

## SPORTS

## OVAC Cal Pokas CC Championship

## Red Devils capture overall title

• St. C.'s Thornburg wins individual title; St. John prevails in Class 1A/2A

By SETH STASKEY  
Times Leader Sports Editor

BYESVILLE — The cross country season is getting down to the nitty gritty.

The annual OVAC Cal Pokas Cross Country Championship kicked off a five-week stretch of important meets Saturday morning at Meadowbrook High School.

As coaches and runners strategically plan their workout regimens for the next couple of weeks before the postseason begins, all hands were on deck as teams were aiming to win the conference title.

St. Clairsville's boys, who have been the area's premier team all season, continued to flex its muscle as it captured the overall title with just 61 points. Along with the overall title, the Red Devils claimed their ninth class championship, but first in 4A after moving up in the OVAC's new five-class system.

"The boys ran well," said Devils' head coach Tony Ciroli. "All of my kids stepped up today. Every one of them, and that's something we'll continue to need as we continue on."

St. John Central got back to its winning ways after winning the 2010 title only to have it stripped by the OHSAA due to the use of an ineligible runner. The Fighting Irish took care of their business in the 1A/2A combined race, accumulating 169 points, which was good enough for fifth overall. The Irish finished just 16 points ahead of Caldwell.

"We're pretty happy with how we ran today,"



T-L Photos/SETH STASKEY

ABOVE: St. Clairsville senior Andy Thornburg leads the pack during the early stages of the OVAC Cross Country Championship Saturday morning at Meadowbrook High School in Byesville. Thornburg, despite falling down during the race, repeated as the champion in a time of 16:03. Trailing him is University's Jordan Brown-Strobbe (left) and teammate Drake Walker (left).

INSET LEFT: St. John Central's Ramon Nieves comes to the finish line in third place overall and first amongst small-school runners. Nieves led the Irish to the team title.

INSET RIGHT: St. Clairsville senior Melanie Hannan was the Lady Red Devils' second finisher. She was eighth overall. Additional images may be found at [cu.timesleaderonline.com](http://cu.timesleaderonline.com)

## Lady Devils capture 4A class crown

By SETH STASKEY  
Times Leader Sports Editor

BYESVILLE — When the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference expanded, many thought University, Morgantown and Parkersburg South would significantly alter the landscape.

After Saturday's OVAC Cal Pokas Cross Country Championship at Meadowbrook High School, it's highly evident the thoughts have turned into reality.

The Lady Hawks and Lady Mohigans ran away from the field and turned the meet, which featured more than 20 full teams and 180 runners, into a dual meet, which could have been contested in Monongalia County.

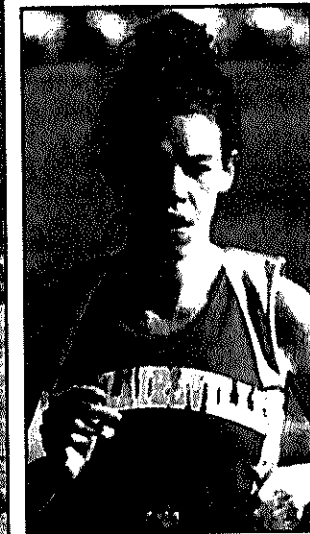
Thanks to their fifth girl, who finished just one spot ahead of Morgantown's, the Lady Hawks claimed their second straight OVAC big-school girls' title and this year notched the school's first overall title. Both University and Morgantown finished with 49 points.

St. Clairsville finished third overall and claimed its fifth consecutive OVAC class 4A title with 115 points.

"We came in with the idea of shooting for the moon and landing among the stars," said St. C. head coach Tony Ciroli. "I told the girls, 'let's shoot for the overall, and in the process, hopefully we'll win our class. We knew University and Morgantown were good, but the kids knew what we had to do today.'"

Fort Frye made school history by winning its first-ever OVAC girls' title. The Lady Cadets finished with 231 points, which was good enough for sixth overall, but tops amongst its class. Barnesville was the runnerup.

