

# OVAC cross country championship on

## • Meet set Saturday at Meadowbrook

By JEREMY MIDEI  
Times Leader Sports Writer

There are big meets...and then there are BIG meets. Saturday's Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Cross Country Championship at Meadowbrook is one of the latter.

As many as 44 schools could take part in the purest OVAC championship; runners from all divisions are pitted against one other in one massive race.

### A-AA BOYS

Teams competing: Mount de Chantal (girls only), Weirton Madonna, Cameron, Bridgeport, Linsly, Shadyside, St. John Central, Wellsville, Caldwell, River, Steubenville Central, Monroe Central, Wheeling Central, Shenandoah and Barnesville.

The boys' A-AA race may be the closest and could determine the OVAC's overall champ.

Caldwell and St. John's have locked horns on three occasions: the Redskins were victorious last Saturday in Lancaster, upending the Irish by 11 points, but St. Johns holds the 2-1 advantage.

Caldwell, coached by Dugan Hill, is the returning champion; the Irish of Dennis Delbert were last year's runner-up. The Redskins enter the meet ranked ninth in the Ohio state cross country coaches poll, while fittingly, the Irish are tenth.

"We've gone back and forth during the year," said Delbert. "It will be close. It's a cliché, but it will really come down to who has the better day."

"If both teams are healthy and run to their potential, only a few points will separate them."

### CALDWELL

Caldwell junior Derek Carter was ninth last year and could be the overall champ this season.

Senior Jarrod Saling is number two for the Redskins, while sophomore Justin Seebach and senior Tyler Smith have run well of late and usually finish together.

Shane McLaughlin is Caldwell's fifth man and has been battling sickness. He did not finish his last race in Byesville, the Meadowbrook Invitational.

### ST. JOHN CENTRAL

The Irish are led by the combination of junior Jared Wilson and freshman Zach Yereb who have each taken turns as SJC's number one runner. Wilson was 27th last season.

Junior Nick Habursky has been a rock-solid number three, while sophomores Brett Holubeck, Zach Foster and David Bowman will fight for the four through six slots. And junior Kevin Rico has finished in the top seven in every meet.

Delbert said the Irish had their first sub-par race of the season in Lancaster, but sees several positive signs for this week's rematch.

"Everyone being healthy would be the main one," he said. "But we've run this course earlier in the year and we've seen most of the schools, so familiarity of course and competition will be key."

"We saw Caldwell last week on the regional course but we definitely didn't have our best



JENNY MORGAN

race. The kids are hungry to come back."

The OVAC meet can do funny things to a team however, and the Irish are not immune.

"People pinpoint the OVAC meet and the post-season; the size and importance of this race can put a lot of undue pressure on kids, and they respond to it differently."

The winner of the small school race could emerge as the overall champ, but two schools from 3A might have something to say about it.

### AAA BOYS

Teams competing: Martins Ferry, Tyler Consolidated, Bellaire, Union Local, Magnolia, Oak Glen, St. Clairsville, Harrison Central, Indian Creek and Meadowbrook.

Bellaire and St. Clairsville will once again battle it out for 3A supremacy. St. Clairsville has sandwiched titles around Bellaire's 2001 crown.

### BELLAIRE

In a scenario similar to that of Caldwell and St. Johns, St. Clairsville beat the Big Reds at Lancaster, but Bellaire holds the season record.

Regardless, Bellaire coach Chris Arno has anointed the Red Devils as the prohibitive favorite.

"They're probably the one," he said. "They've run well the last couple of weeks. We've been too inconsistent. Our seniors will have to step up if we're to compete for the title."

But he added that's exactly what has been happening lately.

"We're trying to get mentally refocused for the last week of the season," said Arno. "We've had a good week of practice and some guys have really stepped up. I'm hoping we have our heads on straight for Saturday, and I think we will."

The Big Reds have three seniors who lead the way: Brice Antonik, Phillip Green and Eric Wise. Green and Wise were 25th and 26th at last year's race.

The four through seven slots could shake out any way.

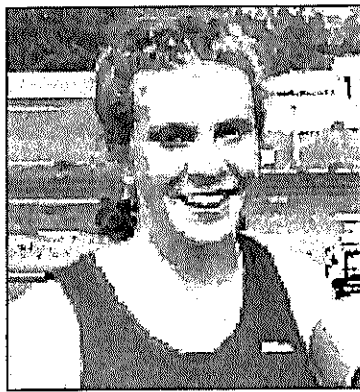
"Brice and Eric have both had to take time off, but we're back to full strength for the first time in two weeks."

"The race for overall champ should be very competitive. Caldwell and St. Johns are the favorites, but four teams could factor in. If anyone slips up, it could open up for anyone."

