

Sports

Weather ices Mercy's bid for tourney title

By Richard A. Kiley

After finishing a respectable sixth during the state championships on Long Island two weeks ago, Mercy cross-country coach Tim Jones expected his team to place better at the Federation Meet this past weekend.

Mother Nature, unfortunately, had the last word.

Severe weather, including a wind-chill temperature of minus-17, wreaked havoc on runners at the meet, which took place at Fayetteville-Manlius High School Saturday, Nov. 21.

Although Maggie Whelehan (22:17.9) finished 25th for Mercy in the girls' team race, the Monarchs finished behind Victor and Fairport to place third among Section 5 schools entered in the 3.2-mile race.

Other Monarch runners who completed the course in the top 100 were Jeannine Muoio (23:18.2, 68th overall), and Nikki LaMagna (23:49.1, 93rd overall).

"My kids were a little disappointed, and I told them to forget it," Jones said. "We beat Fairport and Victor when it counted — in the sectionals. This was anti-climactic."

The meet, which brought together some of the top teams and individual runners from public and private high schools in the state, was marred when several runners were hospitalized for hypothermia and frostbite. Approximately 50 more were treated in the school gymnasium by ambulance and fire-department personnel.

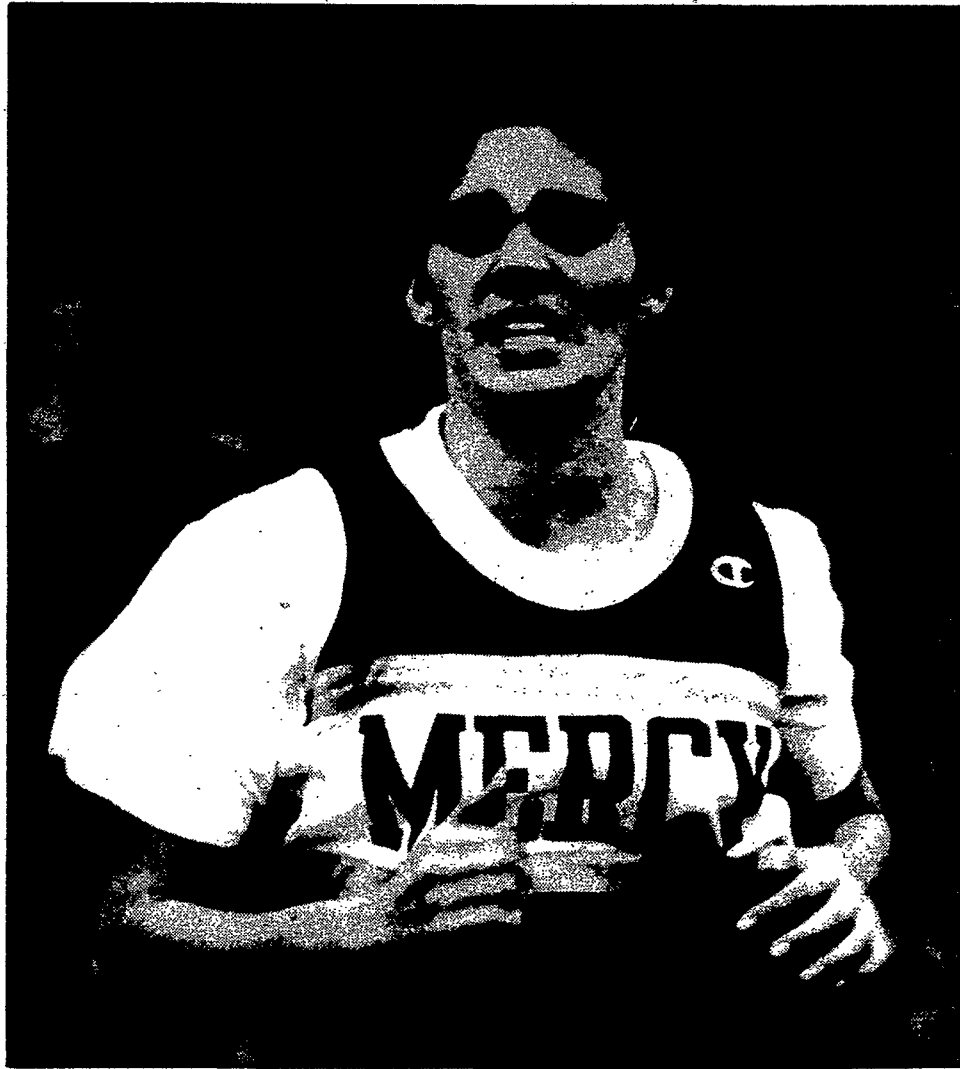
And even though meet officials canceled the final race of the day — for individual boys — Jones was displeased with the way organizers handled the adverse weather conditions.

