

2004 Greater Buckeye Conference...

GBC MEET

Purple reign

Ross boys rule league, again

By RYAN AUTULLO
News-Messenger correspondent

MARION — The second-year Greater Buckeye Conference has its king of boys cross country.

And it again dons purple and white.

Fremont Ross defended last year's league title in convincing fashion, placing five runners in the top 10 on a cold, windy Saturday morning at Marion Harding.

"It's great to win in the tournaments, but there's nothing like winning the league," Ross coach Cathy Esposito said. "It was a big goal for us."

Derek Hill registered a time of 16:46 to win his second straight league individual title.

Nathan Bowen (second) and Josh Bowen (third) earned spots on the GBC first-team, while Andre Velez (ninth) and Derek Flores (10th) took second-team honors.

The five combined to post a team score of 27, easily topping runner-up Napoleon's 62 points.

Napoleon won the girls race, and Ross finished fourth.

Saturday was a form of *deja vu* for the Little Giants as they won on the same course as last weekend. The fields of the two meets were comprised of many of the same teams.

But Esposito certainly didn't take anything for granted. Not shy about setting lofty goals, Esposito came away from a couple meets disappointed this season.

Everything came together on Saturday, however.

"They are staying together more time-wise," Esposito said. "That's a reason we didn't win some other meets."

Hill was 34 seconds slower than

last week, but he'll take it considering the inclement weather that included sub 40-degree temperatures and wind that reached 20 mph.

"I ran the same way as I did last week," Hill said. "My time is fine, I wasn't trying to (set a personal record) today."

It was arguably the coldest day of the cross country season so far. Esposito told her squad to stay behind fellow runners in an effort to cut down on the amount of wind.

"The conditions were really nasty by the 3-mile mark," she said. "I told them to stay behind somebody, but Derek didn't have that option."

He assisted his teammates, however.

Bowen, who finished fifth last week, was thrilled to take runner-up honors, knocking off a rival in the process.

"I was trying to get second because Anthony (Baratta) of Findlay had beaten me a couple times this year," he said.

"I think winning this year might be better than last year," Bowen continued. "Last year we had a lot of seniors, but this year we're younger."

Ross's Ashley Fischer and Alyssa Bowerman finished 10th and 12th, respectively, to garner spots on the league's second-team. Bryleigh Linton (28th), Ashley Brunthaver (29th) and Allison Adams (31st) rounded out the Little Giants' scoring.

Findlay teammates Jennifer Bradley and Alison Leckrone captured the top two spots, respectively.

"It's awesome," Bowerman said of being named all-league, "It's an accomplishment."



HILL



N. BOWEN



J. BOWEN



VELEZ



FLORES

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Ross repeats as GBC king

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The Little Giants will look to use the success earned on Saturday as a springboard to next week's Division I district meet at Oregon Clay.

The top three teams and top 12 individuals at the meet will qualify for regionals. New this year is a rule that individuals do not necessarily have to be members of non-qualifying teams, making obtaining a spot at regionals an even harder task.

To make matters even worse, the sectional will be divided in-

to two races with Ross getting the tougher draw.

Esposito said that the boys team is currently the fourth-best in the sectional behind Toledo St. John's, Toledo Whitmer and Maumee. The Little Giants have beaten the latter two during this season. However, they have also lost to each twice.

"We will need to perform better than we did today time-wise," Esposito said. "But the conditions should be better. It will be good to go in there with people not expecting us to make it."