### ST. CLAIRSVILLE

Coach Tony Cirola has reentered the title picture faster than even he anticipated.

The Red Devils lost four members of last year's team, but could win the 3A title anyway.



AIMEE VAVREK

"Chris has had a couple of setbacks the past couple weeks, but they are always there in the end," he said. "He always puts together a really good team."

Cirola believes one of the Bellaire schools will emerge as the overall champ...but thinks his team could be close as well.

"I think St. Johns will win the overall," said Cirola. "But Bellaire will be right there."

"I think we have the potential to run with those teams, but I'm a little superstitious, so I won't say yes or no."

Cirola did say the backbone of his team was senior Alley Loy, who placed 16th last year.

"Allen really pushes himself," he said. "I respect him because he loves the sport and worked since junior high to improve."

The Red Devil top five is filled out by juniors Matt Ebbert and Jeff Hudock and sophomores Joey DePalma and Casey Creamer.

"We just had our best race of the season so we're kind of keyed up," said Cirola. "It's rare to have a team the caliber of the one we had last year, but this year's team has bounced back quicker than expected."

"Anything's possible, especially if we get the kind of weather that's anticipated."

The weekend forecast calls for rain -- lots of it.

"That's okay with me: the majority of our athletes do their best running in the rain."

### AAAA BOYS

Teams competing: Steubenville, Buckeye Local, Weir, Beaver Local, Cambridge, Edison, East Liverpool, Brooke High, Zanesville, John Marshall and Wheeling Park.

### BUCKEYE LOCAL

Buckeye Local coach Eric Laughlin is also hoping for sloppier conditions.

"The muddier it is, the better we run," said Laughlin. "I don't know what it is. That's the way I've been so maybe I rubbed off on them."

"It takes your mind off

things. You just go out and have fun."

The Panthers will have a good time Saturday if they're able to return to the podium for the first time since 1998. East Liverpool has won the last two 4A trophies, but is muddling through a down year.

Though the Potters, Wheeling Park and Zanesville are the teams on Laughlin's radar.

"Right now I feel pretty good about our chances," said Laughlin. "We've gone head-to-head with Park and Zanesville and beaten them both."

"I would love nothing better than to see St. Johns win A-AA, Bellaire win 3A and us win 4A. It would show the OVAC is the dominant league in the area."

Evan Mathews is the highest returning finisher from last season. He finished 40th a year ago.

Kyle Kull and Mikey Becher are the Panthers' second and third runners. Shane Nickerson, returning from an injury, has secured the number four spot and is a big boost to Buckeye's title hopes.

Jonathan Tomolonis rounds out the top five, while D.J. Peckins and Steven Dobermeskie finish out the team.

"We really benefited from running well against St. Clairsville and Bellaire at Lancaster," added Laughlin. "But we're not worried about overall right now. We'd like to win 4A. We've been an average team lately. We'd like to become better than average."

### A-AA GIRLS

A new champion will likely emerge in the small school division. St. John Central has had a stranglehold on A-AA the past two years, but Barnesville -- recently dropped from 3A -- and Wheeling Central are this year's frontrunners.

### BARNESVILLE

Coach Mark Brown is well aware of the Lady Knights though they haven't matched up with Barnesville this year.

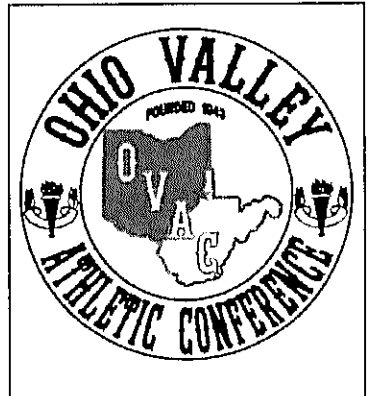
"We've not run against them, but we've seen what they've done," he said.

The Lady Shamrocks biggest strength is the front-running of sophomore Jenny Morgan, junior Kris Schuerhle and senior Molly Morgan.

Jenny was the overall champion last season and is a strong bet to repeat.

"Our top three are running so well," said Brown. "Jenny was fourth at the Great American Cross Country Festival and Kris and Molly were first and second at Lancaster (open race)."

Injuries have decimated the Shamrocks, claiming fourth runner Liza Anderson and fifth girl



Jenny Jefferis. Barnesville will toe the line Saturday with only five girls.

Kate Schuerhle and Ashli Anderson will have a lot to say about where Barnesville finishes.

"I think we can have three in the top ten, so a lot will depend on Kate and Ashli," said Brown. "I've been pleased with how they ran recently, especially at Malone. They've been in the low 23s and are getting better."

Last year marked the first times in eons the Lady Shamrocks did not win an OVAC title. They'd like to rectify that this season.

