

Winner Giusto learns lesson he hopes leads to a second CCS title

By Paul Salvoni
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BELMONT — Even in victory, San Mateo High School's Matt Giusto learned a training lesson Tuesday — and he's glad he learned it this week, rather than next week.

As expected, Giusto won Tuesday's Central Coast Section Region I cross country finals at the three-mile Crystal Springs course. But his time, 14:56, was 15.7 seconds slower than his mark in the Peninsula Athletic League finals at Crystal Springs, and he beat Mills' Chris Becerra by only five seconds. He beat Becerra by 35.4 seconds in the PAL finals.

"I felt pretty good for the first mile or so," Giusto said, "but I took both Sunday and Monday off, and that was too long at this time of the season. My breathing didn't feel good and I felt tired.

"Before the CCS meet, I'll take only one day off. I'm glad I learned this now and not next week."

The top four teams in both the boys' and girls' divisions qualified for the CCS finals, and runners on non-qualifying teams who finished among the top 10 percent also qualified.

The CCS finals are scheduled Tuesday at Crystal Springs, the girls' race starting at 3 p.m. followed by the boys' race at 3:30.

Bellarmino Prep took the boys' Region I team title with 61 points, followed by PAL champion Carlmont (95), Menlo-Atherton (111), St. Francis (140) and Serra (154).

Westmoor's Sabrina Han won the girls' race in 17:51, beating Terra Nova's Lori Wilson by 49 seconds. Half Moon Bay's 55 points won the team title, followed by M-A (80)

Region I cross country

and Terra Nova (103).

Although Giusto is the defending CCS champion, he is not a cinch to repeat. His toughest competitors Tuesday are expected to be Leigh's Chris Craig, who has beaten Giusto in their only two meetings this year, and Del Mar's Tom Legan, who has not raced against Giusto this season.

Legan and Craig finished sixth and 11th, respectively, in last year's CCS finals.

"I'm not overly confident I can win, but I am confident that I'll be right there with him (Craig)," Giusto said. "It should be a fast race, and it's going to be close. I'm looking to run in the low 14:30s."

Bellarmino was led by Shawn Ayers, who finished sixth, and got life-best course times from three runners — junior Shane O'Flaherty (who finished eighth), Keith Allen (11th) and Eddie Paone (16th) — in winning its fourth consecutive Region I title.

Serra's Rob Wickstrom finished third, followed by Capuchino's Paul Ghidossi and St. Francis' Paul Leonard.

In the girls' race, Westmoor coach Ron DiMaggio was pleased with Han, who, like defending CCS champion Shannon Clark of Mountain View, is only a sophomore. Although Han didn't start running competitively until she tried out for cross country last year, she finished sixth in the Region I finals before missing the CCS meet due to



Matt Giusto
... extra value in victory.

illness.

"She's cutting down the time gap between herself and Shannon and that's what we're looking at — although I realize Shannon wasn't pushed at all today," DiMaggio said. Clark won the Region II title Tuesday in 17:44, seven seconds faster than Han's winning time.

"I'd like to beat her," the 85-pound Han said, "but even if I don't, I just want to know I did the best I could."

Carla Holmes and Sandrine Demarval finished ninth and 10th, respectively, for M-A.