

LESSER SECOND, MCQUAID THIRD
AT AUBURN INVITATIONAL

Running for the first time as a 7-man unit, McQuaid Jesuit's varsity cross-country team posted a third place finish and its top runner Dan Lesser ran a record-breaking second to highlight the Knights performances at Saturday's Auburn Invitational.

"We put our five scorers into the top third of the field, which is very encouraging," said coach Bob Bradley. "Now we want to tighten up the group and get it closer to Dan."

Lesser, one of 4 men who broke the existing course record of 15:48 for the 3-mile Auburn course, was over a minute ahead of McQuaid's second man, soph Jeff Clark, who placed 13th in 16:39. Then came juniors Pat Bernal (22) and Mike Perrotta (28) and senior Ian Sohn (32) to complete the Knights' 97-point total. Auburn won the race with 72, followed by Horseheads with 84.

"It'll take our new varsity men a few meets to get used to looking for one another and helping one another out during the race," said Bradley, "but now they know they have the makings of a real good group team."

Lesser's being so far ahead of McQuaid's second runner was a tribute to the tremendous individual race he waged with East Syracuse-Minoa's Tim Englehardt over the last half of the race. Lesser bided his time in the early stages, hitting the mile mark in 6th place. When the field emerged from the trials into the open, though, he had taken the lead. Englehardt, a record breaker a week earlier, had also broken away from the pack, and the two raced each other the rest of the way. The ES-M junior made his winning move about 250 meters from home and won going away in a new course record of 15:24. Lesser's 15:31 was a PR for 3 miles and 46 seconds better than his '91 race at Auburn when he finished eighth.

In the J.V. race at Auburn, sophomore Brendan Hogan led the Knights in his first race at that distance, placing 9th in 18:07. McQuaid's scoring group of Andy Robertson (12), Rob Pacer (14), Kevin Chesterton (17), and Brian Beecher (30) was good enough for a second-place trophy behind Horseheads. Sophs Tim Liebert and Kieran Chaudhry provided strong back-up in 36th and 38th places among the 147 finishers.

Over half of McQuaid's junior high runners opened their season in the first race of the day and produced a team score of 201 points, good for 7th among 11 complete teams. Freshman John Sullivan led the youngest of the Knights with a second-place finish, marred by his missing a turn while leading in the final stages of the 1.6 course. Sullivan's time of 9:08 was 48 seconds better than a year ago.

The Knights' next 6 runners were Shane Woityra (17), Steve Jones (48), Colin Haire (60), Brian Burrows (74), Jeff DiPasquale (76) and J.C. Rondash (77). 142 runners finished.

This weekend will find McQuaid's entire squad at the Newark Invitational in Stuart Park, the site of the state meet in November. A number of out-of-area schools are expected to make the competition the toughest in the meet's history.