The small-school crown went to the Caldwell Redskins, giving them their second title. Their previous crown came in 1994. River finished



See, BOYS, Page C2

See, GIRLS, Page C2

## ● Boys

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said Irish head coach Jeremy Midei. "By in large, I thought we ran a pretty good race. I think we have some things we need to work on before the postseason, but I think every team could probably say that. We knew Caldwell would be tough. We just wanted to get back to winning that single A, double A title."

Magnolia won its 10th OVAC cross country title, but first since 1990. The Blue Eagles finished with 209 points in a Class 3A division, which featured just one other school (Bellaire) with a full squad.

University won the 5A class and finished second overall 68 points. The Hawks edged out city-rival Morgantown for the large-school banner. Wheeling Park finished third in 5A.

**THE RED DEVILS** not only won their second consecutive overall crown, but they also produced the meet's individual champion for the third consecutive season.

Senior standout Andy Thornburg turned in a strong time of 16:03 to win his second consecutive title and kept it in his family for the third straight year as his brother, Alex, won in 2009.

"I feel like my brother and I have made a mark (on this meet)," Thornburg said. "I am feeling pretty good. I had a couple of meets in the middle of the season where I was struggling a little bit, but I felt good today. Hopefully, I can keep it going."

Thornburg and University's Jordan Stobbe-Brown went back-and-forth through much of the race. Thornburg led the race early, but between the first and second mile marks, slipped and fell for the first



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE'S** Cole Antolak heads for the finish line in Saturday's OVAC Cross Country Championship.

time in his running career, allowing Stobbe-Brown to surge to the front.

However, the Hawks' senior proceeded to go down, himself, which reopened the door for Thornburg, who had regained the lead, to pull away. From there, the Red Devils' all-Ohioan didn't look back.

"There's a little bank out there, and I just slid down it," Thornburg said. "He just slid around a turn, so I guess we both needed longer spikes."

Thornburg won the race by more than seven seconds.

"The race pretty much went as I expected," Thornburg said. "(Stobbe-Brown) and I battled throughout much of the race. We went back-and-forth. I don't think either of us had a lead much bigger than a quarter of a mile."

Four of the five Red Devils' scorers earned all-Ohio recognition and the fifth just missed the top 25.

Junior standout Drake

Walker continued his strong season, posting a fifth place finish in a time of 16:40. Junior Joey Davies was 14th overall and third for St. C. in 17:13. Senior Cole Antolak turned in a sharp effort, placing 15th in a time of 17:16.

Rounding out the scoring for the Red Devils was sophomore Alex Timko, who placed 28th in a time of 18:04.

**THE FIGHTING IRISH** didn't even talk about last year's events as they prepared and geared up to try to win their 10th OVAC title and eighth under Midei's watch.

"None of the stuff from last year played into this," Midei said. "It's a good feeling to win an OVAC title regardless of what's happened in the past. We just wanted to come out and run our best because the ghosts of that don't carry over to today for these guys. They just wanted to run well."

The Irish were led by tal-

ented senior Ramon Nieves, who finished third in the race overall in a time of 16:29.

He was joined on the all-OVAC squad by junior Corey Leasure, who finished sixth overall in a time of 16:46, and senior Matt Thomas, who placed 19th in 17:36.

Sophomore Aaron Ebbert was 78th overall and fourth for SJC in 19:23. Sophomore Garrett Holubeck finished 83rd overall in a time of 19:40 to round out the Green's scoring.

"I didn't want these guys to try to run for this or for that," Midei said. "We wanted them to run for themselves, run for their teammates and, most importantly, run for the OVAC title. There's enough value in that to make it worth our while."

**THE BLUE EAGLES** might have been the happiest team of any when the OVAC announced it was expanding to five classes.

The Blue Eagles were led by senior Bill Feehey, who finished fourth overall in a time of 16:31. Classmate Alec Himerman was ninth overall in a time of 16:50.