"It was bitterly cold; they should have canceled the meet," said Jones, adding that runners also had to run on top of five to six inches of loosely packed snow.

The Mercy coach said that he would never again allow his girls to run in a meet so close to winter in upstate New York.

"I'm not going to run (in the Federation Meet) again regardless of how we're doing," Jones said. "It gets to be too late in the year."

The cross-country season has already overlapped with basketball at the all-girls' school on Blossom Road. Jones allowed several of his runners who are looking to play for Kathy Boughton's hoop team this winter to miss practices before the meet.



Bonnie Trafelet/Courier-Journal

Nikki LaMagna, shown here running in the Cobbs Hill Invitational, finished in the top 100 at the frosty Federation Meet in Syracuse.

"This season reached my expectations already; I didn't want them to miss too many (basketball) practices," Jones said. "And you can only peak (in a season) for so long."

Overall, cross country at Mercy has yet to reach its peak. In just their third varsity season, the Monarchs — winners of eight invitational this season — were ranked among the top 15 in the state much of the fall. Their success this year may draw other

promising Rochester-area runners to Mercy, which has experienced a steady decline in enrollment of late.

With many of his top runners competing for him on the track this spring and returning for cross country again next fall, Jones believes he has some promising seasons ahead.

"Next year looks real good," said Jones. "We should be right up there again."

Sports Shorts

ECAC champs

Although it was anything but easy, the Nazareth College volleyball team made sure it didn't return from its long weekend trek to Rhode Island empty-handed.

The Golden Flyers won two matches to capture the championship of the Eastern College Athletic Conference North Division III tournament, which took place at Rhode Island College in Providence on Saturday, Nov. 14.

Nazareth opened the tournament by defeating Clark University in a grueling three-hour, five-game match 15-13, 7-15, 4-15, 15-8, 15-10. The Golden Flyers then disposed of Smith College 16-14, 15-12, 15-12 to win the title.

"It was a long trip, but it was worth it," Nazareth coach Sandy Schencke said. "We could have given up in our first match, but we hung in there, and it paid off. We knew if we had lost, it was a long ride home."

The tournament closed the book on yet another impressive season for the Golden Flyers, who finished 33-16-1 to crack the 30-victory mark for the eighth consecutive season.

One of the keys to the team's ECAC title was balanced production, as Schencke received strong contributions from eight players. Against Clark University, senior captain Mary Kay Botsford (Ontario) recorded eight blocks and five kills, and senior teammate Tina Wolfley (Alexander) added seven kills.

Sophomores Megan McGrath (Medina) contributed eight blocks and 12 kills; Kelly Smith (Broadalbin) added two blocks and 12 kills; Wendy Carney (Pittsford) recorded 15 assists; and Shelly Sicks notched 15 assists. Junior Elaine Vadas (Spencerport) added three blocks and eight kills, and Sally Endres (Basom) executed nine kills.

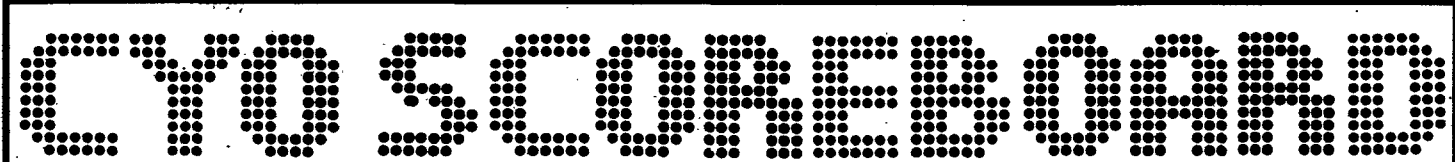
"I was a little worried when we fell behind against Clark," Schencke said. "It took us a little while to get going, but once we settled down, we played well."

In the finals against Smith College of Northampton, Mass., Botsford, McGrath and Endres were dominating once again. Endres, a graduate of Oakfield-Alabama High School, punched home 15 kills. McGrath, a six-foot sophomore from Medina, recorded nine kills and nine blocks, while Botsford — a Wayne Central graduate — notched seven blocks and seven kills.