"We've won so many years and there are all these banners hanging in our gym, but we want another."

### WHEELING CENTRAL

Standing in the way will be Wheeling Central -- ranked third in West Virginia -- which presents a contrast to the top-heavy Shamrocks.

Central's pack-running has dominated most races and coach Wayne Rutter thinks it will be an advantage in this race as well.

"We've been strong all year," he said. "Our team scores have been exceptionally low in the bigger races. Our spread from one to five is very small and should be advantageous."

The Lady Knights are led by junior Kallen Weaver, who has two victories to her resume this season.

Ashley Wolfe is number two for Rutter, while freshmen Lauren Bauer and Stephanie Caruso have provided a shot in the arm at three and four.

Bethany Sloane is Central's number five runner. She was Central's first finisher at 19th last year, while Weaver, who ran

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Bethany Sloane is Central's number five runner. She was Central's first finisher at 19th last year, while Weaver, who ran

for Linsly last season, was 22nd.

"This is my 13th year and we used to sit in back or leave before the awards ceremony," Rutter said. "Now we sit up front and look forward to it."

### AAA GIRLS

**BELLAIRE** Arno's Bellaire girls are the meet's only clear-cut favorite, despite the loss of number two runner Audra Frizzi, who's out indefinitely.

"We've been really consistent on the girls' front," said Arno. "Girls keep stepping up."

They did last year as well: Bellaire was the overall and 3A champ last season.

"We should be able to defend our title successfully."

Senior Aimee Vavrek who, as a member of the Bellaire Homecoming court, will run instead of attending Saturday's parade, leads the Lady Reds. She was third last season.

Sophomore Katie Antonik, senior Chelsey Taylor and freshman Jessi Boston have comprised the top four along with Vavrek the last several weeks.

"We ran without Audra last Saturday and our kids stepped up at a big meet and ran well."

Bellaire captured the Lancaster Invitational title last weekend.

"We'll need a good solid effort to do well in our conference and overall. Barnesville and Wheeling Central could put some heat on us."

Injuries have been the main issue for Arno's team. Aside from Frizzi, junior Jade Tuttle has also battled through nagging ailments.

"Jade's frustrated, but she had a pretty good race on a difficult Lancaster course and I think mentally she's back into it," said Arno.

Injuries may slow the Big Reds down, but the anticipated weather will not.

"It suits our girls because they're strong runners," Arno said. "They get better as the race develops. They're mentally tough enough to adapt to conditions and they know what they have to do."

In 4A, the Wheeling Park Lady Patriots are the slight favorite in a weak field.

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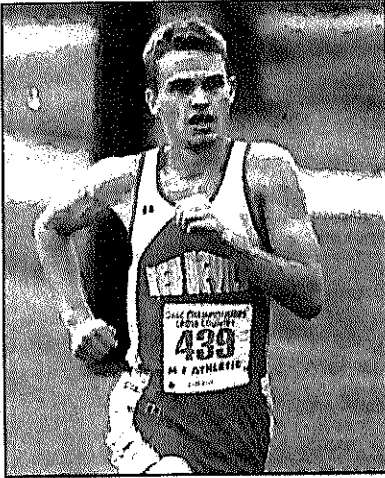
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**BUCKEYE LOCAL**

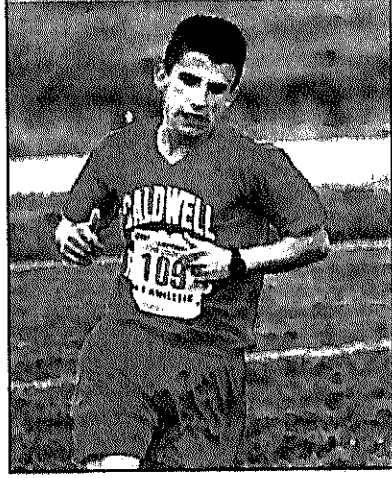
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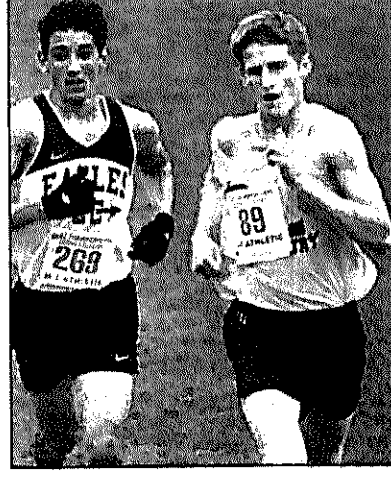
"It takes your mind off



T-L Photo/JOEL JOSEPH  
**ST. CLAIRSVILLE'S** Allen Loy  
 wins the Class AAA title.