Barnesville's Christopher Baker earned a spot on the all-OVAC team by virtue of his 24th place finish in a time of 17:55.

**THE HAWKS** prevailed by virtue of having all five of their runners earn all-conference.

Wheeling Park, which owns 10 OVAC titles, finished third and was led by all-OVAC runner Tyler Long, who placed 22nd in a time of 17:51.

Indian Creek's Frankie Kamarec was 16th overall in a time of 17:23.

Staskey can be reached at [sstaskey@timesleaderonline.com](mailto:ssstaskey@timesleaderonline.com)

## ● Girls

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second in the division and St. John was third.

**THE LADY RED** Devils notched the team title thanks to their big three of junior Amy Castle, junior Juliana Madzia and senior Melanie Hannan.

"The girls ran smart and kept a level head throughout the race," Cirola said. "The girls ran strong, and they're coming along. We've got one more good week of training before we head into the postseason, and I think we're right

where we need to be right now."

Castle led the way by finishing fourth overall in a time of 19:04. Hannan was eighth overall in 19:24 and Madzia finished ninth in 19:27.

Senior Brooke Bosworth was the fourth St. C. runner to cross the finish line. She toured the 3.1 mile course in a time of 21:31, which was good for 43rd place. Freshman Joanna Vincenzo rounded out the scorers for the Lady Red Devils, fin-

ishing 68th in 22:42.

**CALDWELL** was sparked to its title by sophomore Jenna Furr, who finished seventh overall in a time of 19:23.

St. John Central, which finished third in the small-school race, featured the meet's bronze medalist. Freshman dandy Fallon Doyle posted a time of 19:01 to lead the small-school competitors.

Lady Irish senior Lindy Stauffer was 22nd overall in a time of 20:19.

**FORT FRYE** claimed the title thanks in large part to its two all-OVAC runners. Senior Sarah Biehl was 13th overall in 19:41



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

**ST. JOHN'S** Fallon Doyle runs in her first OVAC CC Championship. She placed third.

and freshman Natalie Hart was 25th in 20:24.

Martins Ferry, which doesn't boast a complete team, was led by freshman Jamie Truchan, who placed 24th in 20:24.

