

MITCA newsletter

MICHIGAN INTERSCHOLASTIC TRACK COACHES ASSOCIATION Volume 46/Issue 3 September 2003

www.mitca.org

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CROSS COUNTRY CLINIC
Kalamazoo Radisson
Nov. 7/8 2003

TRACK & FIELD CLINIC
Lansing Holiday Inn South
Jan. 9/10 2004

IN THIS ISSUE:
**TRAINING YOUR RUNNERS HOW
TO RUN THE FINAL MEET**
THE PRESIDENT'S LANE
WHICH WAY DO I GO
CROSS COUNTRY CLINIC
IN THE BULL PEN

TEACHING YOUR RUNNERS How to Run the Final Meet

Greg Miller, Cranbrook

Ask any runner how they prepared in the last week for the Final meet, and you would probably get as many different answers as schools represented at the starting line. But train as they may, each runner will run the same race. How this race differs from every other race in which the runner competed over the past season is the topic of this article.

The MHSAA Final Meet is unlike any other high school competition your runners will race during the cross country season. In every other competitive event, your runners have raced against a variety of running talent spanning from the very fast to the very slow; at the Final Meet, they race exclusively with the very fast. This is not an accident; the purpose of the Final Meet is to find the top two teams and top thirty runners in Michigan (this latter statement is based upon the awards tendered by the MHSAA – trophies to the top two teams, medals to the top thirty runners).

The basis of teaching an athlete how to run the Final Meet is a finish line frequency graph. It is a graph illustrating the number of runners crossing the finish line in some period of time, say, every five seconds.. Consider, for example an invitational meet. The data in **Figure 1a** and **Figure 1b** are from an early season, hilly girls and boys Conference Jamboree meet respectively. Each graph illustrates how many runners are crossing the finish line every five seconds. Surprisingly or not, the graphs illustrate a spectrum of ability. In the girls race, the girls are crossing the line in a continuous stream of runners, no bunching of runners at a particular time. In the boys race, there is evidence of more bunching (several peaks of three runners crossing the finish line every five seconds). This is probably due to the race population differences – the boys race had nearly two times the number of runners as the girls race.

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THE PRESIDENT'S LANE: Mac Domke

Water, water, water. The beginning of Cross season is the only time a Michigan running coach ever thinks about "global warming". Water jugs bottles, damp towels, and cool down periods, all these things are necessary to ensure safety for our athletes. We have to remind our runners that they MUST be drinking water through out the day, not just before or during practice, in order to prevent dehydration, cramps and heat problems.

A lot of coaches have practices in the mornings in order to take advantage of the few cool temperatures of the day. However many of the early invitationals and dual meets are scheduled for the afternoon.

That means extreme heat. Be prepared! Have plenty of water on hand. Most teams have tents. Often those tents may provide the only shade at a meet site. A cold wet towel is a wonderful thing to wrap up in after the race.

Apples, watermelon, peaches, plums, and pears hidden in coolers are also a great surprise for your runners after the meet.

This is Michigan so the weather will get cold in time but the first part of our Cross Country season can seem like an episode of Survival in the Amazon.

Good luck this season. I hope no one has any injuries or disasters.

TEACHING YOUR RUNNERS.....

Time frequency graphs of a girls' and boys' MHSAA Regional Meets are shown in **Figures 2a** and **Figure 2b** respectively. Right away we can see differences between these late season, larger populated races and those of Figures 1. In both races, the difference in finish times between the first and last runner is about ten minutes. Also, the girl's race had a peak rate of six runners crossing the finish line every five seconds at around 21.5 minutes (21:30) and the boys, five runners every five seconds at around 18.75 minutes (18:45). It's interesting to note that in each case, the first spike of four runners crossing every five seconds occurs at or near fifteenth place (the final, individual qualifying place).

