

2012 Division I Regional Meet

State berths on the line this weekend

By Chris Graber

News-Messenger correspondent

TIFFIN — After emerging as one of the elite runners in the state, Ross junior Louis Guardiola has one goal in mind: survive Saturday's regional meet Saturday at Hedges Boyer Park.

Guardiola holds the 30th-fastest time in the state this season at 15:42, a time that would have won the 2009 OHSAA Div. I State Cross Country Championships.

The Little Giants' junior said he just wants to be in the Top 16 individuals Saturday to earn a chance to compete at the state meet.

"I wish I was running (in 2009), but the competition that I have faced this year has made me a much better runner," Guardiola said. "When I have been able to compete against the best at almost every meet, it really has boosted my confidence.

Guardiola will be joined at the starting line with his entire team, as Ross handily defeated Three Rivers Athletic Conference rival Whitmer at the Northwest District Meet in Oregon by a score of 94-154 to garner the fourth and final spot in advancing to the regional meet.

"I'm really proud of the way my team performed at districts," said Guardiola, who ended as the district runner-up. "There is much more comfort running and training with everyone who has been there all season.

"I'm especially happy the seniors will get the opportunity to compete at a regional meet."

Scoring for Ross at the district meet were senior Devaun Churchya at seventh (16:49) with senior Tyler Edmonds 19th (17:23.2), junior Ryan Schaeffer 25th (17:48.7) and junior Brantleigh Bunting 41st (18:18.7). The non-scoring runners at the district meet that will compete in the regional race are senior Justin Schaeffer (18:20.9) and junior Devante Potter (19:20.4).

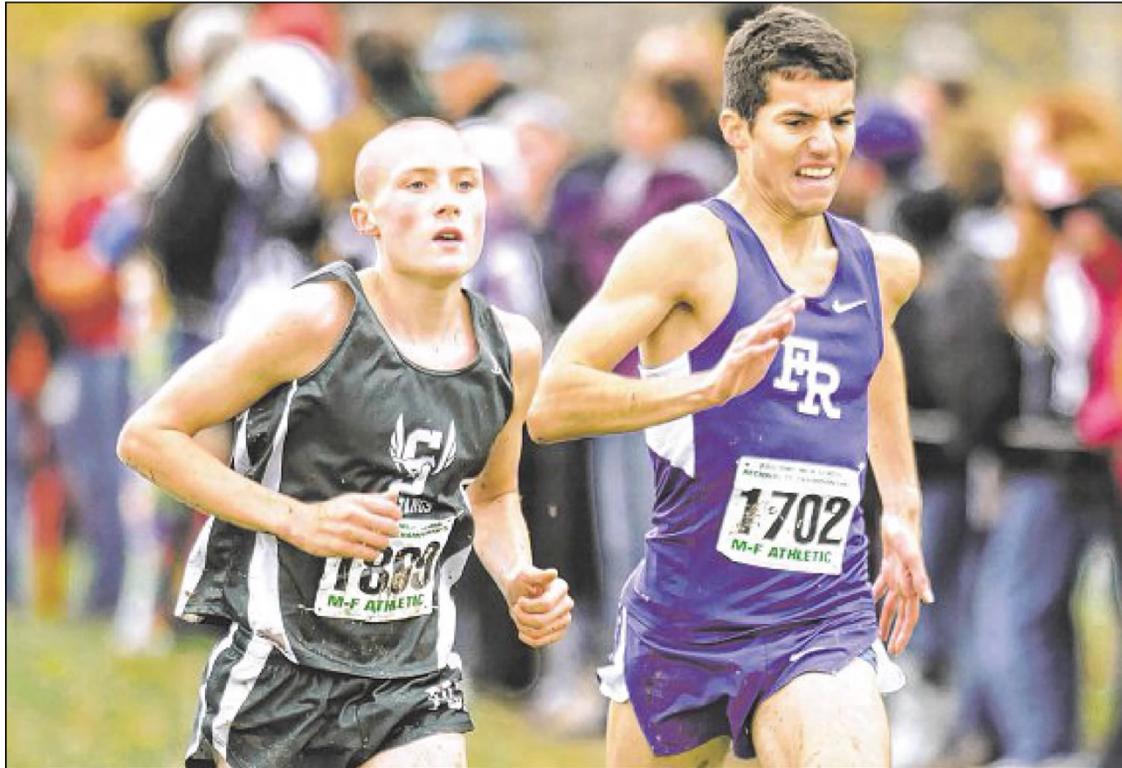
"To have a shot, they would have to run the race of their lives," Ross coach Jon Elder said. "There is St. Francis and then there is (No. 2) St. Ignatius, who is better than St. Francis."