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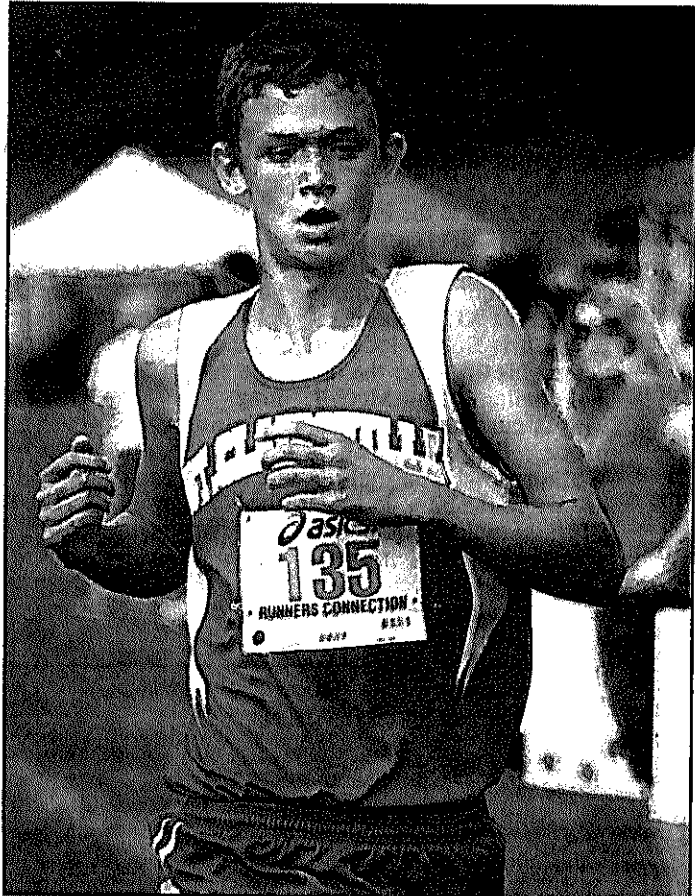
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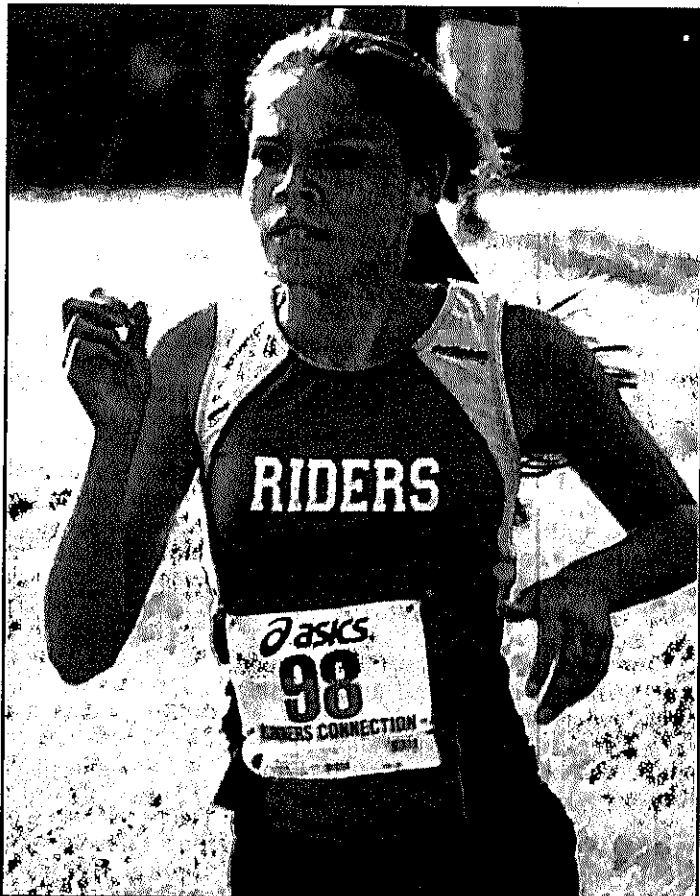
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T-L File Photo/SETH STASKEY

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE'S** Andy Thornburg is the defending OVAC overall champion and will be seeking to repeat his title during Saturday's Cal Pokas OVAC Cross Country Championship at Meadowbrook High School.



T-L File Photo/SETH STASKEY

**MARTINS FERRY'S** Sunshine Wrenn will be one of the female runners to watch during Saturday's Cal Pokas OVAC Cross Country Championship at Meadowbrook High School.

## Cal Pokas OVAC Cross Country Championship

# Area harriers to run for titles

By **SETH STASKEY**  
Times Leader Sports Editor

The cross country season kicks into high gear this weekend, which is where it will remain for basically the next month.

The first of five consecutive big meets gets under way Saturday morning at Meadowbrook High School in Byesville with the Cal Pokas OVAC Cross Country Championship meet.

Action begins with the girls' race at 10 a.m. and the varsity boys' competition will begin immediately following the female race.

The OVAC cross country format stayed the same as the conference added its fifth class this season. All of the runners — regardless of class — will line up and run against each other. From there, the class champions will be crowned.

In the team standings, the 1A and 2A classes will be combined and each of the other classes will crown its own champion.

A new boys' champion in the small-school event is assured as defending champion Barnesville has moved up to

### OVAC CC Championship

**Who:** Cross Country runners.  
**When:** Saturday, 10 a.m. (girls).  
**Where:** Meadowbrook  
**Tickets:** Available at the gate for \$6.



3A.

