

# Tough as nails

## All-Area runners display true grit

By CHRIS MCCOSKY  
STAFF WRITER

Two top 10 teams in Class A, the No. 3 finisher in the Class A individual race, plus two others finishing among the top 20 — Observerland certainly made its mark on the state girls cross country scene.

MacKinnon "It really was a heck of a season," said Plymouth Canton coach George Przygodski.

But here's the scary part: Of the 10 runners named to this year's All-Area squad, six will be back next year. Two of them are freshmen.

Not surprisingly, seven of the 10 come from Plymouth Canton and Farmington Hills Mercy, teams that finished fifth and seventh, respectively, at the state meet.

Canton was one of the most talked about teams in the state. Virtually ignored by preseason prognosticators, the Chiefs stormed out of the gate with victories at Ypsilanti, West Bloomfield and Holly to lay claim to the No. 1 ranking in Class A — a perch they wouldn't relinquish until the state meet.

"The thing you had to admire about the Canton kids was how tough they were," said Gary Meehan who coached Brighton to a second-place finish in Class A. "When the conditions were at their worst, those kids were at their best."

Give at least partial credit to Przygodski, a former University of Michigan football player. The

team developed a hard-nosed, football-like personality, enabling it to run better than its talent and experience might have warranted.

For his efforts, Przygodski gets the nod as Observerland Coach of the Year.

### FIRST TEAM

Bridget MacKinnon, senior, Livonia Stevenson: After spending two years laboring in the shadows of all-star A.J. Kofrnik, MacKinnon emphatically stamped her mark on Observerland cross country.

She didn't lose a single dual meet, she won titles at six major invitational meets including Schoolcraft and the Class A Regional, and, to cap it all off, she placed third in the state Class A individual race with a time of 19:01.

She leaves Stevenson with her name on every school record.

Laura McWilliams, junior, Plymouth Canton: One of the reasons Canton was able to stay on top all season was the steady improvement of this junior. She started the season as the Chiefs' third or fourth runner and finished as their top runner.

She led the Canton contingent with a 13th-place finish at the state meet with her personal-best time of 19:13.

She placed fourth at the Western Lakes meet and fifth at the regionals.

"She ran her best in the big meets," Przygodski said.

Lana Boroditsch, senior, Plymouth Canton: Przygodski calls her the "heart and soul" of this team. She is also a living example of the team's grit. She missed all of last season with an injury, fought through it, worked like a demon all summer and came back to post the best year of her career.

She stunned MacKinnon to win the Western Lakes meet, she placed eighth at the regional and 15th at the state meet. Her best time of the season was 19:54.

Kathleen Landellus, senior, Plymouth Canton: The phrase "stare competitor" always seems to crop up when coaches describe Landellus.

"She really stepped up her perform-

### ALL-AREA GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

#### 1993 ALL-AREA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

##### FIRST TEAM

- Bridget MacKinnon.....Liv. Stevenson
- Laura McWilliams.....Ply. Canton
- Lana Boroditsch.....Ply. Canton
- Kathleen Landellus.....Ply. Canton
- Becky Wolfm.....Ply. Canton
- Eileen O'Connell.....Farm. Mercy
- Amy Freund.....Farm. Mercy
- Betsy Gignac.....Farm. Mercy
- Dana Gobal.....Farm. Mercy
- Allison Noe.....Farm. Harrison
- Leah Retherford.....Ply. Salem
- George Przygodski (Coach).....Canton

##### SECOND TEAM

- Kaeagan Koelover.....N. Farmington
- Janie Bremer.....N. Farmington
- Amelia Hough.....N. Farmington
- Emily Farnell.....Ply. Salem
- Stacy Moore.....Ply. Salem
- Ben Knight.....Ply. Canton
- Dana Gobal.....Farmington
- Ann Genoloti.....Farmington
- Sarah Redor.....Liv. Stevenson
- Kelly Starow.....Ply. Salem

**HONORABLE MENTION:** Stevenson — Nicole Felt, Laura Pisoni; Canton — Meghan Barresi, Tracey Carvin, Casey Swanson; Mercy — Mary Thewes, Sara Podorski, Lisa Nobles, Erin Blazewski; North Farmington — Becky Hagik, Elaine Wolf, Alicia Crossland, Nora Cutler; Church Hill — Tracey Parner, Erin Sharp, Carol McCoy; Harrison — Angie Peters, Julie Rigg, Erin Schwartz; Salem — Kaitly Jost, Lyn Sebestyen, Sarah Hamilton, Courtney Sheldon; John Glenn — Michelle Mottor, Tina Moore; Mayrose Brooks; Franklin — Leo Anne Harigan, Suzie Lushko; Jatherson Westland — Angel Alzopozco; Thurston — Tonya Knight.

ance from last year," Przygodski said. "She had another great season."