Consider the MHSAA Final Meet; the girls race and boys races are shown in **Figures 3a** and **Figure 3b** respectively. What we first notice is the striking similarity in general shape of the two graphs. Without reference to the finish times, the graphs could come from the same population of runners at different races. More importantly, note how these graphs differ from their respective Regional Meet graphs. For the girls and boys, the difference in time between first and last runner is now only seven minutes (approximately, and ignoring the last place girl). But like the Regional Meet, the first large spike occurs with the last qualifying All-State runners (eight runners every five seconds for the girls – around 19:30; ten runners every five seconds for the boys – around 16:30). That the quality of the Final Meet exceeds that of the Regional Meet manifests itself in every measure

The differences are obvious – EVERYTHING is faster; winning times, last place times, and the bubble. The bubble is a term frequently heard, but what, exactly, is it? As the mental image of a bubble may imply, it is the finish time when most runners are finishing. One can get a sense of the bubble from the graphs already produced, but it becomes more apparent if instead of counting runners across the line every five seconds (as was done in figures 1 through 4), we count runners across the line over a longer period of time. By increasing the time period, the resolution of the graph is reduced. For example, **Figures 4a, 4b** and **4c**, show the girl's Final Meet graph using ten, twenty, and forty-five second over which finishers across the line are counted. In figure 4c "the bubble" is clearly seen.

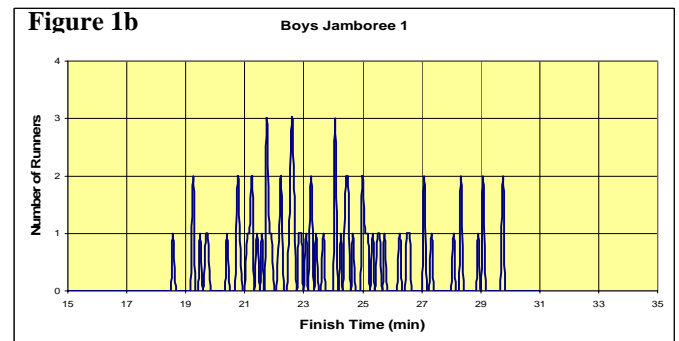
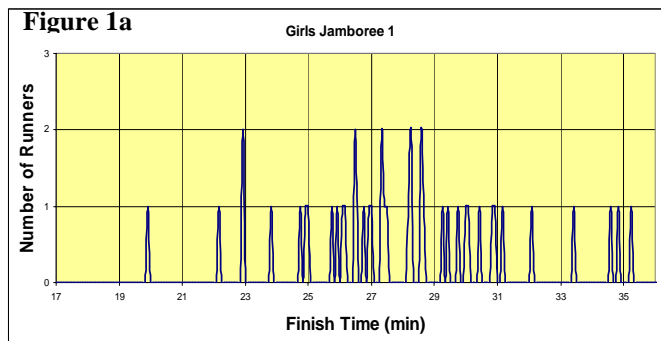
The Final Meet represents an opportunity to get back to the basics of racing strategy. As Dr. Jack Daniels mentioned in his keynote address at the 2002 MITCA Cross Country Clinic, it is important for the runner to mentally segment the race – concern themselves with only the events at hand. In one example, Dr. Daniels told of a runner who mentally perceived their race in segments as small as a step.

The runner will enter a race in a particular state-of-mind and that state may well change during the race. Leading the race at significant points can lift the runner to a superior performance, trailing in the race may result in a sub-par performance. For the "good" runner, the Final Meet may well be the first time they find themselves behind the bubble. The difference between the bubble position at the Regional and Final Meets is significant; 21:45 at the Regional, 21:00 at the Final (for the boys, the bubble peak times are 19:00 and 17:20 respectively).

Where the runner is running, relative to the bubble, will present itself as a different "feeling" to the runner (the crowd is more dense than in a "typical" meet, or less dense, but ahead of the athlete, etc.). It is imperative that most runners be aware that their racing conditions will "feel" very different at this meet than a prior meet. If your less experienced runners find themselves in unusual positions within the race population during the race, they must fall back to other senses to gauge their performance.

