

Falcon fitness team after national crown

Just about the only thing the Rochester Marine Fitness Team has yet to accomplish is a national championship for both the men's and women's team in the same year.

"That may happen soon," Rochester coach Max Hasse said.

Saturday, the teams took a step in that direction at the Rochester Invitational. The men, national champions in 1977, 1980, 1981 and last year, piled up 2,343 points, while the women, national champs in 1982, scored 1779 points. To qualify for the national meet, men must score 1,850 while the women must score 1,275.

The national championship meet will take place May 1-8 at Camp Pendleton, the United States Marine Corps advanced training camp near San Diego, Calif.

The Rochester women's team, which has one senior, was led by Suzanne Flynn's 361 score. She was followed by Becky Meredith (361), Lara Schaden (354), Michelle Slater (352) and Dana Durocher (350).

A total of 52 girls were tested from Rochester, Reuther Junior High and Black Hawk High School in Beaver Falls, Pa. A total of 71 boys were tested from the same schools, with the addition of Bishop Durog in St. Louis, Mo.

Scott Balter scored 482 points to lead the men's team. He was followed by Jeff Bechtel (473), Paul Engstrom (472), Shane Wiedeke (461) and Ed Coyle (455).

Rochester's men's score surpassed the 2,326 mark it compiled last year when it won the national championship.

Tradition lives on

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"We've had all kinds, but the biggest quality has to be desire. You have to want it and you have to concentrate on self-sacrifice," Hasse explained. "I would say you'd have to be of medium height. The taller kids have a harder time with the pullups."

"YOU HAVE TO be fast and you have to be able to jump. The better ones are more lean than muscular. You have to be in outstanding physical condition and have cardiovascular strength. It's open to anyone, and you don't have to be an athlete to be in the program."

"It was developed for the non-athlete for the development of physical fitness. Of course, that's an attribute that athletes have."

In addition to the physical attributes, "It takes mental toughness."

"You need that never quit type of attitude," Hasse said. "You have to want to be better, and that takes a lot of work. There's a lot of character building in this thing, and we can all use that at some time in life."

One of the drawbacks of the program is funds. Once a team qualifies for the nationals, it must raise money to travel to the site of the competition. Hasse says there may be a day in the very near future when a nationwide sponsor will subsidize the program, but until then, it takes community backing to send teams to competition.

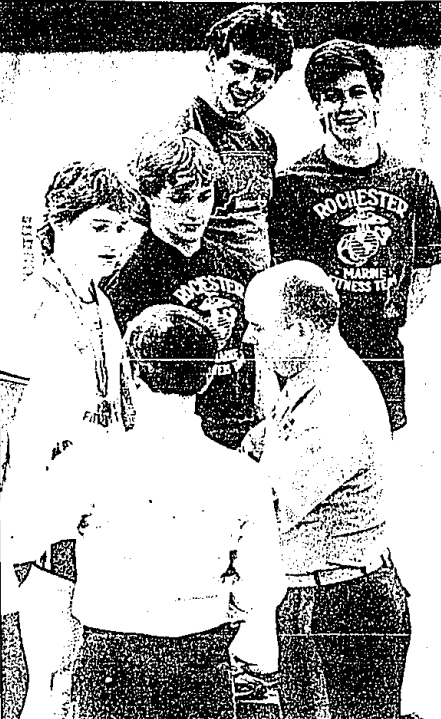
That is why there are very few teams in Michigan.

"What's happening is most teams have found it is unrealistic to raise money in the community only to get beat," Hasse said.



photos by DAVID FRANCO/staff photographer

Paul Engstrom, a senior at Rochester, goes through the pushup portion of the competition.



Rochester team members (left to right) Shane Wiedeke, Paul Engstrom, Scott Balter and Jeff Bechtel receive medals after Saturday's competition

Course changes

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Pre-registration ends April 8. The cost during this period is \$9 and includes a T-shirt with a guarantee on the size requested.

Late registrations runs April 9 to the day of the race and carries a \$12 fee with no size guarantee for the T-shirt.

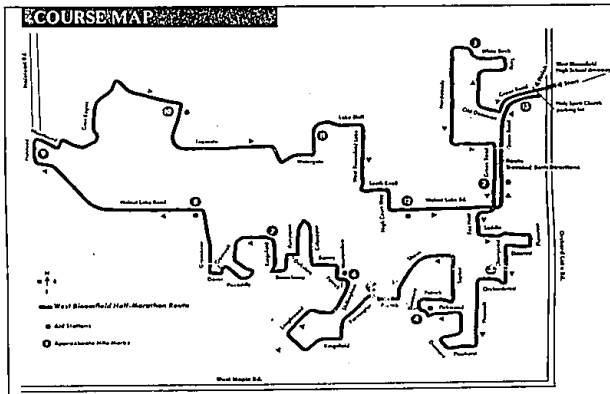
During the race, water will be available for the runners every two miles and an emergency medical care unit will be stationed in the center of the course.

Route marshals will be stationed at every turn and time splits will be available at the 1-, 5-, 8- and 16-mile marks.

An awards ceremony is scheduled at 3 p.m. in the high school gymnasium.

Entry forms can be picked up at the Parks and Recreation Department, 3325 W. Middlebelt, West Bloomfield, and at sporting goods stores specializing in running.

For more information about the race, call 334-5660.



Detroit resident Ralph Judd competes in the 1981 West Bloomfield Half-Marathon.

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