in the race for the individual title, Reitz received a strong challenge from junior

teammate Dan Lesser. After dueling back and forth for the first 2-1/2 miles, Reitz proved stronger and pulled away as Lesser finished 2nd in 16:59.

The true triumph for the Knights came for the entire team, though. Senior Eric Garsin avenged his performance at last year's meet, coming up with a great effort to finish 3rd behind Reitz and Lesser. Besides taking this 1-2-3 sweep, all of McQuaid's scorers piled into the Top 10 of the field of over 80.

Senior co-captain, Tim Kelley and fellow senior Matt Bunce completed the Knights' record-breaking scoring group, taking 6th and 8th, respectively. The other captain, senior Jesse Yeager provided strong backup, powering his way through the mud to take 20th. Junior track stand-out Shawn Watts completed McQuaid's championship team, finishing 39th. Now, the Knights would advance to the State meet where they would defend their #1 ranking in a showdown against Sectional champions from around the state.

Coming off their best performance of the year in hammering their Sectional foes, the team was hoping to improve further at States, held in Sunken Meadows Park on Long Island. But this was not to be.

McQuaid's usual 1-2 punch of Lesser and Reitz were surpassed by the duo of Kelley and Garsin. Kelley came through with one of his best performances of all time, finishing 15th as McQuaid's first man in a field packed with the best teams and individuals in the state. Reitz was close behind, finishing 17th. Eric Garsin and Dan Lesser took 22nd and 30th overall. Matt Bunce followed this tightly packed group to complete the scoring in 74th place in a field of over 150 of the state's best athletes. Jesse Yeager

again ran strongly as the team's 6th man to take 87th. After the race, the Knights were uncertain if their sub-par performance had been good enough for the win. It appeared that it was between McQuaid and Suffern of Section I. But Kelley's clutch race had indeed sparked the Knights to a 26-point victory. Years of hard work had rewarded McQuaid with a New York State Class A Championship, only the third ever in school history (Cross Country '84; Basketball '88).

But the focus of the season had been on the federation Meet. One week later, McQuaid met all the best teams from the State meet's three divisions, plus the 2nd and 3rd ranked teams from New York City, St. Anthony's and Bishop Ford. There were over 250 runners in this crowded field of 24 teams and in the 1/2 mile, Reitz was tripped up and never able to regain position. Garsin, though, rose to the occasion, finishing 15th in the team scoring. Lesser came up with a solid race and took 20th as the team's second man. In the latter phases of the race, Reitz moved well and managed a 30th place finish. Kelley and Bunce rounded out the scoring in 35th and 77th places. Yeager ran well to an 83rd place finish. Team wise, McQuaid placed 5th, despite an anemic performance. St. Anthony's won with 99 points and Bishop Ford was 2nd with 155.

After the race, Coach Bob Bradley remarked, "I know this was a great disappointment for our guys. St. Anthony's is a very strong team, and they just came up with a super performance." in spite of Federations, the team had a great year. In compiling eight invitational wins, including the State meet and Sectionals, they proved to be one of the greatest athletic teams that McQuaid has ever seen.