

HIGH SCHOOLS

Have a story idea?

Call Jeff DiVeronica at 258-2760
or Tom Batzold at 258-2300

DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE, ROCHESTER, N.Y., FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1996 **5D**

5,500 expected for McQuaid Invitational

32nd annual race at Genesee Valley

By JEFF DiVERONICA
STAFF WRITER

A measly 12 teams ran in the first McQuaid Invitational in 1965. About 220 are expected for the 32nd annual race tomorrow, transforming Genesee Valley Park into a sea of more than 5,500 runners.

Why do some of the best high school teams in the Northeast and Canada travel hundreds of miles to Rochester for this race?

"I think the coaches like the competitive mix," said McQuaid cross country coach Bob Bradley, the meet's longtime director. "They know they'll run against top teams from other areas that they won't see again. It's kind of a chance to see

what the rest of the cross country world is doing."

But Bradley thinks there are other reasons a team like Bishop Guertin, a Catholic school in Nashua, N.H., will make the nine-hour drive for an eighth straight year.

"Any time you have a meet that runs for seven hours, if it's dragging people notice," Bradley said. "But the course is laid out so we never have to wait for stragglers. There's not a minute when there's not a runner on the course."

The meet is impeccably organized by Bradley and McQuaid boosters, and the 3.0-mile course is also great for spectators.

"You can see the whole race," Bradley said. "A lot of these courses, the runners disappear into the woods and then you see them only the last 300-400 yards."

Last year the boys and girls

course records were broken. Steve Lawrence of East Northumberland, Ontario finished in 14:52 and Andrea Johnson of Lawrence Park, Toronto came in at 17:22.

"A lot of people say it's a flat course, but we call it deceptively difficult," Bradley said. "If you're running fast over a course of uphill your legs let you know it at the end of the race."

The Canadian teams look strong. The defending AAA division boys champion St. Michael's of Toronto is back. St. Michael's Sam Dorri has the best time (15:10) of any returning runner. New York City's Chaminade, another team in the large-school division, is ranked first in the state.

Other top large-school teams from Section IV (Ithaca, state No. 10), Section III (Fayetteville-Manlius, No. 5), Section VI (West Seneca East) and Section II (Burnt Hills,

No. 2 in Class B) are competing.

"On paper it looks like the toughest one we've had," Bradley said.

Andy Carling of Spencer Van Etten (IV) is one of the top runners in A, the small-school division and Beaver River (III) is a top team. Penfield senior Jay Slowik and Victor's Vince Sherry could stage the top local duel. They compete in different class races during the regular season but will be in the AA boys race at 1:30 p.m.

Section III's F-M and Auburn, ranked second and fourth in the state, respectively, are favored in the girls large-school (AA) division. Canandaigua, the top-ranked team in Section V, should be strong, but the Braves are without their top runner, Gia Canali, who is injured. Victor is ranked No. 2 in the state in Class B. The Blue Devils, along with Mercy and Waterloo, are in the A division. □

McQuaid Invitational

Overview: More than 220 teams and 5,500 runners will challenge the 3-mile course at Genesee Valley Park course.

Schedule: The first of 23 races begins at 9:15 a.m. The first varsity race starts at 9:45. There are 12 varsity events and 11 races for junior-varsity, sophomore and junior-high runners. The top high school runners won't hit the course until after noon.

Meet history: This is the 32nd annual McQuaid Invitational, which traditionally draws the top teams from the state and around the Northeast, including Canada. The school that has traveled the farthest is Nebraska's Creighton Prep, which came twice but hasn't made the trip since 1990.