St. John Central, which won the meet title a year ago, but later had it stripped by the OHSAA due to an ineligible runner, will be one of the favorites.

Coach Jeremy Midei's Irish are somewhat of a mystery team because they don't run too many meets in the immediate area.

"Winning the A/AA championship has definitely been a theme for us this year," Midei said. "Our focus has been on being the best team we can be, and we get closer to realizing that each week. We'll have to be sharp this week if we hope to win the title."

Midei expects Caldwell to be one of the

chief competitors to the Irish.

On the girls' side, Shadyside is the defending champion. However, the Lady Tigers have yet to put it all together this season as they've struggled to find a consistent fifth scorer. The Lady Tigers are led by the strong one-two punch of junior Tara Tollett and senior Brooke Meintel.

Caldwell's girls — led by Jenna Furr — are a strong competitor as is River and St. John Central, which boasts one of the meet's overall favorites in heralded freshman Fallon Doyle.

"The girls have worked very hard to put our team back in the position where it can compete for the OVAC title," Midei said. "Caldwell, Shadyside and River are good teams, but we feel we'll be right in the mix."

IN CLASS 3A, another new champion is assured in both boys and girls as St. Clairsville, which has been the kingpin for the last several years, has bumped up to 4A this season.

Magnolia's boys must be listed amongst the favorites. Matt Quinett's team was strong in last weekend's

See, **AREA**, Page C2

## ● Area

Continued from Page C1

Cambridge Invitational and have ran well much of the season. Alec Hinerman and Bill Feeney lead the way. Both were in the top 10 of last year's meet.

Barnesville could also pose a challenge with one of the top runners in the class back in Brandon Stephens.

Fort Frye is another team to keep an eye on, especially on the girls' side of the equation.

Martins Ferry doesn't boast a full girls' team, but the Lady Riders feature three of the premier individuals in Sunshine Wrenn, Lindsay Cunningham and Jamie Truchan.

IN CLASS 4A, St. Clairsville looks like a strong favorite as the Red Devils have claimed five OVAC titles in a row on the boys' side.

All told, the Red Devils' boys own eight conference crowns and they've all come since 2000.

Senior Andy Thornburg is the defending overall boys' championship. He'll try to keep the crown in his family for the third straight year as his older brother, Alex, won the crown in 2009.

Senior Drake Walker, senior Cole Antolak, junior Joey Davies and Alex Timko have been solid.

"We are looking forward to running at Meadowbrook," said Red Devils' head coach Tony Cirolì. "The kids have always liked the course."

The Red Devils could receive a challenge from Meadowbrook and Harrison Central.

The St. C. girls own four OVAC banners and those have all come since 2007 under now retired head coach Heidi Mooney.

Cirolì now coaches the Lady Devils, too, and they've not skipped a beat.

Despite losing defending overall champion Jamie Perzanowski, who now runs at Central Florida, to graduate, the Lady Devils have still been solid.

Juniors Amy Castle and Juliana Madzia lead the way, while senior Melanie Hannan has been a steady contributor.

THE MOST wide open class race appears to be in 5A with always powerful Wheeling Park being amongst the favorites.

University, which is running in just its second OVAC meet, won the big-school girls' crown a season ago, while another fairly new OVAC entrant, Parkersburg South, won the boys' crown. Morgantown's girls also figure to be in the thick of the title chase.

Wheeling Park, which trails only Shadyside for the most OVAC boys' titles and only John Marshall for the overall girls' lead, expects to challenge the defending champions.

The Lady Patriots are currently ranked fifth in the West Virginia state rankings and are led by Lauren Tarovisky, Madi Morris and Elena Romanek.

"Our girls are running very well at this point," said Park head coach Michael Jebbia. "The main goal this weekend is to go out and run our best and compete. We have a very quality team, but University and Morgantown are in a league of their own in the OVAC and West Virginia right now."

The Patriot boys, meanwhile, are ranked ninth in the Mountain State poll, but Jebbia still concedes the favorite tag to University.

