

Runners master heat at Bray

Framstad runner-up in Division I boys race

By TIMOTHY R. WOLFRUM
Sports editor

Though he was in third place at the time, Fremont Ross cross-country runner Jeremy Framstad approached the two-mile mark Saturday with designs on winning the 12th annual Norm C. Bray Invitational on his home course at Robert L. Walsh Park.

He soon passed Maumee's David Perez and narrowed his sights on race leader Mike Smith of Toledo Start as the pair started up the big hill for the second and final time.

Framstad figured his knowledge of the Walsh Park course would allow him to overtake Smith at the

end. Ross and St. Joe runners consider their course one of the toughest in northwest Ohio because of the two trips up the hill and a long, wide-open flood wall along the Sandusky River.

But Smith had other ideas.

"I kinda did (think he could win) until that guy wasn't going away," Framstad said. "On that second hill, he took off, and that was my plan to take off and take him there. But he stayed with me coming down that hill. He just took



Photo courtesy of Art Bucci

JEREMY FRAMSTAD gets ready to pass a Maumee runner en route to a second-place finish at the Norm Bray on Saturday.

'off.'

Smith won the race in 16:31.68, breaking the invitational record of 16:34 set last year by St. Joe's Mike Chapman.

Framstad came in second

Chudzinski, SJCC take second place

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"I left a space on the wall," Chudzinski said. "He wanted to see what it would take to get me under 18 minutes."

Chudzinski finished seventh in 17:45.84 on the Robert L. Walsh Park course. Teammate Jeremy Velliquette came in fifth at 17:36.61.

The Streaks' No. 2 runner, broke 18 minutes for the first time in his career, a feat that garnered him a stuffed bear's head for his taxidermy collection.

Chudzinski's father, Tony Chudzinski, promised to get his son the bear's head to go along with the alligator, deer, turtle and coyote heads that already adorn the sophomore's bedroom.

The Streaks credited their strategy of running as a pack and the extra incentive of competing in Fremont for the strong performance.

"It's always good to see your classmates come out," Velliquette said.

See ST. JOE, B4

Ross boys fourth

Continued From B1

"This really makes us optimistic," Elder said. "We talked about it before the race, and I said, 'Your goal is to win it, I hope.' He said, 'Yeah it is.'"

Saturday's invitation was run in hot, humid conditions but under mostly overcast skies. Maumee won the Div. I boys race with 36 points by placing four runners in the top 10. Woodmore, a Div. III school, moved up and easily won the Div. I girls race when Meredith Magisig, Casey Ulinski and Kathy Camp took the first three places.

"It was much better than I thought. We expected weather like yesterday," Elder said. "That really made me nervous with how hot it was. I think the hottest race was the first race. But the girl who won broke the course record."

Hopewell-Loudon's Carime Reinhart set the course record in 19:17.45 in the Div. II-III race.

Woodmore, led by Montana Garcia's fourth-place finish in 17:03.01, came in second in the Div. I boys race with 67 points. Nick Garcia was seventh in 17:57.74, and Jason Haar was 10th in 18:06.96.

The Ross boys finished fourth in the six-team race with 86 points. Freshman Jay Ohms came in 15th at 18:29.28, Art Neeley was 22nd at

19:19.90 and Josh Ohms was 23rd at 19:23.81. Noah Grayson was 36th at 20:51.47.

In the girls race, Magisig's time of 19:40.37 beat teammate Ulinski, who came in with a time of 20:14.74. Camp recorded a 20:45 for third place. Heather Michael of Woodmore finished sixth in 21:35.36, and teammate Cindy Dibert was ninth in 21:56.06.

Woodmore scored 21 points, far outdistancing Bowling Green's 46 points. The Wildcats, who qualified for state last year, finished second at the 1999 invitational.

The Ross A team finished third with 46 points, and the Ross B team came in fifth with 110 points.

Ross sophomore Stacy Hall finished eighth in a time of 21:46.01. Teammate Wendy Farrell was 11th at 22:28.29. Also for Ross A, Monica McElfresh was 17th in 23:11.09, Kayla Crispen was 22nd in 23:26.75 and Kristy Gabel was 24th in 23:46.69. Lindsay Swope of the Ross B team finished 16th in 23:00.56.

Little Giants' coach Cathy Esposito was pleased with her girls' performances. The invitational gave Ross an early look at Bowling Green, a tournament rival.

"BG is one of the teams that will be shooting for to get out of districts. Right now, we're 1-2, 1-2, 1-2," Esposito said.

REMONTE



Photo courtesy of Art Bucci
IRENE BRAY, widow of former coach Norm C. Bray, is flanked by Ross girls coach Cathy Esposito and boys coach John Elder prior to Saturday's meet.

Bray's legacy lives

By TIMOTHY R. WOLFRUM
Sports editor

The legacy of former Fremont Ross track and cross country coach Norm Bray extends far beyond the invitational that bears his name, and reminders were everywhere Saturday at Walsh Park.

Bray's widow, Irene Bray, watched the invitational and cheered on the runners, just the way she used to during the 26 years her husband coached at Ross.

Her only regret was wearing long slacks on what turned into a sweltering morning.

"It's a thrill to be here and honor him. It's always hot, but never too hot to come out," Irene Bray said. "He coached all the sports during his career, but cross country and track were his favorites."

Meanwhile, Bray protégés John Elder and Cathy Esposito, who ran for Bray as Little Giants, coached the Ross boys and girls teams, respectively. Ross athletic director Art Bucci, who was mentored by Bray as a beginning teacher at Ross 28 years ago, presided over the event.

They all recalled fondly the man they knew as "The Colonel."

"I just remember how mean he was," Esposito laughed, "how disciplined he

made us be about running. But he was so much fun; we'd have a lot of fun. He was inspirational to me."

Bray moved to Fremont from the Willard area in the early 1960s. He was a junior high track coach and an assistant varsity coach at Ross before taking over the track program in 1979. He began coaching cross country in 1980 and coached both sports until he retired from teaching in 1987.

After serving as an assistant track coach at St. Joe for a year after his retirement, Bray coached the Port Clinton cross country team from 1989-92. In fact, he coached the Redskins for two years after contracting pancreatic cancer and up until two months before his death in January 1993.

The consensus among those who knew Bray was that he would have loved the event that has been his namesake since 1993.

"If Norm was still around, he'd have been here for sure," Elder said. "In fact, if Norm had his way, he'd probably still be coaching. You don't see that anymore, coaches coaching right up until they die. He's part of a long-ago era. It's kind of sad."

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