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FROM SOUTH JERSEY TO YOU

Potts leads Bulldawgs to 30th crown

By GUS OSTRUM • Courier-Post Staff • November 7, 2010

FRANKLIN TWP. — Ben Potts knew right up front that all he had to do was run his usual race.

The Haddonfield High School senior did just that, clocking a winning time of 15:55 Saturday, to capture the South Jersey Group 2 boys' cross country championship at Delsea.

The rest fell into place, just like Potts knew it would.

Haddonfield continued a storied tradition as South Jersey's No. 1 boys' program, laying claim to the school's 30th sectional crown and seventh in a row with a team low of 20 points.

The Bulldawgs, who lost several talented runners to graduation entering the campaign, dominated the meet in typical fashion with five runners in the top 10. Matt Nussbaum (second, 16:00), Tim Malloy (third, 16:24), Greg Halla (fifth, 16:45) and Conor Jacobs (ninth, 17:04) also played key roles in the triumph.

"I knew that all I had to do was run at my usual pace and not worry about anything else," said Potts, a senior who won his first sectional title. "Coming into the season, I had a lot faith that coach (Nick) Baker would develop the younger runners -- just like he did with me and Matt (Nussbaum) -- and that's exactly what he did. We were all confident that the program would continue this kind of success."

Nussbaum, who has given Potts some tough competition, also displayed plenty of confidence.

"We just basically reloaded as a team, and everyone stuck with the program like always," said Nussbaum, also a senior. "Ben (Potts) and I really pushed each other, and we had a great race right to the finish line. Our teammates were fantastic too. No one wanted to settle for anything less than a championship today."

Other team champions included Haddon Township in Group 1, Ocean City in Group 3, and Southern Regional in Group 4. Bishop Eustace captured the Robert Kiessling Non-Public championships in both the boys' and girls' meets.

The day produced several highlights both in individual and team competition.

Washington Township's Anthony Dentino won his first sectional championship in Group 4 in dramatic fashion. Dentino clocked a winning time of 15:38, surpassing Shawnee's Connor Herr (15:43) in the final 300 yards for the victory.

"Connor raced really tough today and I was constantly looking over my shoulder," said Dentino. "It seemed like I heard him breathing behind me almost the entire race."

In Group 1, Haddon Township captured its third straight sectional championship with ease. Senior Joe Eagan clocked a winning time of 16:42, topping Pennsville's Tyler Cummings (16:43) as the Hawks placed six runners among the top 11.

In the Non-Public championships, Paul VI's Tom Hoban had a winning time of 16:02 to win the boys' race while Bishop Eustace's Holly Bischof clocked a first place time of 18:05 to win the girls' race.

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