She was 34th at the state meet, with a time of 19:49. She was fifth at the Western Lakes and 4th at the regional.

Becky Wolfm, freshman, Plymouth Canton: Meet the future of the Canton program.

"Becky's trademark was her consistency," Przygodski said.

Wolfm and classmate Beth Knight provided the talent and depth at the No. 4 and No. 5 positions that separate great teams from good teams. She was seventh at the Western Lakes, 24th at the regional and 87th at the state meet with a 20:48.

Not too many freshmen ran better. Eileen O'Connell, junior, Mercy: The test of a champion is how she fares when the competition is stiff and the stakes are high. O'Connell passed.

She was good all year, winning the Catholic League race and placing first in all but two races. But she was great at the state meet, running a personal-best 19:08 and placing ninth.

"Eileen is blessed with speed and love to compete," said Mercy coach Gary Servais. "The bigger the race, the better she runs."

A common trait on this squad.

Amy Freund, senior, Mercy: The dean of this cross country team, Freund ought to have her shoes enshrined at Mercy. To list her place: Three-time all-city, three-time all-Catholic League, two-time all-state and now two-time All-Area.

"Amy has shown great leadership and dedication to the sport," said Servais. "She is the first two-time all-state runner I've ever coached in 10 years of coaching. We'll have a hard time replacing her next season."

This past season Freund was second to O'Connell in the Catholic League race, Operation Friendship champion, seventh at the regional and 14th at the state meet.

Betsy Gignac, freshman, Mercy: Servais will indeed have a hard time replacing Freund, but having this youngster back ought to help.

Undaunted by the pressure of the race, Gignac posted a personal-best 19:49 to place 33rd at the state race. She took a third at the Catholic League, second at Operation Friendship and 19th at the regional.

Allison Noe, junior, Farmington Harrison: About the only thing more impressive than her running achievements are her academic achievements. The academic all-star placed 16th at the Class



Laura McWilliams Canton

Lana Boroditsch Canton

Kathleen Landellus Canton



Becky Wolfm Canton



Eileen O'Connell Mercy



Amy Freund Mercy



Betsy Gignac Mercy



Allison Noe Harrison



Leah Retherford Salem

A individual meet with a Harrison record time of 19:38.

"She is just one of the finest athletes and most athletes I've ever coached," said Harrison's Mark Babcock.

Noe placed sixth at the Western Lakes meet and 13th at the regional.

Leah Retherford, sophomore, Plymouth Salem: Does this girl fit the toughness mode of the sport, or what?

"She has an excellent work ethic and a tremendous desire to win," said Salem coach Mike Krachak. "This desire drives her to run above herself and compete strongly against other runners."

She made three all-Invitational teams, including the talent-rich West Bloomfield, she was 17th at the regional and 29th at the state individual race.

### SPORTS ROUNDUP

#### LADY OCELOTS WIN

The start was a fast one for Schoolcraft College's women's basketball team. The Lady Ocelots opened their season Wednesday hosting Kalamazoo Valley CC, and they got out of the starting gate fast,

outscoring KVCC 36-22 during the opening 20 minutes en route to a 65-43 victory.

Plymouth Salem graduate Shelly Schoep paced SC, hitting 6-of-8 from the floor for 15 points. She also had nine steals. Dawn Newlin scored 13 points and Angie Cerne had 10. Julie Kloes led

the rebounders with 11.

#### RUNNING EVENTS

The 11th annual Thanksgiving Parade 10-kilometer Turkey Trot and Gobbler's One Mile run will start at 8:00 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 25 at Cobo Hall in Detroit.

The entry fee is \$12 (before Nov. 16) or \$15 race day (8:45-7:45 a.m.).

For more information, call 544-9099 (between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.). The Max & Erma's Jingle Bell 5K run and walk for the Arthritis Foundation will begin at 10 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 6 at Oakland Uni-

versity. Pre-registration fee is \$15 (until Nov. 26). Race day registration is \$17.

For more information, call 350-3030.

#### EMU WINTER BASEBALL

Eastern Michigan University

will stage its winter baseball camps Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 4-5, 1993 and Feb. 12-13, 1994 at Bowen Field House.

The cost is \$75 for one weekend, or \$125 for both weekends.

For more information, call Roger Corryell at 487-0315.

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