

Track suits foil would-be robbers

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SARATOGA — Seven members of the Saratoga High School cross country team were roughed up by three youths who tried to rob them on Big Basin Road, Santa Clara County Sheriff's Deputies said today.

There was little the toughs could take, however, since the runners were wearing track suits. The only item taken was a pair of \$10 tennis shoes.

Several of the students suffered cuts and bruises after being punched by their assailants.

Deputies said the seven team members were running east on Big Basin near Toll Gate Road at 3:15 p.m. Monday when three youths approached them.

Steve Kissel, 14, of 21154 Sullivan Way, told deputies he was running at the tail end when he rounded a corner and "noticed team members and other people running in all directions."

He could see there was a fight, so tried to run around it. One of the toughs, however, hit him on the shoulder. Kissel ran faster and made it to a driveway where he found a woman in a car. She drove him and the other team members to the high school.

Timothy Trapp, 15, of 19981 Winter Way, was hit twice in

the stomach by one assailant who demanded he give him his shoes. Trapp refused, and managed to escape.

James Ray, 14, of 20374 Chalet Lane, was hit in the face and suffered a cut lip.

The assailants managed to steal a pair of shoes from Dean Matthews, 15, of 14800 Bickery Ave., by threatening to push him over a steep embankment. Matthews had to flee barefooted.

Philip Stillman, 16, of 19166 DeHavilland Drive, was hit in the stomach and face when he refused to give one of the assailants his watch. He suffered a black eye.

Gerald Venaka, 15, of 19449 Via Madrouas Court, was ordered to give one of the toughs his glasses. When Venaka refused, he was hit in the face, knocking his glasses off. Venaka picked them up and put them on. He was hit in the face again, once more knocking his glasses to the ground. Venaka picked them up again and ran off.

George Buljan, 15, of 15474 Monta Vista Drive, was shoved and pushed around, but managed to "talk the situation down," he told deputies. The three assailants returned to their car as the cross country team ran off.

Deputies said two of the toughs were white and the third was black. All three were about 15 or 16 years old.