Sicks and Carney, the Golden Flyer's two main setters, combined for 25 assists.

"This was very satisfying for us," said Schencke, who has compiled a 115-45-1 record in three seasons as coach at Nazareth.

The ECAC tournament victory was the fourth invitational triumph for the Golden Flyers, who also won the Nazareth, Vassar and St. John Invitations.



High School League

- Northwest Division: Pinnacle Lutheran, Christ the King (*), Holy Trinity 111, Blessed Sacrament 44, St. Ambrose 65, St. Margaret Mary 46
Northeast Division: St. Lawrence, St. Charles Borromeo (*), St. John (Greece), Sacred Heart (*), Mother of Sorrow, Most Precious Blood (*), St. Pius X 73, Holy Cross 64
Southeast Division: St. Joseph (Pen.) 76, Resurrection 60, Good Shepherd 90, St. John (Humboldt) 50, JCC 47, Faith Lutheran 26, St. Thomas More 102, St. Louis 38, St. John (Fpt.), Assumption (*)
Southwest Division: Holy Name, Holy Family (*), Holy Ghost 67, St. Monica 55, Good Counsel 59, St. Anne 48, St. John (Spn.), St. Theodore (*)

Junior High Boys' League

- Northwest Division: Sacred Heart, St. Anthony of Padua (*), Holy Cross, Most Precious Blood (*), St. Rita, Mother of Sorrow (*), St. Lawrence 67, St. John (Greece) 24, St. Thomas the Apostle 36, St. John (Spn.) 34
Southwest Division: Holy Ghost 44, Charles House 40, St. Anne/St. Boniface, St. Theodore (*), Good Counsel, Seton (*), St. Pius Tenth 58, Holy Rosary 34, St. Helen, St. Monica (*)
Northeast Division: St. Cecilia 53, St. Josaphat 19, Christ the King 91, Blessed Sacrament #2 23, St. Salome, Lewis Street (*), St. John (Humboldt) 50, St. Ambrose 36, St. Stanislaus, Holy Trinity (*)
Southeast Division: Sacred Heart, St. Anthony (*), Blessed Sacrament #1 51, Pinnacle Lutheran 37, Good Shepherd, St. Louis (*), St. Joseph (Pen.), Oatka (*), St. John (Fpt.), CYP (Mendon) (*)

Junior High Girls' League

- East Division: Seton 33, Blessed Sacrament 25, St. Joseph (Pen.) 42, St. Rita 13
Good Counsel, Lewis Street (*), St. Louis 55, Christ the King 16
St. John (Spn.), Mother of Sorrows (*), St. Charles 48, Holy Cross 30
West Division: Sacred Heart/Nazareth Hall, St. Ambrose (*), St. Pius Tenth 46, St. Theodore 16

5th and 6th Grade Boys' & Girls' League

- North Division: Holy Cross 42, St. Pius Tenth (A) 18, Holy Ghost, St. Charles Borromeo (*), St. Pius Tenth (B), St. Lawrence (*), St. Thomas the Apostle 80, St. Helen (W) 3, St. Margaret Mary (B), Mother of Sorrow (*), St. John (Spn.), St. Helen (B) (*)
West Division: St. Theodore 22, Nativity 18, Good Counsel, Holy Rosary (*), Holy Family, St. Anthony of Padua (*), St. Margaret Mary 25, Most Precious Blood 17, St. John (Greece) 22, St. Anne 14
South Division: Good Shepherd 40, Bethlehem Lutheran 7, Pinnacle Lutheran, CYP (*), St. John (Hum.) W 63, St. John (Fpt.) W 55
Central Division: Holy Trinity, Christ the King (*), St. John (Fpt.), St. Ambrose (*), St. Rita 26, St. Joseph 16, St. Ambrose (Gold) 56, St. John (Humboldt) Red 15, Lady of Lourdes, St. Andrew (*)

(*) No scores reported

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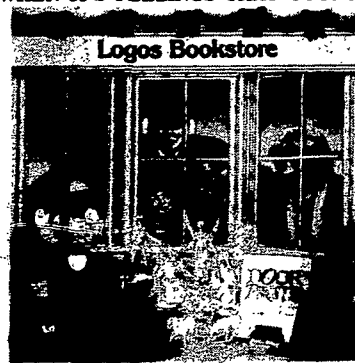
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