

A sophomore running his first varsity race made the difference in McQuaid Jesuit's cross-country opener last Saturday as the Knights edged Christian Brothers Academy of Syracuse, 19-21, in a six-team field at the Liverpool Invitational.

McQuaid, holding a 13-14 lead over the Brothers going into the third and last varsity flight, needed to hold their two CBA rivals even to insure their victory. Sanjay Narayan came through with a strong front-running performance to win the 3.4-mile race in 19:36, and senior Brendan Hogan, still sub-par after a summer virus, hung on to fifth. That gave the Knights six points, and the best the Brothers could do was a 3-4 for seven.

"It was a bit like the old days when CBA was the perennial power in Section Three," said McQuaid's Bob Bradley, who is into his 34th year of coaching. "I didn't think they would be that deep beyond the first flight, but they surprised us."

In that first flight, McQuaid senior tri-captain Jeff Clark got his season off to an impressive start by running away from the field and winning by over a hundred yards against CBA's Jason Meany and Liverpool's Jeff Cook, two of the top runners in Section Three. Meany, a 4:28 miler as a freshman, let Clark get away at the start and never mounted a challenge. Clark's winning time of 17:39 over the 3.4 mile course is one of the fastest recorded by a McQuaid man in the meet's 11 years.

Clark's fellow tri-captain, Steve Shaw, ran a solid race to take sixth in the same flight, improving on his '94 time by almost two minutes. Just as impressive was senior Brian Beecher, who moved to the lead of the second flight after the first mile, and won going away in a time that was 80 seconds faster than last year. Junior John Sullivan finished fifth, beating his CBA counterpart.

McQuaid's junior varsity team also had an winning debut, posting scores of 1-3-5 and 1-2-3 in its two flights to defeat runner-up Henninger by 12 points. Soph Matt Davin won his first race at the longer distance and classmate Shane Woityra was fifth. Junior Joe Wiltberger was a strong third. In the second flight, it was a McQuaid sweep up front, with Jim Whitcomb, Ben Zyla, Tim Liebert, and Tim Perrotta taking top four.

This weekend, McQuaid's Varsity-1 will travel to Corning for the Chenango Valley Invitational, transplanted this year from Binghamton to Corning Community College, which will be the site of this year's state meet. The balance of the Knights' 30-man squad will be at the Spencerport Invitational with assistant coach Tony Trama.