

New Haven Register

Sunday, Oct. 23, 1994 by Jim Fuller

Rams take SCC girls' title; Maheu leads Xavier to boys' crown

With each win, the strides and smiles come that much easier for the Cheshire High girls' cross country team. Saturday, the Rams' victory tour made a stop at Racebrook Trails long enough to add the Southern Connecticut Conference title to the New Haven County Classic title and the Varsity III championship at the Windham Invitational they won earlier in the season. The boys' race was won by Xavier of Middletown with 47 points. The Falcons also had the individual champion, Steve Maheu, who finished the 3.1-mile course in 16:24.92.

"Having five girls make all-conference, it's a coach's dream," Cheshire coach Rob Schaefer said. "They've been working so hard. I think success breeds success. We're starting to get a little excited about girls' cross country at Cheshire High School."

The girls' individual race was won by Lyman Hall of Wallingford senior Allison Ciosek in a time of 15:44.72 over the 2.4-mile course. Mercy of Middletown's Amy Montemerlo was a distant second in 16:01.45. Then came Cheshire's Amy Baxter (third) and Alex Piotrowski (fourth).

Cheshire, ranked third in the state coaches' poll, wrapped up the victory when Jen Martin finished ninth, Kris Dantscher 10th and Lisa Bodnar 11th. All five Rams earned all-SCC honors. Baxter and Piotrowski were first-team picks by virtue of placing in the top eight, and Martin, Dantscher and Bodnar made the second team by placing in the top 16.

The girls' race, which included a false start when a few runners fell before entering the woods, was dominated by Ciosek. Hillhouse's Tawanna Henry took the early lead, bolting ahead from the starting line, but she was caught by Ciosek during the first mile. "I took the lead up the first hill," Ciosek said. "Running hills isn't one of my strengths, but I always tell myself to go, go, go."

Joining Ciosek, Montemerlo, Baxter and Piotrowski on the all-SCC first team were fifth-place finisher Samantha Lang of Mercy, Shelton's Jackie Debicella (sixth), Hamden's Lisa Mayhew (seventh) and West Haven's Michelle Stratz (eighth). Mercy finished second in the team competition with 70 points. Shelton was third with 149.

Maheu said he was just following his coach's instructions. "I didn't know what to expect," Maheu said. "Coach (Bob Michalski) just told us all to be up there (near the lead)." The strategy worked as Josh Winkley and Brendan Hines joined Maheu on the all-conference team by finishing fifth and sixth, respectively, to help the Falcons beat out Notre Dame of West Haven (85) and Guilford (98) for the team title.

The race for second place was the best of the day as Notre Dame's Dan Wilson used a strong finish to pull away from Guilford's Joe McKnight and Mark Katuzney of Sheehan of Wallingford. Wilson finished in 16:40.22, McKnight in 16:41.77 and Katuzney in 16:42.49. They were joined on the all-SCC first team by Ricky Bell of Cross (seventh) and Hamden's Muhammed Dawson (eighth).