

TIMES CHRONICLE GLENSIDE NEWS

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Falcons swoop in, claw District One crown

By: Patrick Foy , Sportswriter

North Penn took first overall in the boys' Class AAA race and Phil-Mont Christian Academy won the boys' Class AA race at the PIAA District One cross-country championships at Lehigh University Oct. 26.

Phil-Mont was the only Class AA school to qualify its entire team for Saturday's PIAA state championship in Hershey.

In Class AAA, Upper Dublin, Coatesville, Council Rock North, Hatboro-Horsham and Holy Ghost Prep all joined North Penn in qualifying their teams for states.

Chris Aldrich of Henderson turned in a time of 15:02 to win the AAA race, while Jenkintown's Greg Ahlswede, finishing the course in 16:19, edged Springfield's Mike Vido to take the AA race.

Phil-Mont Christian Academy: Welcome to the PIAA.

In the school's first ever district meet since joining the PIAA this season, the Falcons swooped into Lehigh University last Friday and clawed the District One Class AA boys' team title.

Jon Shope led the Falcons with a seventh place finish after turning in a time of 16:42. Following right on his tail was Stephen Arena (16:43) in eighth place and Wes Shope (16:45) in ninth.

Also contributing to the Falcons' win were Wes Tomer, who took 12th place with a time of 17:12, Andrew Maienshein (17:23), who came in 16th place and Owen Struck (17:34), who grabbed 21st place.

Coach Chip Struck made a phone call back to school to spread some good news early in the morning after Ceceila Forshee secured a spot in Saturday's state meet in Hershey by placing fourth overall with a time of 19:10.

It turned out the good news for the PMCA community was just beginning.

The Phil-Mont boys entered the district meet ready to battle a strong bunch of schools for the district crown.

After placing second to Holy Ghost in the Bicentennial League meet back on Oct. 18, the Falcons turned their attention to their first district meet.

"I've been saying all along that we were one of a number of teams who had a legitimate chance of winning," said coach Chip Struck. "But when it comes down to that day that doesn't really matter. All that matters is how we do that day."

The Falcons did just fine. They finished with 65 points, overtaking Jenkintown (72) by seven points for the win. Greg Ahlswede paced the Drakes, taking the overall title with a time of 16:19.

"To come to this meet for the first time and win is really special," said Struck. "We really felt like we were a part of all of this (PIAA) while we were there and to represent the school and the district is just really neat."

Struck cited a late September trip to Lehigh to compete in the Paul Short Invitational as a key factor in the Falcons' success last Friday.

"It was a very smart move and I think that it made for an easier transition," said Struck. "I think that we got familiar with where everything is and that really played a big part in getting the win."

The Falcons also got a chance to compete in a big race.

The Paul Short Invitational featured 350 runners, all of whom competed at once. Phil-Mont also got valuable experience competing against the best teams in the area without the restrictions of school size. The Falcons placed 24th out of 50 teams.

That experience will undoubtedly be a big-time benefit at Hershey, where the Falcons' runners will be among about 280 state participants.

Spartans spring into sixth

Springfield finished sixth in the boys' AA race with 114 points. The Spartans were just four points away from third-place Devon Prep. Nonetheless, senior Mike Vido finished second with a time of 16:28, nine seconds behind first-place finisher Greg Ahlswede of Jenkintown. Spartans' coach Chris Mazurek is proud of Springfield's season.

"We had our best seven starters in a number of years," he said. "I was thrilled with the way we ran."

Twelve of Springfield's 14 total runners achieved personal records last Friday, including Vido and sixth-place finisher Matt Finn, who barely missed the cut for states.

"I was disappointed he didn't make it, but thrilled with the way he ran," said Mazurek of Finn. "All in all, it was a beautiful day, everyone ran well, and we're looking for a medal at states for Vido."

Crits qualifies for state meet

Wissahickon had a strong showing in the boys' AAA race, placing 15th.