Therefore, preparation for the Final Meet begins with the first meet of the season. During the season your runners must learn to note and understand the meaning of their splits – this allows for quantitative check points during the race. They must also learn how their body "feels" at different race positions and at different paces. This latter suggestion can only come about through experimentation. During the season runners should learn how fast starts and moderate starts affect their overall performance. How do they "feel" in such races at the mile points, at the finish? The most effective way to help your runners in this process is to have them complete, as soon as possible, a post-race report. This report can take a variety of forms, from essay based to check-box and fill-in-the-blank. By constant review, your runner can answer the questions posed above and be as mentally prepared for the Final Meet as possible. With such a mental edge, your runners will gain a competitive advantage.

The important message for you runners is that preparation for the Final Meet is a season long effort and it involves more than just the legs, heart and lungs; it includes expectations, planning and understanding.



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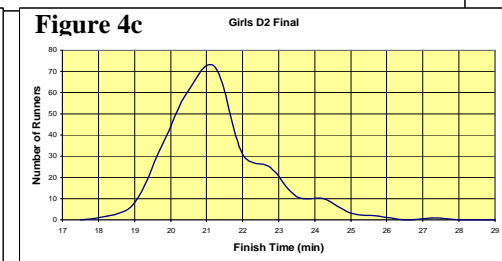
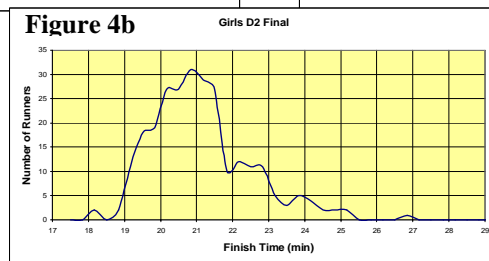
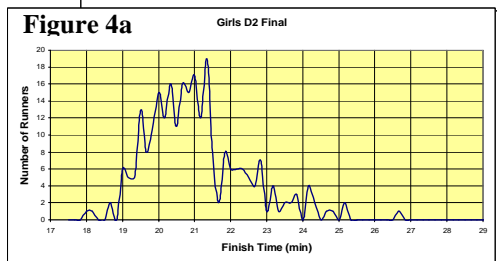
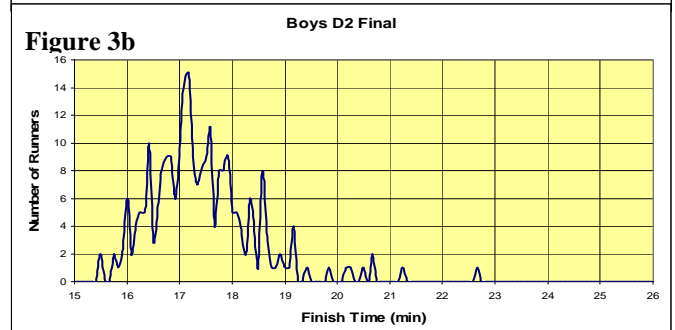
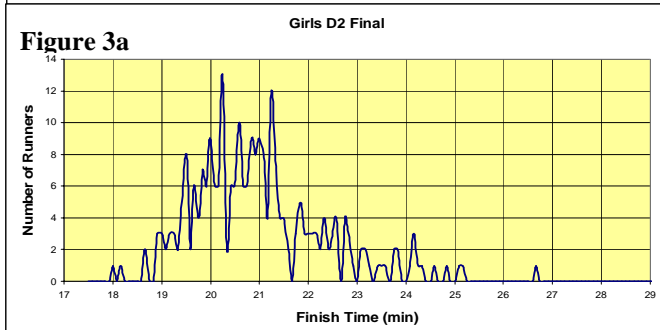
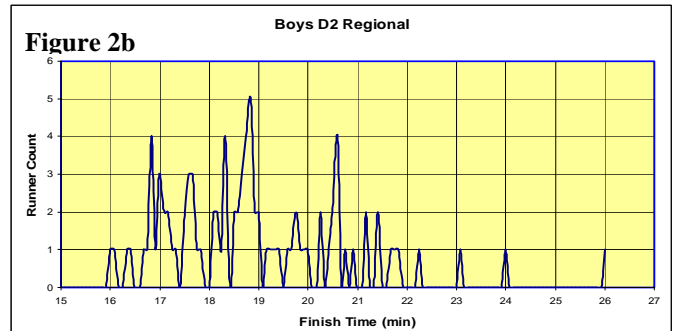
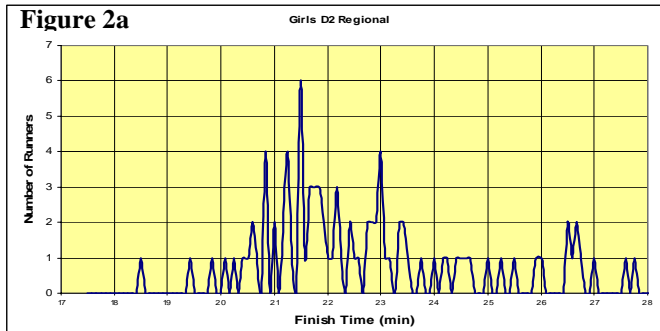
MID EAST QUALIFYING MEET

