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You won't run into a tougher course than this

David Kiefer
PENINSULA TIMES TRIBUNE/SPECIAL

PREP SPOTLIGHT

If cross country runners formed a fraternity, running the Crystal Springs course would be considered hazing.

The freshmen — or rather, the uninitiated — hear the stories, perhaps embellished, from the veterans about the rigors of running a

race on the Belmont trails. "If you think this is tough, just wait until you run at Crystal Springs," they say.

For most local runners, Crystal Springs is synonymous with cross country. The 2.95-mile high school course is the site of all the

major meets in the Central Coast Section, including the CCS finals. It is the 20th straight year that Crystal Springs has been used for high school events.

The 4.195-mile course is a major community college venue and its 6.2-mile course is used annually as the site of the West Coast Conference and Pacific Association/TAC championships.

The national championships were often held there, featuring runners such as Olympic gold medalists Kip Keino and Frank Shorter. And during the 1980s, an unknown Chabot College runner, Doug Padilla, developed into one of the country's finest.

The course may be the on- Please see **RUNNING, C-3**

RUNNING/ Two generations know the grueling appeal of the fa

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ly one of its kind on the West Coast — that is, a series of trails planned and developed solely for the purpose of cross-country competition.

"In my opinion, it's the best cross country course there is," said College of San Mateo coach Bob Rush, the groundskeeper and creative force behind the course.

"We're starting to see a second generation of kids whose fathers ran there. My goal, and I hope to see it in my lifetime, is for kids to

be able to compare their times to their grandfathers'."

Generations of runners can describe the treacherous beginning — a near-free fall down a hill. The trail loops back and the runners reach the first mile going back up toward the starting line.

The second mile features varied terrain, on a curving trail through the chaparral with a slight downhill. The rest of the course, though, tests the mettle of each athlete.

A steep hill is followed by a series of switchbacks and finishes with a seemingly endless stretch

that leaves nervous runners wondering if they have enough left to try to outkick the opponent on their heels.

Maybe it was exhaustion that caused one delirious Gunn High runner to walk off the course at the conclusion of a meet and into the wrong bus, which transported him to Fremont High.

Before Interstate 280 was built, an old course existed, crossing the area of present freeway, that was more dangerous than the present version.

"It had a really steep hill," said 28th-year Aragon coach Bill Das-

mous Crystal Springs cross country course

karolis. "In inclement weather, it was sort of an entertainment center. People would gather and watch who would fall next."

Sometimes, it's man-against-beast. One runner was dive-bombed by a red-tailed hawk, another knocked down by a deer. Occasionally, runners step in gopher holes and are stung by mud hornets.

"At one of our Center meets, I noticed some kids throwing rocks into the grass near the finish line," Woodside coach Jim Luttrell said. "I looked and there was a rattlesnake. It bolted and went

straight toward the finish line where all the timers were.

"(Carlmont coach) Loren Lansberry says, in a subtle tone, 'By the way, there's a rattler headed your way.' Everyone looked up. Some of the kids were about to finish, but it veered into the bushes. As far as I know, it's still there."

Said Rush: "Some coaches complain about the terrain, but I tell them, 'If you want to run on a golf course, run on a golf course. If you want to run on a parking lot, run on a parking lot. But if you want to run cross country, this is cross country.'"

CRYSTAL SPRINGS TOP TIMES

BOYS			
Name	School	Yr.	Time
Mitch Kingery	San Carlos	'73	14:28
Jay Marden	Mis. San Jose	'80	14:28
Darasa Thomas	Santa Barbara	'79	14:37
Andy DiConti	La Canada	'79	14:40
Matt Giusto	San Mateo	'83	14:40
Bob Paulin	Camden	'75	14:42
Mike McGlade	Spokane (Wash.)	'79	14:42
Bob Barnett	Hillsdale	'73	14:43
Tom Downs	Skyline	'78	14:43
GIRLS			
Name	School	Yr.	Time
Elen Lyons	Bshp Kily (Idaho)	'79	16:30
Vickie Cook	Alemay	'79	16:40
Eryn Forbes	Sunset (Ore.)	'75	16:53
Roxanne Bler	Indprnce	'78	17:01
Eliza Carney	McClintock (Ariz.)	'79	17:10
Debbie Quatler	Edmnds (Wash.)	'75	17:11
Robin McSwain	Terra Linda	'80	17:14
Cory Schubert	Del Mar	'82	17:23
Shannon Clark	Mountain View	'82	17:26

Homestead and Los Gatos set sights on league titles

The name to remember in the De Anza Athletic League is Lynbrook High freshman Jason Balkman, who may become the finest runner on the Peninsula since San Mateo High's Matt Guisto in the early 1980s.

As an eighth-grader, Balkman won the national Junior Olympic mile title and the Northern California cross country championship. He has a 1,500-meter best of 4:08 — roughly equivalent to a 4:23 1,600 — a time that would have placed him among the top five at the Central Coast Section track and field championships.