T-L Photo/JOEL JOSEPH  
**CALDWELL'S** Derek Carter  
 wins the boys' overall crown.



T-L Photo/JOEL JOSEPH  
**BUCKEYE'S** Evan Matthews  
 (right) wins the 4-A crown.



T-L Photo/JOEL JOSEPH  
**BARNESVILLE'S** Jenny  
 Morgan cruised to overall title.

## Bellaire, SJC capture overall titles



T-L Photo/JOEL JOSEPH  
**A PACK** of the area's elite runners compete in Saturday afternoon's OVAC Cross Country Championship at Meadowbrook High School. From left, are St. John Central's Brianne Catran, Bellaire's Aimee Vavrek, Barnesville's Kris Schuerle, Martins Ferry's Amy Bruney and Barnesville's Molly Morgan.

• Barnesville, SJC, Bellaire, St. C. claim OVAC CC crowns

By **SETH STASKEY**  
 Times Leader Sports Writer

Byesville was alive and running Saturday morning.

Some 35 schools got together to embark on a 3.1 run to settle the OVAC cross country championships at Meadowbrook High School.

A few familiar faces took home both the coveted team individual trophies.

Bellaire's girls captured their first overall championship and second straight 3-A title thanks to an impressive 53 points.

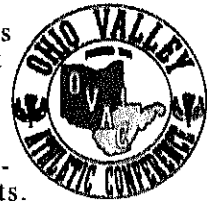
Barnesville finished second overall and as victors in the 1-A/2-A class for the 10th time in school history.

St. John Central's boys claimed the overall championship with 81 points and won the 1-A/2-A title in the process.

St. Clairsville won their second straight 3-A title and finished third overall with 104 points. Buckeye Local won the 4-A title and finished fifth overall with 117 points.

Buckeye Local's boys claimed the 4-A crown, closing with 117 markers. Wheeling Park's girls took home the 4-A team trophy.

**THE LADY BIG REDS**, needless to say, have been the dominant team this



See, **OVAC**, Page C5

# OVAC CC Results

## BOYS

**OVERALL TEAM SCORES:** 1. St. John Central, 81; 2. Caldwell, 96; 3. St. Clairsville, 104; 4. Bellaire, 112; 5. Buckeye Local, 117; 6. Zanesville, 234; 7. Wheeling Central, 247; 8. Union Local, 263; 9. Meadowbrook, 267; 10. Shadyside, 295; 11. John Marshall, 297; 12. Cambridge, 302; 13. Harrison Central, 308; 14. Wheeling Park, 322; 15. Martins Ferry, 350; 16. Indian Creek, 425; 17. Shenandoah, 476; 18. East Liverpool, 502; 19. River, 511; 20. Edison, 517; 21. Brooke, 564; 22. Linsly, 605.

**OVERALL TOP 25:** 1. Derek Carter (CAL), 16:55; 2. Tyler Morando (WCC), 17:22; 3. Allen Loy (STC), 17:28; 4. Justin McEidowney (MAG), 17:29; 5. Evan Mathews (BL), 17:32; 6. Josh Benyon (MEAD), 17:42; 7. Jared Wilson (SJC), 17:43; 8. Jarrod Saling (CAL), 17:54; 9. Kyle Kull (BL), 17:54; 10. Zach Yereb (SJC), 17:56; 11. Joey DePalma (STC), 17:58; 12. Tyler Tenley (HC), 18:03; 13. Brice Antonik (BEL), 18:04; 14. Matt Gilloon (SCC), 18:06; 15. Eric Wise (BEL), 18:08; 16. Dusty Fowkes (UL), 18:09; 17. Shane Melanko (SHA), 18:09; 18. Anthony Miller (ZAN), 18:09; 19. Ben Gotschall (CAM), 18:10; 20. Mike Becher (BL), 18:12; 21. Austin Carney (ZAN), 18:15; 22. Allen Byard (JM), 18:17; 23. Nick Habursky (SJC), 18:17; 24. David Bowman (SJC), 18:18; 25. Zach Foster (SJC), 18:19.

**A-AA TEAM SCORES:** 1. St. John Central, 75; 2. Caldwell, 90; 3. Wheeling Central, 247; 4. Shadyside, 295; 5. Shenandoah, 476; 6. River, 511; 7. Linsly, 605.

**A-AA TOP TEN:** 1. Carter (CAL); 2. Morando (WCC); 3. Wilson (SJC); 4. Saling (CAL); 5. Yereb (SJC); 6. Gilloon (SCC); 7. Melanko (SHA); 8. Habursky (SJC); 9. Bowman (SJC); 10. Foster (SJC).

