

1996 State meet...

Ross runners ready for state



THESE FEET carried Lindsay Frontz, left, and Alison Kelly to the state cross country championship Saturday at Scioto Downs in Columbus.

News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison

Frontz, Kelly represent Little Giants Saturday in Columbus

By MICHAEL BOSI
Staff writer

When Fremont Ross's Lindsay Frontz and Alison Kelly get on the bus to Columbus for Saturday's state girls cross country championship meet, they won't be thinking about all they've accomplished this season. They won't consider that they'll be running with the best in the state. And they won't consider what they have to do to crack the All-Ohio team. Or even that perhaps a scout from their future college will be watching them.

None of that mind-boggling mayhem will clutter their minds. Instead, they'll be focused on one thing and one thing only:

"Going to the mall," Kelly conceded.

Like true 16-year olds, Kelly, a junior, and her sophomore teammate Frontz might shop 'til they drop, but they've certainly earned this trip to Scioto Downs. Even if it was only by the skin of their teeth.

At last week's Division I regional meet at Tiffin, Frontz finished 14th in 19:48 and Kelly claimed the 15th and final qualifying spot two seconds later.

"Towards the end, when I was in 16th place, I thought about (states)," Kelly said after a wind-whipped practice Wednesday at Walsh Park. "If I passed the girl then I would go, and if I didn't then I would stay home. And I wanted to go."

While they even chugged an extra half-mile or so in hurricane-like conditions Wednesday, Kelly and Frontz can afford a *laissez-faire* attitude.

They set their goals in 1996. They came. They saw. And they conquered.

As the Little Giants went undefeated in the Great Lakes dual-meet season before taking the league championship, Frontz and Kelly were always in a top-three mix, along with Kristyn Warner, who finished 17th at regionals.

After a pep rally sends them off Friday morning, they'll face competition at Scioto Downs that routinely finishes in sub-19-minute times, while they're more accustomed to the 19:40

range.

"I think when Alison and Lindsay go down, to finish in the top 10 will be a huge goal," coach Cathy Esposito said. "This field's going to be pretty tough."

A flatter course than what they're used to training on at Walsh Park may work to their advantage, but they still need to concentrate only on themselves.

"You don't think about times, you just run as fast as you can and whatever you get is what you get," said Kelly. "I just want to go out really hard and that's about it. I know everybody else will be."

Other than staying together, there is no high-tech game plan

If you go

Take Ohio 53 to Upper Sandusky, and pick up Ohio 23 South. Follow 23 into Columbus, where it will become High Street. About three miles south of Columbus is Scioto Downs, located at 1600 High Street.

See ROSS DUO, B2

Ross duo to run at state

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or X's and O's for them to worry about, however.

"It's better to see a teammate than someone else," Frontz said. "It's better to know the person you're running with. You know how they run."

She added, "I just want to try to do my best."

Just as excited is Esposito, who will watch her first runner other than Jami Toeppe run at Columbus.

"In Division I, it's jam-packed and people are there to see the big kids run," said the coach, who thought her entire team had a legitimate shot at qualifying out of regionals. "It is an honor too for them to go there and represent Fremont Ross."

Certainly, Toeppe's runner-up finish last year provided a valuable learning experience for this year's entrants.

"They need to go out hard," Esposito said. "Some of Jami's mistakes was that she didn't go out hard and she saved too much. They need to understand there's

no saving it for the end. Last year, Jami saved too much for the end."

Given their sterling season, Esposito sees this final week of workouts — even with the miserable weather — as a reward to Kelly and Frontz.

"That's exactly how I feel," she said. "We've accomplished all the goals we wanted to this year. Anything they do now is just a bonus. It's time to have fun. Who cares how they do?"

Well, Kelly and Frontz sure care.

"It's a pretty big accomplishment," Frontz said.

They've trained all week just like the regular season (although their teammates have found it more comfy to drop off the pace a bit sooner). But the work can only get so far before they'll have to do it for real one more time.

"There's not much you can do to prepare, besides mentally," said Esposito. "Anything you do isn't going to make them better runners. States week in cross country is like a celebration."

And a shopping trip, too.

Local runners try, try again at state



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison
JON BURROUGHS of Fremont St. Joe at the Norm Bray Invitational Aug. 31 at Walsh Trails.



News-Messenger/Andrew Morrison
JEREMIAH SMITH of Fremont Ross, shown running at the Norm Bray Invitational.

St. Joe's Burroughs makes second trip in four years

By **MICHAEL BOSI**
Staff writer

Fremont St. Joseph Central Catholic's Jon Burroughs inched into the Division III boys cross country state finals by the narrowest of margins.

After qualifying with a 15th-place finish at last week's regionals in Tiffin, Burroughs hopes that adrenaline will carry him for more than the first mile Saturday at Scioto Downs.