For the Ross girls, Valerie Bixler and Faye Sloma advanced to compete at the regional meet in Tiffin. Bixler and Sloma achieved the final two spots for advancement at 15th and 16th at 20:32.4 and 20:44.4, respectively.

Bixler "has been battling illness but she said she felt great running in practice today," Elder said. "To make it out, she will also have to run the race of her life, but she could do it."



Fremont Ross' Louis Guardiola holds a slim lead over Bellevue's Andrew Beier early in the Lakota Cross Country Invite last month. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER



Fremont Ross' Louis Guardiola competes in the regional cross country Saturday at Hedges Boyer Park in Tiffin. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS-MESSENGER

Guardiola leads area state meet contingent

Bellville's Hosang qualifies for her third straight race

By Chris Graber
News-Messenger correspondent

TIFFIN — Fremont Ross standout Louis Guardiola was in 20th place with two miles remaining in Saturday's Division I regional cross country race at Tiffin.

The Little Giants' record holder knew top 16 advance to state. So he pushed through the muddy terrain and outkicked two opponents in the final 200 meters to place 11th and become the only area competitor in Division I to qualify.

The 84th annual OHSAA State Cross Country Championships are Saturday at National Trail Raceway in Hebron.

"I'm relieved that the hard work, dedication, pain and misery that I put myself through to get to this point prevailed and that I will be able to get the experience of running at the state meet," Guardiola said. "There are meets where you can avoid the mud, but you couldn't avoid it today.

"After the second mile, I knew I was in 16th and coming into the

final stretch, I kept thinking I'm going to catch these guys."

Despite his time at 16:25.69, Guardiola defeated five of the Three Rivers Conference competitors on Saturday that beat him at the conference meet. Oct. 13. In that race he set a school record at 15:42.9.

"I want everyone to see that anyone can do this that works hard, especially Latino children," Guardiola said. "This is for the whole community in Fremont."

Guardiola "deserves this, he worked so hard to be there," Little Giants coach Jon Elder said.

As a team, Ross was 15th among 16 teams with a score at 352. St. Ignatius claimed the regional crown at 42.

Little Giants senior Devaun Churchya was Ross' second finisher Saturday at 65th (17:20), while the Ross scoring was rounding out by Tyler Edmonds at 101st (17:48.32), Ryan Schaffer 108th (17:59.52), Brantleigh Bunting 52nd (19:12.57). Justin Schaffer and Devante Potter chipped in at 128th (19:45.85) and 129th



Bellevue's Erika Hosang competes in the regional cross country meet Saturday at Hedges Boyer Park in Tiffin. JONATHON BIRD/NEWS HERALD

(19:56.19), respectively.

For the Little Giants girls, Valerie Bixler ended at 73rd (20:52.05) and Faye Sloma finished 83rd (21:03.73). Both competed as individuals.

Division II at Tiffin

Bellevue senior Erika Hosang will make a third consecutive trip to the state meet, after placing

sixth at the regional meet on Saturday in 19:40.97.

The senior has yet to earn All-Ohio honors and will have her final opportunity Saturday.

Hosang "went hard from the gun and her goal was to be in the Top 10 at the halfway point, which she was and she maintained for a

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