**AAA TEAM SCORES:** 1. St. Clairsville, 104; 2. Bellaire, 112; 3. Union Local, 263; 4. Meadowbrook, 267; 5. Harrison Central, 308; 6. Martins Ferry, 350; 7. Indian Creek, 425.

**AAA TOP TEN:** 1. Loy (STC); 2. McEidowney (MAG); 3. Benyon (MEAD); 4. DePalma (SJC); 5. Tenley (HC); 6. Antonik (BEL); 7. Wise (BEL); 8. Fowkes (UL); 9. Phillip Green (BEL), 18:21; 10. Eric White (UL), 18:23.

**AAAA TEAM SCORES:** 1. Buckeye Local, 111; 2. Zanesville, 234; 3. John Marshall, 297; 4. Cambridge, 302; 5. Wheeling Park, 322; 6. East Liverpool, 502; 7. Edison, 517; 8. Brooke, 564.

**AAAA TOP TEN:** 1. Mathews (BL); 2. Kull (BL); 3. Miller (ZAN); 4. Gotschall (CAM); 5. Becher (BL); 6. Carney (ZAN); 7. Byard (JM); 8. Jonathan Tomalonis (BL), 18:49; 9. Dustin Daugherty (CAM), 18:52; 10. Kevin Narrish (WP), 18:59.

## GIRLS

**OVERALL TEAM SCORES:** 1. Bellaire, 53; 2. Barnesville, 60; 3. Wheeling Central, 82; 4. Martins Ferry, 123; 5. Caldwell, 181; 6. Tyler Consolidated, 188; 7. Wheeling Park, 191; 8. Shadyside, 210; 9. Zanesville, 213; 10. Meadowbrook, 250; 11. Harrison Central, 258; 12. St. Clairsville, 274; 13. John Marshall, 310; 14. Cambridge, 314.

**OVERALL TOP 25:** 1. Jenny Morgan (BAR), 17:48; 2. Kris Schuerle (BAR), 19:53; 3. Molly Morgan (BAR), 20:15; 4. Brianna Cattran (SJC), 20:20; 5. Amy Bruney (MF), 20:41; 6. Kallen Weaver (WC), 20:54; 7. Aimee Vavrek (BEL), 21:02; 8. Samantha McIntosh (HC), 21:04; 9. Katie Antonik (BEL), 21:32; 10. Marissa Melanko (SHA), 21:35; 11. Jessi Boston (BEL), 21:38; 12. Hanna Robinson (Cameron), 21:39; 13. Jessie Teske (Cameron), 21:46; 14. Lauren Bauer (WC), 21:51; 15. Stephanie Caruso (WC), 21:51; 16. Chelsey Taylor (BEL), 22:00; 17. Bethany Sloane (WC), 22:06; 18. Marisa Matanzo (SCC), 22:08; 19. Megan Miller (ZAN), 22:11; 20. Jade Tuttle (BEL), 22:17; 21. Brittany Crosby (BEL), 22:18; 22. Kristan McCabe (JM), 22:20; 23. Kathryn Jones (BEL), 22:25; 24. Kelsey Bugher (MEAD), 22:27; 25. Ashli Anderson (BAR), 22:28.

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## OVAC

Continued from Page C1

season, and that trend continued Saturday.

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Senior Chelsey Taylor was 16th overall in 22:00, while junior Jade Tuttle finished 20th in 22:17.

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Martins Ferry finished second in 3-A with 123 points and fourth overall.

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Sophomore Jenny Morgan captured her second straight OVAC overall title after she turned in a blazing 17:48, which

was more than two minutes faster than her nearest competitor. In just a year's time, Morgan shaved some 42 seconds off her time.

"I am really proud of our entire team," the personable Morgan said. "We ran totally awesome. We talked about our strategy of not falling asleep and relaxing on the second and third miles."

As for her 17:48, which would have earned the eighth place award in the boys' race, the reigning state runnerup said, "I felt really good today. I have been totally blessed with this ability and I don't want to waste any of it."

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One Lady Irish who made it to the line was senior standout Brianna Cattran. She earned all conference for the fourth straight season thanks to a fourth place finish in 20:20.

Shadyside placed one girl into the meet's top 10. Freshman dandy Marissa Melanko led Coach Joel Joseph's squad with a 10th place effort in 21:35.

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The Irish had knocked off Caldwell all season other than last weekend at Lancaster, but the Irish were able to gain revenge when it counted most.

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The third through fifth runners followed one another in the finish line. Junior Habursky (18:17), sophomore David Bowman (18:18) sophomore Zach Foster (19:11) finished 23rd through 25th.

"We don't have a guy coming who is winning the individual title each week, but we have seven solid guys, and that's the key," Delbert said. "This team sport and being solid way through is the key."

