

Trojans Repeat as Spoiler

Bloom Captures State Crown

BY KEN KITE

Finishing their season undefeated, Bloom topped the field in one of the closest state cross-country meets in recent years by scoring 91 points, five less than three time defending champion, York, who totalled 96 points. Third place was captured by Fremd who remained close with 106 points.

Bloom's victory, their second ever in the 29 year running of the meet, was no less historic than was their first win. A 21 point Bloom win in 1950 ended Paris High School's string of four straight wins, however, their present victory preserved that record for Paris as the Trojans ended York's current string at three straight titles.

The meet evolved into a confrontation of experience versus youth, of quiet dedication versus brash confidence, of the masters of many cross-country seasons versus a relative newcomer to the state meet carnival.

In the final hours before the starting gun fired, Coaches Larry Wiczorek of Proviso West, Ron Menely of Fremd, Joe Newton of York and John Coughlan of Maine East, all veterans of many state meets, prepared their charges for the toughest meet of the year. Newton and Wiczorek spoke in philosophical terms. Newton made an analogy between his top five harriers hanging on a tree in the fall. Wiczorek told his thinclads, "You're artists. Go out and create a masterpiece."

Menely and Coughlan also prepared their squads by reminding them how well they had run in the meets prior to the state meet.

Slota, however, bringing a Trojan squad to the state meet for the first time in many years, readied his charges in a most unusual manner. Despite coming to Peoria on Thursday, a day earlier than most, Slota's harriers approached the meet with an unbelievable non-challance. As Slota described, "They're as loose as possible. They're singing and joking with each other. They're happy. We're just approaching it like a dual meet."

Vocally confident of their abilities from the very beginning of the season, Slota was unusually quiet immediately after the race as the raw scores proved to be too close to allow any reflection of the race just completed. York totalled 156 points, Bloom 157 and Fremd 174.



BLOOM

"They ran as well as they're going to run. We've got no excuses. I'm pleased whatever happens. They ran like competitors," Slota commented, sounding more like a defeated coach than one who would soon accept a state championship trophy.

The meet was nearly as close after the individuals were removed and the places adjusted appropriately. A cross-country purist couldn't have been more pleased with the final results. In the real essence that cross-country is a team sport, it was the fifth runners from Bloom, York, Fremd that decided the final places. With four finishers in, the scores were York 56, Bloom, 57 and Fremd 58.

The race for the individual honors was just as close as was the race for the team title. The pace of the lead runners was somewhat slower than in recent years. Although eliminating the possibility for a record run, the slower pace allowed as many as fifteen to twenty runners to vie for the lead, even after two miles of the race.

Not until the final uphill straightaway did Proviso West's Tom Marino and York's Ron Craker break away from the

massive pack. Marino pulled away from Craker to win the coveted title in 14:14.3.

Craker and Marino faced each other four times during the season with each winning twice.

The conservative pace allowed Marino to run precisely the way Coach Wiczorek had dictated. Wiczorek has taught all his runners to run near the front, but never lead until the final yards of the race.

Bloom's top harriers were Leo Lenting, a senior, ninth in 14:35, Dave Carrizales, a junior, fourteenth in 14:42, Jeff Small, a junior, 37th in 14:55, Mike Lopez, a senior, 41st in 15:56 and Terry Bauer, a sophomore, 56th in 15:00.

York's top five were Ron Craker, a junior, second in 14:20, Bob McCarty, a senior, fifth in 14:28, Todd Miller, a senior, 26th in 14:50, Jim Driscoll, a junior, 59th in 15:00 and Bob Bradshaw, a sophomore, 64th in 15:04.

Fremd's first five thinclads were John Filosa, a sophomore, eleventh in 14:40; Wilson Fieldhouse, a senior, twenty first in 14:48; Paul Kinyon, a senior, 24th in 14:49; Jim Galis, a senior, 45th in 14:57 and Dave Scott, a senior, 73rd in 15:11.