Sunday Nov. 9

at SHARP PARK, Jackson

2:00 Boys

2:30 Girls



WHERE DO I GO..... Jim Murray Brandywine

"Where Do I Go" is a comment heard too often on a cross country course. "Coach- Help I'm Lost" is a comment I heard from the woods at the 2 mile mark, while giving my runners splits at a meet a few years ago. Our lead runner had gone by, leading the race by about 100 yards shortly before he called out from the woods. When he found his way, he had dropped back to third and it cost us the meet. A few years ago a runner won one of the state final races as several runners in front of him made a wrong turn late in the race. Last year at a meet a couple of runners went the wrong way on an improperly marked course. Had I had a full team it would have cost us the meet. As it was the only real loss was by the runner that should have won the meet. I was doing warm-up one year with my team and the host coach. We got to an area and the coach said you turn here and threw his jacket down.

My second meet as a high school runner was at a park in the Lansing area where after 200 yards you were out of site until the last 200 or so yards. Much of the course was on wooded trails with little visibility of other runners in the race. The host school had spotters at the major turns to keep runners on the course. We had a couple of runners that were far enough behind, the spotters thought everyone had gone by and left. The runners made a wrong turn and wound up on the business end of an unused shooting range and followed that with a blind turn that ended in the river. It made a good story for the rest of our careers.

I know of a runner that fell at the intersection of two lines. The first line he saw was the wrong one. Why not when lines intersect, paint the first one solid. With an arrow head in the direction at the intersection. The second line stops just short of the intersection, with an arrow head showing that you cross the first line. Then shortly after it continues with another arrowhead.

I am sure there are many coaches with similar tales. I don't know if it is happening less often or I have just gotten used to the situation.

Spotters, natural barriers, following paths seemed to be the way courses were marked when I ran. I ran at Washtenaw and other than running up one fairway or along a tree line, then around trees, a green and then heading back down the other side I cannot remember any particular markings. The first marked course I can remember was the Forest Acres course at Michigan State when the Nationals were held there my freshman and sophomore year. They had permanent posts and then a line marking the course.

- 9.1 The course shall be clearly marked.....This may be by a wide line.....or by sign posts with large directional arrows wherever the course turns or by flags.....
- 9.2 In a case of discrepancy in the course markings, directional flag markings take precedence over any other course markings.

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WHERE DO I GO cont.....

How many courses are marked, let alone properly marked? Yes, many have a semblance of lines, fewer have the proper flags. WHY!!! We ask our runners to do the training, put in the miles, why do they have to run on a "naked" course? Shouldn't the course be approximately the same each time or are we just running. A football coach's biggest complaint usually is crooked lines. I realize that many cases if there is any marking it is up to the coach, on the other hand I know most properly marked courses are marked by coaches.....