Caldwell produced the top individual winner. Junior Derek Carter captured the title in 16:55. The Redskins' Jarrod Saling was eighth overall in 17:54.

Shadyside placed one girl into the meet's top 20 to earn a conference. Senior Marissa Melanko was 17th in 18:06. Stuebenville Central's Gilloon was 14th overall in 18:06.

ST. CLAIRSVILLE was posed to endure a downturn after winning the 2002 conference title and losing four of the five runners to graduation.

Coach Tony Cirotti's Devils persevered and have bounced back-to-back in Class 3-A.

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# Results

## ● OVAC

Continued from Page C1

### BOYS

St. John Central, 81; 2. Caldwell, 96; 3. 5. Buckeye Local, 117; 6. Zanesville, 234; 7. Union Local, 263; 9. Meadowbrook, 267; 10. Hill, 297; 12. Cambridge, 302; 13. Harrison Central, 322; 15. Martins Ferry, 350; 16. Indian Creek, 400; 18. East Liverpool, 502; 19. River, 511; 20. Linsly, 605.

1. Carter (CAL), 16:55; 2. Tyler Morando (SJC), 17:28; 4. Justin McEldowney (MAG), 17:42; 6. Josh Benyon (MEAD), 17:42; 7. Jared Ling (CAL), 17:54; 9. Kyle Kull (BL), 17:54; 11. Joey DePalma (STC), 17:58; 12. Tyler Antonik (BEL), 18:04; 14. Matt Gilloon (SCC), 18:09; 16. Dusty Fowkes (UL), 18:09; 17. Shane Miller (ZAN), 18:09; 19. Ben Gotschall (L), 18:12; 21. Austin Carney (ZAN), 18:15; 23. Nick Habursky (SJC), 18:17; 24. David Foster (SJC), 18:19.

1. Harrison Central, 75; 2. Caldwell, 90; 3. Wheeling Central, 95; 4. Shenandoah, 476; 6. River, 511; 7. Linsly,

8. Wilson (SJC); 4. 6. Gilloon (SCC); 7. Melanko (SHA); 8. 10. Foster (SJC).

1. Clairsville, 104; 2. Bellaire, 112; 3. Union Local, 112; 5. Harrison Central, 308; 6. Martins Ferry,

7. McEldowney (MAG); 3. Benyon (MEAD); 4. 3. Antonik (BEL); 7. Wise (BEL); 8. Fowkes; 10. Eric White (UL), 18:23.

1. Buckeye Local, 111; 2. Zanesville, 234; 3. John Central, 111; 5. Wheeling Park, 322; 6. East Liverpool, 4.

1. Kull (BL); 3. Miller (ZAN); 4. Gotschall ney (ZAN); 7. Byard (JM); 8. Jonathan Daugherty (CAM), 18:52; 10. Kevin Narrish

### GIRLS

1. Bellaire, 53; 2. Barnesville, 60; 3. Wheeling Central, 60; 5. Caldwell, 181; 6. Tyler Consolidated, Shadyside, 210; 9. Zanesville, 213; 10. Harrison Central, 258; 12. St. Clairsville, 274; 13. John

1. Morgan (BAR), 17:48; 2. Kris Schuerle (BAR), 18:05; 4. Brianna Cattran (SJC), 20:20; 5. Amy Aver (WC), 20:54; 7. Aimee Vavrek (BEL), 21:04; 9. Katie Antonik (BEL), 21:32; 10. 1. Jessi Boston (BEL), 21:38; 12. Hanna Tessie Teske (Cameron), 21:46; 14. Lauren Caruso (WC), 21:51; 16. Chelsey Taylor (WC), 22:06; 18. Marisa Matanzo (SCC), 22:11; 20. Jade Tuttle (BEL), 22:17; 21. Kristan McCabe (JM), 22:20; 23. Kathryn Ugher (MEAD), 22:27; 25. Ashli Anderson

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1. Wheeling Park, 191; 2. Zanesville, 213; 3. 14.

1. 2. McCabe (JM); 3. Lindsey Duneway (Edison), 22:48; 5. Tia Morre (BL), 23:17; 7. Missy Basich (BL), 23:22; 8. Danielle (WV), 23:48; 10. Jennifer Gibson (CAM),

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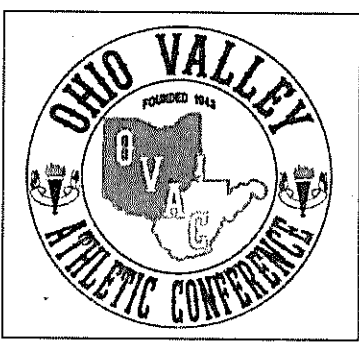
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"I didn't think we would bounce back (from graduation losses) this quick. A couple of years ago, we won, but we took a

few years off, and then came back last year," Ciroli said.

