

Times-Standard

Scenic end to cross country season

Erik Fraser/The Times-Standard

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TRINIDAD -- In the last league meet of Tom Olsen's 35th and final season, the South Fork cross country team made their coach proud.

Cubs seniors Hank Carl and Michael Radenbaugh were the top two finishers at the Humboldt-Del Norte County Cross Country Championships at Patrick's Point State Park on Saturday, with times of 16 minutes, 20 seconds and 16:33, respectively.

Three other Cubs -- Lucas Wilhelm (10th, 18:05), Brandon Steele (19th, 18:54.17) and Lucas Sack (20th, 18.54.7) -- finished the course in under 19 minutes.

"It's been fun, more than we expected," said Olsen. "We knew our top two guys were going to be strong, but to have the whole team do as well as we're doing right now is really nice."

By virtue of their top-seven finishes, Carl and Radenbaugh will compete at the North Coast Section Meet of Champions on Nov. 17. The Cubs will also compete as a team, as the top Division V team in the conference.

"In two weeks we're going to Hayward," said Olsen, "and if we finish in the top five, we get to go to state. That's our goal."

Eureka won the team competition, as Loggers took four of the remaining five individual NCS spots.

They were Jason Haase (3rd, 16:42), Robin Harkins (4th, 16:49), Tyson Brown (6th, 17:06) and Nick Krause (7th, 17:10).

Arcata's Joaquin Smith (5th, 16:59) will also be going to Hayward.

The Arcata team will also be going, because they are the top Division IV team in the conference.

Unfortunately, the biggest story in the varsity girls' race was the injury to the conference's leading runner, Eureka's Nina Carson. During the race, Carson slipped and fell, seriously injuring her leg.

The full extent of the injury wasn't known, but unconfirmed reports were that it was broken. Carson had to be taken to the hospital by ambulance.

"This was her year," Eureka coach Bill Morris said of Carson. "She's been winning every league meet by 40 seconds to a minute-plus, so she really wanted to win county."

In Carson's absence, Arcata dominated the girls' race, as four of the first five runners to cross the finish line were Tigers. Allie Maher won the race at 19:47, followed by Montana Larson (19:55), Fortuna's Nochella Ozard (20:19) and Tigers Anya Ritter (20:36) and Kira Tangney (20:53).

The four Tigers will all be competing to the Meet of Champions as individuals and as a group, as the Tigers easily won the team title.

The other three individual girls to qualify were Ozard and Eureka's Imogene Carson (6th, 21:06) and Brook Marino (7th, 22:10).

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