

Fremont Ross junior Louis Guardiola finished 44th at 16 minutes, 4.33 seconds Saturday in the Division I boys state cross country race.

Bellevue senior Ericka Hosang was 68th (19:59.46) in the Division II girls race.

# Guardiola makes a major meet

By Chris Graber

News-Messenger correspondent

**Fremont** — Ross standout Louis Guardiola emerged this fall as one of Ohio's elite cross country runners and on Saturday the junior will compete at the 2012 Foot Locker Midwest Regional Meet at Wisconsin Parkside in Kenosha, Wisc.

If Guardiola places among the Top 10, he will compete at the Foot Locker National Championships on Dec. 10 at Balboa Park in San Diego.

"Every time Lou has been in

a big meet this season, he stepped up and ran a great race," said Little Giants coach John Elder. "I don't think this race will be any different.

"I'm excited for track coming up and when it's all said and done, I think he could own every distance record at Ross."

To qualify for the regional meet, a high school athlete must have ran at least 16 minutes, 20 seconds or faster during the 2012 cross country season.

"I have a lot of nervous energy and excitement," Guardiola

said. "It's questionable as to whether I can (make it the national meet), but if I run by my race plan, I believe I can make it."

Guardiola accomplished the qualifying feat with a performance at 16:00 on Sept. 1 in a first place finish at the Chris Green Invitational at Osborn Park in Sandusky. On Oct. 13, he set the Little Giants record at 15:42.9 at the Three Rivers Athletic Conference Championships, hosted by Findlay at Sycamore Springs Golf Course.

"From sophomore to junior

year, I made a lot of progression," Guardiola said. "If you put the hard work in, you can do anything."

Despite such a successful year, the junior wanted to finish better at the OHSA Div. I State Championships on Nov. 3. He finished 44<sup>th</sup> at 16:04.33.

"I could have done much better, but I waited too long to move up (at the state meet)," Guardiola said. The Foot Locker Regional Meet "will be an experience that not many other

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# Guardiola

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runners get to experience.”

The regional meet will consist of athletes from Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin and U.S. citizens in Overseas Military Installation.

Guardiola's mother Judy Guardiola said she is proud that her son will get the opportunity to compete in the meet.

“He was 8 years old when he started running and he has been so dedicated and determined,” she said. “It is nice to see your children do well and it has been really nice to see how the community and businesses have supported him.

“He has received cards in

the mail of encouragement and it's nice to see people take the time to write little notes.”

In 2011, 13 athletes from Ohio competed at the meet and one advanced to the national meet.

On Saturday, Guardiola will be joined by the following athletes from Ohio: Versailles senior Samuel Praker, the Div. I state champion at 15:16; St. Thomas Aquinas senior Cory Glines, third in Div. III at 15:20; Chardon junior Nick Elswick, fourth at the Div. I at 15:24; Independence senior Kyle Polman, third in Div. III at 15:24; and Boardman junior Mark Hadley, sixth in Div. I at 15:29.

Guardiola “is a student of running, studies running and wants to be a great runner,” Coach Elder said. “Lou is a great leader by example and is still growing and maturing.”

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