The Trojans were led by senior Nick Crits, who qualified for states. Crits followed up his first-overall finish in the previous week's Suburban One American Conference meet by coming in fifth at Districts, completing the course in 15:26.

"I'm excited about it," said Crits. "I just wanted to get out, be with the top pack, be in the top five, and run with all the other elite runners around here."

Crits was followed by sophomore Justin Knoebel and senior Carlos Thillet, with respective times of 16:37 and 16:42.

Cardinals take second, head to states

Upper Dublin followed up last week's dominant performance at the Suburban One championship with another elite outing, this time placing second to North Penn in the boys' AAA race.

The Cardinals will join the Knights, along with Coatesville, Council Rock North, Hatboro-Horsham and Holy Ghost Prep in sending their full teams to states. Junior Mike Palmisano ran 10th with a time of 15:40, followed by senior Patrick McLaughlin in 28th and junior Matthew Lorenzo in 29th, who posted identical times of 15:57.

PW pleased with performance

Plymouth Whitmarsh finished 42nd out of 60 schools in the AAA race, but coach Joan Hunter is pleased with the strides that the Colonials have made this season.

"We were 47th last year, so we moved up five places," said Hunter. "I would have liked to be in the 30s, but I'm thrilled that we had four runners under 18 minutes. They're all underclassmen, so that's a great thing."

Anthony Lancaster, Sean McCreesh, Greg Moore, and Calvin Sy all ran in the 17-minute bracket.

"I'm really looking forward to a good season [next year]," said Hunter.

District One Cross Country Championships at Lehigh University

Boys

Class AAA

North Penn 92, Upper Dublin 170, Coatesville 222, Council Rock North 244, Hatboro-Horsham 283, Holy Ghost Prep 298, Penncrest 302, Central Bucks West 327, Central Bucks East 331, West Chester Henderson 341.

1. Chris Aldrich (WCH) 15:02; 2. Mark Dennin (BOY) 15:06; 3. Tyler Jones (CBW) 15:21; 4. Brad Miles (NP) 15:24; 5. Nick Crits (Wiss) 15:26; 6. Zach Montijo (NP) 15:29; 7. Josh Izewski (CBE) 15:33; 8. John Lacolla (WCE) 15:35; 9. Jimmy Tarsnane (PV) 15:38; 10. Mike Palmisano (UD) 15:40; 11. Chris Bodary (BS) 15:40; 12. Sean Steller (UNV) 15:42; 13. Mike Mahoney (CRN) 15:43; 14. Michael Pierce (HGP) 15:47; 15. Kevin Murray (SH) 15:47; 16. Zach Hoagland (NP) 15:47; 17. Will Kellar (WCH) 15:47; 18. Christ Rosato (COA) 15:48; 19. Pierre Lecorre (CBW) 15:49; 20. Nick Bonaventure (PCT) 15:49.

Class AA

Phil-Mont Christian 65, Jenkintown 72, Devon Prep 110, St. Pius X 111, Lansdale Catholic 113, Springfield (Montco) 114, Lower Moreland 144, Christopher Dock 150, New Hope-Solebury 212, Bristol 269, Delco Christian 280, Morrisville 369.

1. Greg Ahlswede (J) 16:19; 2. Mike Vido (S) 16:28; 3. Pio Mandato (LC) 16:38; 4. Dan Day (LC) 16:40; 5. David Evans (DP) 16:41; 6. Matt Finn (S) 16:42; 7. Jon Shope (PMC) 16:42; 8. Stephen Arena (J) 16:43; 9. Wes Shope (PMC) 16:45; 10. Andrew Bone (SPX) 16:56; 11. Brian Cullen (J) 17:10; 12. Wes Tomer (PMC) 17:12; 13. Chris Lacava (SPX) 17:12; 14. Conor Logan (DP) 17:12; 15. Mike Keller (CD) 17:22.

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