

2008 Norm Bray invitational...

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**NORM BRAY INVITATIONAL**

# Perrysburg edges Ross boys

Woomore girls finish second in Division II-III

By JEFF ARENZ  
Sports Writer

FREMONT — If the Norm Bray Invitational can be used as a predictor of the 2008 cross country season, the Fremont Ross boys are going to have a solid squad.

On Saturday at Walsh Park, Perrysburg narrowly escaped with the Division I boys team championship 50-58 over the Little Giants, who were in a neck-and-



THE FREMONT ROSS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNERS begin the Division I girls race at Norm Bray Invitational on Saturday at Walsh Park.

neck battle with the Yellow Jackets to the finish line.

The Norm Bray Invita-

tional, named in honor of Ross's former cross country and track and field

coach, has been used by many schools as the cross country season's kickoff event since the mid-1990s, according to Little Giants athletic director Art Bucci.

"This event started out with 10 teams about 13 years ago," he said. "Now, it's grown to more than 30 teams."

Ross and Perrysburg combined to have eight of the top 15 individual finishers on Saturday.

Kristopher Esparza (second, 17:58.35), Andy Leemaster (third, 18:02.34), Ricky Ramirez (eighth,

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## BRAY INVITE: Season now open

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18:32.06) and Michael Yuhas (14th, 18:40.99) were the Little Giants who were among that group. Evan Lepolt (fourth, 18:06.58), Tyler Swartz (seventh, 18:23.13), Wyatt Hoch (10th, 18:34.32) and Adam Vaughn (13th, 18:39.29) were the Yellow Jackets among the top 15.

Esparza was about 35 seconds off the pace of Division I boys individual champion Paul Klocinski, of Toledo Whitmer (17:22.73).

"I got really dehydrated and died a little during the second lap. I didn't have enough water," Esparza said. "I was third last year in 18:03 and, now, I finished second in the 17:50s. I think I could have done better, but "Butt-Buster Hill" lived up to its reputation."

Leemaster credited summer workouts for the 88 seconds he knocked off his 2007 time.

"Our training this summer helps us get to this level," Leemaster said. "I ran a 19:30 here last year and I ran an 18:02 this year. I run about five times a week, maybe five miles a day with at least two days rest. It's kinda boring because you're running by yourself. But, this is what we do it for."

Esparza has taken a new approach this season.

"Last year, I over-trained too much — about 60 miles a week — and I didn't peak at the right time during the season," Esparza said. "I didn't want to do that this season."

Ross coach Kathy was happy with the early results.

"I think the boys are going to be pretty consistent this year because they're pretty tough," Esposito said. "My top four (runners) are really nice and they run together really well. Any of them could be a No. 1 runner for us. And even the Nos. 5-7 runners are right there. For preseason, this is really good."

But the difference in the Division I boys race came in the those upper slots. Ryan Chimney (16th, 19:04.86) and Quin Adams (17th, 19:06.13) finished just outside of the top 15 for Perrysburg, while Alex Stringham (21st, 19:22.00) barely missed the top 20. The final three Ross runners — Alex House (20:28.12), Luis Franco (20:46.35) and Brian Hoelze (21:59.00) — were 31st, 34th and 43rd, respectively.

Alexander (19th, 18:47.92) and Nathan Alexander (28th, 19:20.28) lifted the Stockadres to a third-place effort. The top SJCC finisher was Josh Schiets, who was 21st in 18:51.26.

### Division I Girls

No prior cross country experience was not a problem for Kaitlyn Llewellyn, of Perrysburg, who edged Ashley Aberl, of Toledo Notre Dame, by 0.25 seconds (20:02.03-20:02.28) for the Division I girls individual championship.

"I stuck with what I had planned. That was to stay with the top girl and kick it in at the end. It worked out well," said Llewellyn, who as a sophomore was competing for the first time in a varsity cross country race. Last spring, she participated for the Yellow Jackets in the 1,600 and 3,200 runs and 3,200 relay in track and field.

Toledo Notre Dame overcame Perrysburg 27-68 for the Division II-III girls team championship. With 167 points, Fremont Ross finished seventh.

The Little Giants' Jessica Soule (17th, 22:15.39) and Lisa Carter (28th, 23:43.02) were among the top 30 finishers. Ross's Paige Wiechman (31st, 24:01.58) narrowly missed a top 30 performance.

### Division II-III Girls

Tiffin Columbian secured the Division II-III girls team championship 75-82 over Woodmore despite not having one runner finish among the top 10. Bailey Ulinski (second, 20:16.62), Lacy Nagy (third, 20:35.53) and Lynne Schroeder (11th, 21:12.87) paced the Wildcats with top 15 placings.

"With Bailey Ulinski, Lacy Nagy and Lynne Schroeder, they're all very good runner who push each other in practice every day," Woodmore coach Mike Morena said. "They are all seasoned runners, but today was a good day for them, especially because of the heat. This is the type of course that's going to challenge them because there are not many hills on the course we practice on."

As Columbian and Woodmore held the top two team spots, Maumee was third (96 points) and Lakota ended up fourth (131). Other area schools in the field were Oak Harbor and Old Fort, which tied for fifth with 141 points, Gibsonburg (11th, 257), SJCC (12th, 304), and Clyde (13th, 368).

Alexa Stults, of Old Fort, who is a two-time state qualifier, was the Division II-III

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