"The boys are coming off a very good week where we ran well at our home meet," Jebbia said.

"We feel like we have a shot, but we know we'll have to run well to knock (University) off."

### OVAC NOTES

■ SATURDAY'S meet will be the first official championship event for new member East Richland Christian. Clay-Battelle will also take part, but the CeeBees entered the golf tournament last month.

■ OVAC Hall of Famer Donna Joseph serves as the OVAC CC Meet Director. She's aided by Meadowbrook's John Epperson.

*Staskey can be reached at sstaskey@timesleaderonline.com*

# CONGRATULATIONS!



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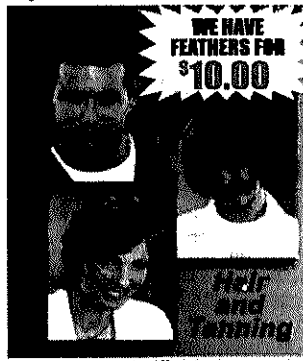
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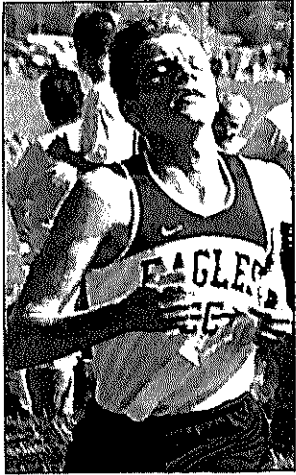


Photo by Seth Staskey  
Magnolia's Bill Feeney  
nears the finish.

## Magnolia Boys Claim 3A Crown

Eagles' Feeney is fourth overall

By SETH STASKEY  
For the News-Register  
BYESVILLE — St. Clairsville's boys, who have been the area's premier team all season, continued to flex their muscle Saturday as they captured the overall title at the Cal Pokas OVAC Cross Coun-

try Championships at Meadowbrook High School.

Along with the overall title, the Red Devils claimed their ninth class championship, but first in 4A after moving up in the OVAC's new five-class system.

"The boys ran well," Devils coach Tony Ciroti said. "All of my kids  
See, Magnolia, Page B2

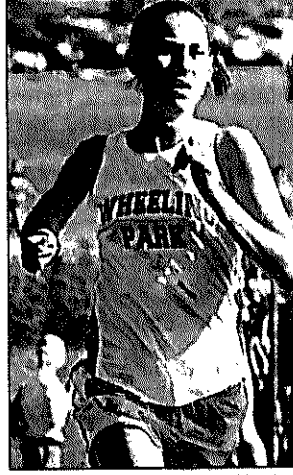


Photo by Seth Staskey  
Park's Elena Romanek runs for the Patriots.

## Red Devils Girls Take Third Place

Mohigans, Hawks rule OVAC race

By SETH STASKEY  
For the News-Register  
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See, Devils, Page B2

### MAGNOLIA

Continued from page B1

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Blue Eagles finished with 209 points in a Class 3A division, which featured just one other school (Bel-laire) with a full squad.

"I think every one ran really strong and really hard," Blue Eagles coach John Holliday said.

"We had eight boys run and seven of them ran personal records, so we're real pleased with that.

University the 5A class and finished second over-all.

### DEVILS

Continued from page B1

County.

The Hawks claimed their second straight OVAC big-school title and this year notched the school's first overall title.

St. Clairsville finished third overall and claimed its fifth consecutive OVAC class title.

Fort Frye made school history by winning its first-ever OVAC title. The Cadets finished with 231 points, good enough for sixth overall, but tops

amongst its class.

Barnesville was the runner-up for the small-school crown which went to Caldwell.

Weir's duo of Alexis Virtue and Kristen Mastrantonio finished back-to-back in 16th and 17th, respectively.

Wheeling Park, which finished third in 5A, had two runners. Elena Romanek (20th) and Lauren Tarovisky (21st) earn all-conference acclaim.