If your are going to mark with a line, consider the NCAA system. Rather than a single line, they run a parallel lines, 10 meters wide, through the course. The advantage of this system is spectators are told to stay outside the lines with good results. Whereas with a single line and telling people to stay back, they may stay back but only a step or two.

Turns should be around natural barriers, when possible. Many lines are painted with a significant gap between the barrier and the line. One of the first state final meets not at Washtenaw Country Club, lines were 10 yards or so away from trees, bushes, the natural barriers. The lead runners followed the line, but the pack and after used the tree. Many coaches figured the pack and beyond may have run 200 or more yards less than the leaders.

The white line is nice, but often in the morning the dew or the sun can make it not visible. The way to run a course is from visible mark to visible mark. Flags, permanent posts provide runners with the visible mark. I am fortunate to have a course on the school grounds. After a couple of years of setting up for meets we began to put 4x4's with the proper color painted, our course is permanently marked. Except for the trails, the runners are never out of sight of a properly colored post. The side of the post facing the runners is white, with a white strip above the color. The white greatly increases visibility. Yet we will have runners unable to use the posts because they don't know what the colors mean. Isn't that something to do with coaching?

Utility marker flags provide a great way to mark courses and provide crowd control. Rob Johnson, Clare, and then Gene Bednarowski, Watervliet, used these flags when they hosted state final meets. Flags provided a great visible path for the runners. In area where spectators could be a problem, both sides of the course were lined with the flags. This did one of the best jobs job of keeping the crowd from the runners I had seen.

When we hosted our first regional I was worried about crowd control as we brought the runners through the start/finish area 3 times. It would have been impossible to rope the paths off and I doubt we could have had enough marshalls. We lined the course on both sides of the course in these areas with the flags, the crowd was able to move freely around the area and the spectators knew where to stay so they wouldn't interfere. I added one thing to Ron and Gene's flag idea, in that I use the red & yellow flags to mark the appropriate turns and white the straights. White is used rather than blue because of better visibility. The utility flags cost around \$10 per 100 and can be used for several seasons, with the best height 30 or 36 inches.

We ask much of our runners for their best effort. Don't they deserve a well marked, consistent course for their best effort??????

Michigan Interscholastic Track Coaches

Cross Country Academic All State Award

Eligibility:

Team / Race

1. We rank all teams who submit an application AT THE STATE FINALS.
2. Athletes must have accumulative GPA established prior to the current season to be eligible. No 9th graders.
3. The G.P.A. must be validated by the principal and be based on a 4.0 system. Schools not using this configuration will have to make their conversions. No weighted grade points. G.P.A. must be carried out 3 places.
4. Any five of your top seven runners who participated in the State Finals may be averaged.

Individual / Race at least

1. You must have accumulative G.P.A. of 3.500 or higher by the beginning of the year and finish in the top half of the field at the state meet.
2. Academic All State honors shall be given to the top 25 qualifiers on Class A & B, the top 20 in Class C, and the top 15 in class D.
3. If your athlete has a 3.8 G.P.A. and finishes in the top half of the field they automatically qualify.

_____ Team	_____ Individual				
School Name _____	Circle Class: I II III IV				
School Address _____	Coaches Name _____				
City _____	Zip _____				
School Telephone _____	School Fax _____				
Coaches Signature: _____	Coaches Home Phone _____				
School Administrator Signature: _____					
Student Name	Sex	Grade	G.P.A.	Race	Place
1. _____	_____	_____	____.____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	____.____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	____.____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	____.____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	____.____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____	____.____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____	____.____	_____	_____
		*Team Average	____.____	_____	_____

1. All teams who submit an application at the state finals will be ranked.
2. The coach is responsible for turning in this form to the meet management **AT THE STATE FINALS** when reporting to pick up packet or you may fax to class representatives by noon on MONDAY.
3. The coach is responsible for having this form signed by the school principal or athletic director **PRIOR** to the State Finals.
4. Awards will be presented to coaches present at the MITCA Cross Country Clinic. Schools not represented will have their awards mailed.
5. Individuals will be awarded two certificates. Teams with a grade point over 3.000 but less than 3.499 will be awarded 2 certificates. Teams with a 3.500 or higher will be awarded 7 certificates.