The Devils' cupboard was far from bare, seeing that senior Allen Loy returned for his final campaign.

"Allen has been a great leader for this team," Ciroli said. "You couldn't ask for a better kid. He has been a workhorse throughout the season."

Loy failed to disappoint, finishing third overall and first in 3-A with a 17:28.

Junior Joey DePalma earned all conference, finishing 11th overall in 17:58.

Matt Ebbert, Jeff Hudock and Casey Creamer finished 31st, 35th and 36th, respectively to round out the scoring Devils.

"I have a great group of kids and a great leader," Ciroli offered. "All these kids want to do is come out and compete, and hopefully do well."

Bellaire -- which won the OVAC title in 2001 -- settled for the runner-up hardware for the second straight season.

The Big Reds were led by senior Brice Antonik who was 13th overall in a time of 18:04. Classmate Eric Wise was 15th overall in 18:08.

Union Local produced an all-OVAC performer in junior Dusty Fowkes who finished 16th overall in 18:09.

Harrison Central's Tyler Tenley took home the 12th place award with a time of 18:03.

BUCKEYE LOCAL entered the 4-A meet as one of the favorites and the Panthers were able to get it done.

"I am really proud of our kids," said Panther coach Eric Laughlin. "They all did a great job and ran very well."

The Panthers were paced by junior Evan Mathews who was the first 4-A runner across the line. He closed in fifth place with a 17:32.

Senior Kyle Kull was ninth overall in 17:54 and Mike Beecher ran a season best time of 18:12 to finish 20th overall and third on the Panthers.

Jonathan Tomalonis and Shane Nickerson rounded out the top five for the Panthers.

"I was getting a little nervous through the first half mile or so," Laughlin explained. "Once, I saw where we were at the mile, I thought we had a very good chance."

The championship meets continue for the next month in prep cross country. This week's meet takes most local teams to Buckeye Local High School for the Ohio Valley Cross Country League Championship before the OHSAA competition begins.

OVAC CROSS COUNTRY

# Bellaire, Irish Claim Crowns

*Barnesville's Morgan repeats as girls' champion*

Barnesville's girls turned in a 1-2-3 performance Saturday at the OVAC Cross Country Championships, but it was Bellaire that took home the overall gold.

Paced by better scoring among the team's fourth and fifth runners, Chris Arno's Big Reds captured their first overall conference title at the 3.1-mile Meadowbrook High School course in Byesville.

Bellaire also captured its second-straight Class AAA championship. The Shamrocks brought home the Class AA/A crown after dropping down a class this year. Wheeling Park captured the Class AAAA title.

Bellaire St. John claimed the Class AA/A and overall title on the boys' side. It was the third boys crown in school history and first since 1995 for coach Dennis Delbert's bunch.

St. Clairsville repeated as Class AAA champions, while Buckeye Local finished fifth overall, but won the Class AAAA championship.

Barnesville sophomore Jenny Morgan raced to her second-consecutive overall girls crown with a time of 17:48.2, a little more than two minutes ahead of second-place runner, and Shamrock teammate, Kris Schuerle finished with a time of 19:53.3. Molly Morgan, Jenny's older sister, finished third overall with a time of 20:15.92.

The Shamrocks were without the services of their regular fourth and fifth runners.

Caldwell's Derek Carter raced to the overall title on the boys side with a time of 16:55.7. Wheeling Central's Tyler Morando was second with a time of 17:22.06, while St. Clairsville's Loy Allen crossed the finish line in third place with a time of 17:28.27.

Aimee Vavrek, continuing her recovery from a late August automobile accident, earned all-OVAC honors for the fourth-straight year and was Bellaire's top runner as she took seventh place overall with a time of 21:02.72. Teammate Katie Antonik was two spots behind, in ninth, where she clocked a 21:32.98. The Big Reds' Jessi Boston was 11th with a time of 21:46.34.

Bellaire placed two more run-



Jenny Morgan

ners in the top 20 and that gave the team the edge it needed to overcome Barnesville. Chelsey Taylor was 16th overall with a time of 22:00.68, while Jade Tuttle was 20th with a time of 22:17.

Others scoring for Barnesville were Asli Anderson (25th, 22:28) and Kate Schuerle (42nd, 23:10.8).

Wheeling Central's girls were third overall and second in Class AA/A, paced by Kallen Weaver, who finished sixth overall with a time of 20:54.64.

Martins Ferry's Amy Bruney was the top Class AAA individual runner on the girls' side. She finished fifth overall with a time of 20:41.52.