In analyzing of his own running style Wednesday, the Crimson Streak senior said he often tires in the second mile. That won't do if he wants to accomplish his

goal, which is to shave nearly half a minute off his finish as a sophomore at states, the last time he earned a trip to Columbus.

"I need to cut my time off the last half mile for sure," said Burroughs, last week's News-Messenger Athlete of the Week. "My first mile is mostly on adrenaline and by the second mile I'm usually tired. Usually the last mile depends on how I feel."

Burroughs and coach Gary Logsdon are eyeballing a top-25 finish this weekend. Burroughs finished 37th in 17:08 in 1994.

See **BURROUGHS**, B2

State meet

The following area runners will compete at Saturday's state cross country championships at Scioto Downs in Columbus:

Div. III Boys,
11:05 a.m.

Jon Burroughs,
Fremont St. Joe

Div. I Boys,
12:35 p.m.

Jeremiah Smith,
Fremont Ross

Div. III Girls,
1:20 p.m.

Woodmore team

Div. I Girls,
2:50 p.m.

Lindsay Frontz and
Alison Kelly,

Fremont Ross

Little Giants' Smith hopes third appearance is charm

By **MICHAEL BOSI**
Staff writer

This state final stuff is becoming old hat for Fremont Ross's Jeremiah Smith. But he wouldn't mind coming home with a championship crown.

"It still has its little special feeling to it," said Smith, who will make his third straight appearance in the Division I boys cross country state meet at Columbus' Scioto Downs Saturday.

As a sophomore, Smith finished 24th. Last year he was 16th to earn his second All-Ohio honor.

In an effort to crack the top 10 this year, Smith and Ross coach

John Elder emphasized quality not quantity in this week's workouts.

"It's been pretty much the same old stuff, but maybe a little more relaxed than normal," said Smith. "We cut back a little bit, but not too much."

"On Mondays, we always run what I call a long, hard workout," said Elder Wednesday night. "We ran a thousand-meter course, and we ran about four repeats about two minutes between each one. On Tuesday we went out and ran and (Wednesday) we ran 400's,

See **SMITH**, B2

Smith to run at state a 3rd time

Continued from B1

eight of them. (Thursday) we'll run easy and Friday we'll run easy. We'll go down and check out the course and see what the footing's like and see if there's any changes."

The weather has also cooperated with Smith this week. "It could be a lot worse and I could be sick or something but I've managed to stay healthy this week. Last week (for regionals), I didn't feel that great," Smith said.

With Smith's physical condition unquestionably top-notch, Elder wants that to be the case with his attitude as well.

"He's always had good preparation, but now that he's a senior, seniors for the most part always have a different attitude," said Elder. "He's much more confident and he's been as focused and has prepared as always, but his confidence has increased."

Runners take different approaches

to every meet, and Smith will make an effort not to burn his fuel too early on Saturday.

"(Elder) just wants me to relax at the beginning — and it's quite a big rush — but to lay back for the first mile and yet to stay in contact with everyone else," Smith said.

"Last year that's what I did and I did OK, and the people we've watched run down there, they've done the exact same thing. It works for them and hopefully it will for me."

Smith is coming off a 16:13 at last week's regionals and a 16:33 at districts.

He had a 16:14 Oct. 12 at the Great Lakes League meet. He's looking to top his personal best (16:09) Saturday.

"That's his personal goal," Elder said. "He can definitely do that. If he can make the same jump up like he did the previous year, he'll be in the top 10."

It would be a perfect 10.

Ross's Frontz, Kelly finish 28th, 81st in state cross country

By MARK GRIFFIN
Staff writer

COLUMBUS — Any hopes Fremont Ross teammates Lindsay Frontz and Alison Kelly had of running together quickly disappeared Saturday at the 19th annual girls state cross country meet at Scioto Downs.

"I didn't even see her to begin with," said Frontz, a sophomore.

Frontz and Kelly, a junior, appearing in their first state meet, placed 28th and 81st, respectively, in the Division I girls race. Frontz finished in 19 minutes, 46 seconds and Kelly in 20:38.

"I thought it was pretty good," Frontz said of her performance.

"My time wasn't that great, but I felt pretty good. She (Ross coach Cathy Esposito) wanted me in the 18s, but I wanted in the low 19:20s or something like that.

"I wasn't expecting top 30. It's a pretty tough course."

Said Esposito: "Anything in the top 30 is pretty awesome. This is their first year, and just getting past the nerves of being down here was enough for them.

"This meet's all about experience, and that's something they don't have down here yet. They went out fast and went out real

hard. They did a fine job for their first time down here."

Jen Wollman, a junior from Alliance, won the meet in 18:09.3.