Fax 2003 form to:

- Division 1 John Quiring Okemos (517) 351-0552
- Division 2 Inga Longpre Stevensville (616) 429-1093
- Division 3 Anita Lister Stockbridge (517) 851-7816
- Division 4 Ron and Lynn Hart Bellevue (616) 763-3955

Sponsored By BLUE STAR SPORTSWEAR, 8244 Embury Rd., Grand Blanc, Mi. 48439

Patsy Arpino Memorial Scholarship

Currently MITCA provides two \$500.00 Scholarships

Guidelines:

1. Recipient must be a legal dependent of a parent or legal guardian who is a member of MITCA for at least five consecutive years prior to the application.
2. Recipient must provide evidence of full time enrollment with a minimum of twelve credit hours in a college, university, or trade school.
3. Applications must be postmarked by October 30 of the application year.

Procedure:

1. The MITCA President (or designee) will be charge of:
 - a) Verification of the scholarship guidelines.
 - b) Selection and notification of the recipients.
2. All eligible candidate names are placed in a box. The recipient(s) will be drawn at the MITCA November Executive Board meeting and announced to the membership at the MITCA Track and Field Clinic. Alternate recipient(s) are drawn and will receive the award should any recipient fail to meet any of the guidelines.
3. All applications are destroyed after a selection is made, therefore it is necessary to re-submit applications each year.
4. Recipient is eligible to win only one time.
5. The scholarship is made in the form of a tuition reimbursement. The check will be written to the MITCA parent/guardian or college (MITCA must be given direction in this matter).

Complete and mail the form below:

MITCA Member Information

Name			
Address			
City			
State		Zip	
Home Phone	()	Work Phone	()

School Information

School Name			
Address			
City			
State		Zip	
Phone	()		

Mike Woolsey	Lumen Christi High School	3483 Spring Arbor Road	Jackson, MI 49203
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APPLICATION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 30

IN THE BULLPEN

MITCA CROSS COUNTRY QUESTIONNAIRE 2003 The membership will vote on these at the Clinic Business Meeting.

1. Should individuals who finish in places 16 through 20 at their regional qualify as individuals for the state finals meet at MIS?
2. Would you be in favor of the Upper Peninsula cross country runners coming down to participate in the MHSAA post-season cross country tournament?(Not separate LP and UP finals)
3. Would you be in favor of studying and pursuing changes in the way teams from the Regional qualify to the state meet based on a regional's strength?
4. Was there a major flaw design in your regional course layout? Division: Regional Location: Flaw:
5. Are you in favor of pursuing 5 equal divisions in cross country based on the number of schools who sponsor the sport?
6. Are you in favor of allowing cross-country runners to wear wristwatches during their race?
7. Are you aware that no transportation aids can be used by coaches at the regional and state meets?

8. The issue of no-show teams at regionals in cross country was passed by MITCA went to rules and regulations committee and was referred back to MITCA for further study. We have collected data from 2003 regionals and will advance this issue again.

MITCA CROSS COUNTRY BUSINESS MEETING at the Clinic this year will have a different format. Rather than being the last session on Friday, it will be combined with lunch in the vendor's room on Friday. The Executive Committee hopes this way more of the membership will be involved at the business meeting. It will provide more time to access the vendors, without missing any of the presentations and enjoy lunch with your colleagues.

continued next page.....

IN THE BULLPEN cont.....

VENDORS, MITCA AND YOU..... Vendors help reduce the cost of **MITCA Clinics** to the membership, provide a great source for all of our cross country/track & field needs, speakers and help underwrite **MITCA** activities. You may say I would rather deal with locally. Great, why not suggest that your local vendor join us at **MITCA**. Exposure to a sizeable group of Michigan cross country/track & field coaches helps your local vendor, **MITCA** and you.

