

Salem harriers slip past Farmington

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Since the two teams spent a week together at camp last summer, the Plymouth Salem and Farmington boys cross country teams have been friendly rivals.

That spirit of sportsmanship remained Thursday, but the mood and competition were very serious as their long-awaited showdown for first place in the Lakes Division arrived.

In a classic contest deserving of its pre-meet billing, the Rocks edged the previously unbeaten Falcons when a sixth-man tiebreaker was needed to decide the issue.

Salem's Al Rye made the difference after the meet ended in a 28-28 stalemate. Rye, who was the No. 6 runner to finish for the Rocks and 10th overall, finished ahead of Farmington's fifth runner.

With one division meet left on the schedule, Salem leads the Lakes circuit with a 4-0 mark and is 5-2 overall. The defending Western Lakes champion Falcons are 3-1 and 6-1.

"We felt we could run right with them," Salem coach Geoff Baker said. "There's been years when we should not have been on the same course with them, but this year we were ready."

Rye suffers from an asthmatic condition and hasn't been able to run to the top of his ability this season, Baker said, but he had a big impact Thursday.

"He's a senior and, when it comes right down to it, he knew what he had to do, and he went out and did it," Baker said.

Over the last 200 yards, Rye overtook Farmington's Rob Holloway and finished with a 17:57 time. Holloway, running in his first meet since hurting his back a week ago, came across five seconds later (18:02). Rye also held off the Falcons' Paul Brandt (18:07) and Greg Endres (18:10), who were 12th and 13th, respectively.

"It's got a great kick and when he went by (Holloway) I knew he had him for good," said Baker of Rye.

"We ran well up front, but our fifth man just didn't make it," said Farm-

ington coach Jerry Young, adding Holloway wasn't ready after missing a week.

"We knew if they ran well they had a shot at beating us, and they did an exceptional job. They've got six good kids, and they'll be tough to beat in the upcoming WLA meet."

After losing to Doug Vergari in the Redford Union and Schoolcraft invitations, Farmington's Brandon London defeated his Salem opponent for the first time this season.

He ran an exceptional race, according to Young, and took individual honors with a 16:32 time, which was only two seconds off the winning time of 16:30 turned in by WLW's Brian Grosso at the RU Invitational.

Vergari was second (16:40) and teammate Bill Atwell third (17:08), but the Falcons were in good shape after taking three of the first four spots.

Farmington's Matt Walker finished fourth (17:14), Brad Moore (fifth 17:16) and Steve Quenneville seventh (17:41), with Salem's Brendon Masterson slipping into the No. 6 position at 17:28.

But the keys to the Rocks winning were the consecutive finishes by Dave Hamway (17:45), Scott Stryker (17:51) and then Rye in the Nos. 8-10 places.

"For us to beat them," Young said, "we had to break that group up and we didn't — and they got us."

Though most of the Falcons ran their best times on the difficult Cass Benton course and six were under 18 minutes, one and a half minutes separated Farmington's first and fifth runners, which was too great a spread, Young said.

"I knew, when I heard Rob (Holloway) had hurt his back, it would go down to the wire," Baker said. "I knew we had a chance. Our guys kept pulling along and finally we caught up."

"All the guys knew each other, so we were running against friends out there. From the camp experience, we knew we could run with them, because we did it all week long."

The Rocks, who bounced back from early-season losses to Plymouth Canton and Wallied Lake Western, can lock up the division title with a win over Livonia Stevenson Thursday, but Baker said they aren't taking that meet for granted.

"About the time you start overlooking someone, they come in and take all your hard work away," he said.

"(The Salem runners) have stood by my words all year. I told them they could and they're going out and doing it."

N. FARMINGTON 29, GLENN 30: The Raiders put the first three runners across the finish line Thursday, and that made all the difference as they held off Westland John Glenn for a narrow victory.

North's Jim Nader was first in 17:39, and teammates Tom Harnden and Jeff Simpson tied at 17:40 as the trio finished well ahead of any Rocket runners.

But Glenn captured the next eight places, scoring points with the Nos. 4-8 positions. Jerry Allen was fourth (18:06), Larry Zimba fifth (18:15), Joe Zawoi sixth (18:18), Mark Bloomfield seventh (18:31) and Matt Mahoney eighth (18:35).

But, despite the Rockets apparently having overcome North's early edge and using its blockers effectively, the Raiders held on by the slimmest margin possible.

Since only two blockers count, North's Scott Simpson (19:10) moved up from 12th to 11th in the final tally and Jeff Black (19:24) from 14th to 12th.

In a triangular meet involving Southfield-Lathrup, the Raiders lost to the Chargers 22-37. Lathrup had the overall winner in Neal DeFord (16:57).

The Raiders are 2-2 in the Lakes Division and 7-2 overall. The Farmington schools compete in the annual city meet Thursday at Oakland Community College.

CHURCHILL 26, HARRISON 30: Churchill's depth enabled the Chargers to edge Harrison in a Western Division boys dual meet.

The Hawks, 1-5, captured second and third places with Chris Hart and Jeff Baringer posting 17:28 and 17:41 times, but Harrison had only two others in the top 10.

Pat Runk was fifth (18:08), Dave King eighth (18:49) and Mark Saur 12th (19:57).

Falcons win close contest

Farmington's girls cross country team has been living dangerously this season, but the Falcons keep surviving.

They won yet another close meet in Lakes Division competition Thursday when they turned back a good Plymouth Salem squad 26-29 at Cass Benton Park.

Farmington has now beaten Livonia Stevenson and the Rocks by three points each and Walled Lake Central by one. The Falcons are 4-0 in the division, 7-0 overall.

The Rocks had the top runner in Jenny Sample, who covered the course in 21:12 to edge Farmington's Amy Trunk, who was second at 21:16.

The Falcons strengthened their position as Bonnie Stecker and Jennifer Kiel finished in front of and behind Salem's Kim Mishler. Stecker was third (21:27), Mishler fourth (21:34) and Kiel fifth (21:45).

"It didn't look like we had any problem, but (Shannon) Donnelly and (Traci) Thomas came on near the end," Farmington coach John Barrett said. "The fact we had three of the top five gave us a little edge."

Salem's Donnelly moved into the No. 6 spot (22:02) and Thomas finished in eighth place (22:43) to keep the Rocks within two points, 17-19.

Farmington's Margaret Martin broke up the combination by finishing seventh (22:23).

Judy McKeever wrapped up the win for the Falcons, taking ninth place (22:58), and Beth Cunningham completed Salem's scoring with a 10th-place finish (23:08).

Considering the number of close

girls cross country

meets Farmington has had, Barrett predicts a tight league meet when the Western Lakes teams get together on Tuesday, Oct. 27.

"That's going to be a very competitive conference race with five teams all coming on at the end," he said. "Canton has to be the one to beat, because they've got the best times on paper."

"It'll be a real horse race, and that's the way it should be. Every team should be peaking at the end of the season. (The league) is more competitive than any other year."

N. FARMINGTON 25, GLENN 30: The Raiders got their first Lakes Division victory at the expense of the winless Rockets. North is 1-3 in the division, Glenn 0-4.

Ginger Rowland gave the Rockets first place in 20:46, but Donna Chuba and Lisa Rives got North started with second and third. Both were clocked at 21:57.

North's Tracy Mitchell finished fifth (22:23), Sonia Singh seventh (23:58) and Amy Gallus eighth (24:36).

Glenn's Yvonne Waddle was fourth (22:24), Darlene Manning sixth (22:53), Vickie Vickers ninth (23:34) and Leslie Erickson 10th (26:01).

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