Kelly was involved in a collision that included several runners early in the race. The mishap contributed to her losing track of Frontz.

"It happened right in front of me," Kelly said. "I stepped on this girl, pushed off her and just kept going. It psyched me out. Lindsay got farther ahead and that's who I wanted to stay with.

"She was totally out of sight; I couldn't see her at all."

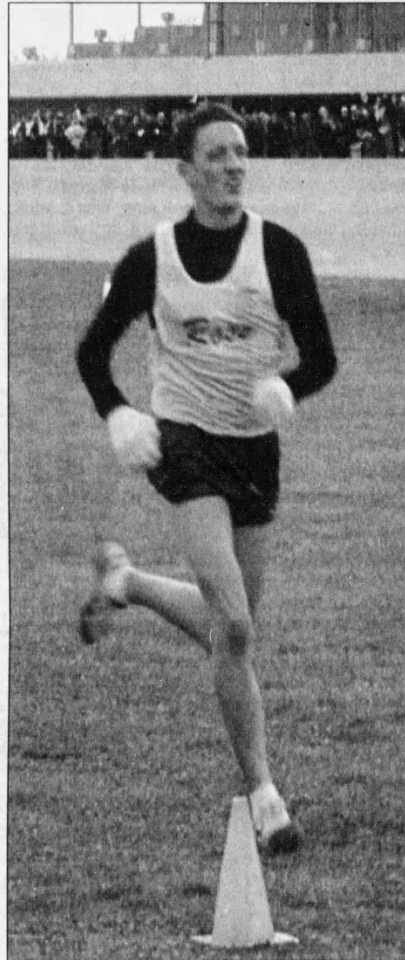
Runners in all six divisions fought off a stiff wind and 30-degree temperatures.

Kelly also had a cold of her own but didn't use that as an excuse.

"Everybody's nose is running because it's so cold, but I got a cramp and it hurt bad," she said. "I don't know if it was from the cold, or what."

Kelly added that the meet was a good experience for her.

"It's fun but it's hard," she said. "I wasn't ready for this, but it definitely makes me want to come back — and get out faster next time so I don't have to wait for people to fall."



Ross runner

Jeremiah Smith of Fremont Ross competes at the state cross country championships Saturday at Scioto Downs in Columbus. Smith finished sixth in the Div. I race. Story, B1.

News-Messenger/
Mark Griffin



Smith sixth at state

Ross runner records career-best time; Burroughs is 49th

By MARK GRIFFIN
Staff writer

COLUMBUS — Fremont Ross senior Jeremiah Smith saved his best race for last Saturday at the 68th annual boys state cross country meet at Scioto Downs.

Smith, the only Ross male to qualify to three state cross country meets,

eclipsed his best time of the season in finishing sixth in the Division I race.

The 6-foot-1 Smith clocked in at 16 minutes, 4 seconds, well behind the time turned in by runaway meet winner Ernie Ziegler of Harrison. Zeigler, a senior, broke

away from the pack early and went on to win in 15:27.4.

"I never really took the attitude that I was actually going to win," Smith said after the race, which was run in a stiff wind and 30-degree temperatures. "I just came in to see what I could do. I just hoped to run a PR (personal record), which I believe I did."

Smith's previous best was 16:09, set back in September.

"He ran an awesome race. I have no complaints," Ross coach John Elder said. "I thought he ran with confidence. It was definitely the best race he's ever run."

Smith started the race looking to stick with Findlay junior Brett Baddorf for the first 800 meters.

"That's when I wanted to move, and I moved up some," Smith said. "I was right where I wanted to be at the mile mark."

Smith said his time at the one-mile mark was 4:47, also a personal best. He was still in third place at the two-mile mark.

"I thought I'd be able to maintain it," he said, "but then I hit a hill and lost it."

Smith, who ran in front of about 30 friends and family members Saturday, said he was "happy to finally make the top 10" after placing 24th as a sophomore and 16th last year.

"That was always a dream of mine, and I did it," he said.

Jon Burroughs of Fremont St. Joseph Central Catholic placed 49th in the Division III boys race.

Burroughs, who took 37th in 17:08 at the state meet two years ago, ran to a 17:12 finish.

Burroughs said he was hoping to finish in the 16:50s.

"I felt sick halfway through the race," he said. "It wasn't nerves. It happened at regionals, too. I don't know what's wrong."

"That wasn't a bad time," St. Joe coach Gary Logsdon said, "considering the conditions."

Ian Conner of Galion Northmor won the meet in 15:40.2.

"I was just trying to relax," Burroughs said. "This was a nice ending. I wish I could have done better, but I'll accept it."

Area runners

Fremont Ross's Lindsay Frontz and Allison Kelly finished 28th and 81st, respectively. The Woodmore girls team finished ninth. **Stories, B3**