The Purple Rider girls finished fourth overall as a team.

Class AAAA champion Wheeling Park was paced by Lindsay Duneway, who crossed the finish line 26th overall with a time of 22:29.36.

Bellaire St. John's girls didn't figure into the team scores due to runners out because of injuries, but the Irish's Brienne Cattran impressed with her fourth-place overall finish with a time of 20:20.84.

The Irish boys were paced by Jared Wilson, who took seventh-place with a time of 17:52.3. Teammate Zac Yereb was 10th overall in 17:56.67. The team cruised to the title thanks to Nick Harbursky, David Bowman, and Zac Foster, who finished in

places 23-25 overall.

In addition to Loy, St. Clairsville was aided by Joey DePalma's 11th place finish in 17:58.45.

Bellaire finished fourth overall, paced by Brice Antonik's ninth-place finish in 18:04.52.

Buckeye Local's Evan Mathews took fifth overall with a time of 17:32.54, while teammate Kyle Kull was ninth in 17:54.28.

Magnolia's Justin McEl-downey, who was racing as an individual, turned in a fourth-place performance with a time of 17:29.68.

BOYS

Overall Team Scores

1. Bell. St. John 81, 2. Caldwell 96, 3. St. Clairsville 104, 4. Bellaire 112, 5. Buckeye Local 117, 6. Zanesville 234, 7. Wheeling Central 247, 8. Union Local 263, 9. Meadowbrook 267, 10. Shadyside 295, 11. John Marshall 297, 12. Cambridge 302, 13. Harrison Central 308, 14. Wheeling Park 322, 15. Martins Ferry 350, 16. Indian Creek 425, 17. Shenandoah 476, 18. East Liverpool 5-2, 19. River 511, 20. Edison 517, 21. Brooke 564, 22. Linsly 605.

Top Overall Individuals

1. Derek Carter (Cald) 16:55.7, 2. Morando (WC) 17:22.06, 3. Loy (St.C) 17:28.27, 4. McEl-downey (Mag) 17:29.68, 5. Mathews (BL) 17:32.54, 6. Beynon (Mead) 17:42.32, 7. Wilson (BSJ) 17:52.3, 8. Saling (Cald) 17:54.06, 9. Kull (BL) 17:54.28, 10. Yereb (BSJ) 17:56.67, 11. DePalma (St.C) 17:58.45, 12. Tenley (HC) 18:03.67, 13. Antonik (Bel) 18:04.52, 14. Gilloon (SCC) 18:06.56, 15. Wise (Bel) 18:08.84.

Top Five Class AAAA Individuals

- Mathews (BL) 17:32.54; Kull (BL) 17:54.28; Miller (Zanes) 18:09.9; Gotschall (Cam) 18:10.56; Beecher (BL) 18:12.11.

Top Five Class AAA Individuals

- Loy (St.C) 17:28.27; McEl-downey (Mag) 17:29.68; Beynon (Mead) 17:42.32; DePalma (St.C) 17:58.45; Tenley (HC) 18:03.67.

Top Five Class AA/A Individuals

- Carter (Cald) 16:55.7; Morando (WC) 17:22.06; Wilson (BSJ) 17:52.3; Saling (Cald) 17:54.06; Yereb (BSJ) 17:56.67.

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Top Overall Individuals

1. Jenny Morgan (Barnes) 17:48.2, 2. Schuerle (Barnes) 19:53.3, 3. M. Morgan (Barnes) 20:15.92, 4. Cattran (BSJ) 20:20.84, 5. Bruney (MF) 20:41.52, 6. Weaver (WC) 20:54.64, 7. Vavrek (Bel) 21:02.72, 8. McIntosh (HC) 21:04.26, 9. Antonik (Bel) 21:32.98, 10. Melanko (Shady) 21:35.41, 11. Boston (Bel) 21:38.36, 12. Robinson (Cam) 21:39.29, 13. Teska (Cam) 21:46.34, 14. Bauer (WC) 21:51.66, 15. Caruso (WC) 21:51.94.

Top Five Class AAAA Individuals

- Miller (Zanes) 22:11.92; McCabe (JM) 22:20.9; Duneway (WP) 22:29.36; Thompson (Edi) 22:48.24; Morre (BL) 23:17.03.

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- Bruney (MF) 20:41.52; Vavrek (Bel) 21:02.72; McIntosh (HC) 21:04.26; Antonik (Bel) 21:32.98; Boston (Bel) 21:38.36.

Top Five Class AA/A Individuals

- J. Morgan (Barnes) 17:48.2; Schuerle (Barnes) 19:53.3; M. Morgan (Barnes) 20:15.92; Cattran (BSJ) 20:20.84; Weaver (WC) 20:54.64.