IT IS NOW AGAINST THE RULES A new rule this year is: **“no artificial means of transportation”** can be used by coaches at meets. This will be enforced at MHSAA meets this year. I understand it was enforced at an invitational last year and led to the disqualification of a team. I had been hoping that there would be a rule adoption encouraging meet managers to provide us senior coaches with a golf cart since we aren't as quick in our movements around the course and our younger brethren.....

NCAA DISTRICTS This year the calendar is such that the **MITCA Clinic** does not conflict with the NCAA Regional. Those that attended the clinic a couple of years ago at Eastern Michigan were able to see the NCAA Regional held there. This year the regional is being held at Indiana State University, site of last year's Nationals, the Saturday after the **MITCA Clinic**. What a course!!!!!! It is a cross country course and that is it!!!! There is a half mile plus straightaway, fenced off and wide enough for over 40 teams, 7 wide at the start. Every 1000 and half mile is marked. It has a single loop that can be 4K, 5K or 6K. Most of the course is clearly visible from inside the loop by the finish line. The Great Lakes Region is one of the strongest in college. You will have a chance to see great running on a great course.

MITCA Coach of the Year Nominations to MHSAA 2003

Boys CC: **Eldon “Pete” Moss**, Benzie Central High School
Girls CC: **Pat Pastula**, Hillsdale High School
Boys Track: **John Reed**, Farmington Hills Harrison High School
Girls Track: **Paul Christiansen**, Maple City Glen Lake High School

READING T-SHIRTS I don't know how many of your are into reading the t-shirts that abound in our sport but I think I saw the limit at New Prairie. A girl's team was proudly wearing:
front: If you think I'm beautiful **back:** You should see my coach

TALK ABOUT EATING DIRT Did you see the article about the college runner that was following a group of runners and swallowed a stone that was kicked up, went down choking. A coach in the area, properly applied the Heimlich Maneuver, to free the stone which they claim traveled about 8 ft.

**MITCA CROSS COUNTRY CLINIC
November 6-8, 2003**

Training Boys & girls together.

Joan Ludtke, White Cloud Cross Country
& **Jill Evers**, Kent City Cross Country

The Season Workouts- 3 Sessions

Early Season, Mid Season, Late Season
Ruth Rogers, Clare & **Linda VanTol**, Garber

How Does the body work during running?

Anatomy of the Runner- 3 Sessions
Energy Systems and Training
Prevention of Injuries and Rehabilitation
Rob Blume, Armada

The Stillwater Program- 3 Sessions

Scott Christensen, Stillwater, Minnesota

How to Build a Championship Team.

Pat Richardson, Grass Lake

Hotel Information Radisson Plaza Hotel

Kalamazoo, Michigan
616-343-3333

Call For The MITCA Rate: Single or Double \$105

Cut off date is 10/16
Book Early- we only have 80 rooms reserved

**MITCA CROSS COUNTRY CLINIC
November 6-8, 2003**

Name _____

Home Address _____ New Address

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Home Phone _____

In what year did you begin coaching? _____

How many years have you coached Cross Country? _____
Coaching assignment? Mid. S. H. S. Univ.

School Name _____

School Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

School Phone _____

School Classification A B C D
Cross Country Division 1 2 3 4

Registration deadlines and cost:

On or before Oct. 30: \$75.00
After Oct. 30 and at door: \$85.00

Payment must accompany the registration form.

NO CREDIT CARDS

Make checks payable to **MITCA**

Mail to: **Jerry Lasceski, Treasurer**
1691 N. Hinson Road
Fairgrove, MI 48733-9503
Clinic Notes and Giveaway LIMITED to the first 375 registrants

Full refund if notified by 10/30, full refund less \$25 after.
Please detach before mailing

QuickTime™ and a TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor are needed to see this picture.

Cross Country Issue

Jim Murray
Newsletter Editor
1321 Country Club Dr.
Niles Mi 49120

or

Jerry Lasceski
Membership
1691 North Hinson Road
Fairgrove Mi 48733

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MITCA.org