You have to experience it to understand what a special running event the McQuaid Invitational is. One visiting coach aptly referred to it as "the glory of the sport." When Bob Bradley started it in 1965 as a replacement for the Brighton Invitational, only 12 teams lined up for Terry Foley's starting gun.

Last year the meet attracted over 210 schools and 5400 runners from six states and Canada and ranks as one of the largest in the nation. It takes 23 races and 7 hours of non-stop competition to handle the annual invasion of Genesee Valley Park. One race is still finishing as the next group gallops off. And, as we have witnessed in some years, the atmosphere is enhanced by the unpredictability of Rochester's weather.

While the coaches and runners put a lot of hours into the preparations, on race day they're joined by parents, faculty, students, alumni, and just plain cross-country buffs. All of them combine to make the meet the showcase that it has become. It is a festival as much as a competition.