"Jason's going to be big-time," said Los Gatos coach Willie Harnatz, who coached Balkman in youth competition.

The following is a rundown of DAAL boys and girls teams in alphabetical order:

Cupertino — Senior Danny Kennedy, Junior Bryant Silva and freshman David McDonough lead the Pioneers. The girls team, however, has only three runners.

Fremont — Fremont won the 11-school Menlo-Atherton Invitational three weeks ago and sopho-

more Mike Powers was second. Junior Julio Flores, is another top runner.

Junior Donna Ferrante, the Central Park Invitational winner, first-year sophomore Amy Corral and junior Kathy Mikula are the top girls, but Fremont's run at six straight individual titles will likely end.

Homestead — Homestead has won the boys league individual title nine of the past 10 years. The standout runner isn't there this year, but coach Vern Thornburg's top five, led by senior Randy Hu-lett, could finish within 10 seconds of each other.

The Mustang girls captured the Fremont Union District Meet title last week with sophomore Julie Conger capturing the individual crown. In addition, junior Cari Olmstead and freshman Kristen Kempe round out a solid top three.

Los Gatos — The Wildcats are

aiming toward winning the Central Coast Section Division II girls race. Los Gatos was second last season, but could win its fifth CCS title.

Freshman Miranda Middlecoff received her first real notice when she was second out of 132 runners in the Stanford Invitational Division III race recently. As an eighth-grader, she ran a 5:36 mile.

Harnatz said any of his top five boys is capable of running under 16:30 at the 2.95-mile Crystal Springs course. Senior Jack Middlebrooks is the league's top returning runner after finishing fourth in the league finals a year ago.

Lynbrook — Already among Balkman's prep accomplishments are victories in the Artichoke Invitational's large-schools division and the Fremont Union District Meet. Lynbrook could give Los Gatos a run.

The girls team has only four runners.

Monta Vista — Senior Dave Noland is a competitive, dedicated runner and will stand out for

DAAL

Ron Ross, who said the Matadors could finish as high as third in the DAAL.

Jenny Scheuerlein, a transfer from St. Francis, could be an all-league runner, but the rest of the team is inexperienced.

St. Francis — The Lancers were ranked eighth in the girls Division III state preseason rankings. Laura Demmelmair (49th at Stanford Invite Div. III) leads a strong top four consisting of Kathy Kelly, Katie Monahan and Alicia Ferguson.

Saratoga — Former Stanford and San Jose State cross-country coach Marshall Clark returns to high school coaching for the first time since 1968, when he coached at Seaside.

Clark takes over a rebuilding program that includes 30 freshmen on his 50-member squad.

Seniors Lisa Pappanastos and Joanna Shen lead the girls.

Cross country previews by David Kiefer.

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10-18

With depth and talent back, Mills could be ready to contend for state girls title

Perhaps the best girls cross-country team in the Central Coast Section, if not the state, will come from the Peninsula Athletic League.

Mills High was fourth in the State Division III race and has all its top runners back.

The following is a rundown on the PAL boys and girls teams in alphabetical order:

Aragon — The Dons are the defending boys champions and could win it again in a wide-open competition. Sophomore Brent Reid, the only returning member of the title squad, and junior Fred Harle are the top runners.

Senior Audrey Miller won the Artichoke (large school division) and Woodside invitationals. She heads a strong top four.

Burlingame — Jim Yeager (26th of 164 at Stanford Invite Division III) has reached the CCS finals the past three years and is a top contender for the PAL title, but the team is plagued by injuries.

Senior Kim Lanterman is one of two returning girls.

Capuchino — Coach Al Stanbridge leads a team that hopes to be competitive. Brian Ramirez is the top runner.

Carlmont — Tom Musgrave is a swift finisher and Nick Enri-

PAL

quez is another team standout, but the Scot may finish in the middle of the pack.

Sophomore Rachel Lind reached coach John Woodhall's summer training goal of 500 miles and leads a young team.

Hillsdale — Seniors Steve Barnes and Luis Torres, and junior Bob Hill, lead the Knights, last season's PAL runner-up.

The entire girls team is new. **Menlo-Atherton** — In 34 years of coaching, Plato Yanicks said freshman Silvia Pieslak "is the greatest natural talent of any girl I've ever coached."

Yanicks sees her as an outstanding 400-meter runner, but in the meantime is the Bears' top distance runner.

Nolan Felix, a P.E. class discoverer, leads a young team that includes fine sophomores Jeremy and Chris Kitchen.

Mills — The Vikings won the 2.9-mile Stanford Invite Division III race, defeating Aptos and La Jolla, two of its potential rivals for the state crown.

Diana Harlick won the individual title in 19:33 for a 6:18 pace. Her sister Jeanene was eighth.

Coach Ed Parker has an outstanding top five, but is worried about depth if No. 5 runner Kathy Morse experiences an asthma attack.

The Mills boys could also contend for a league title behind top runner Quang Thai Phan.

San Mateo — Junior Tony Nash has the potential to become a league champion. Senior Mason Waxman and sophomore Mark Foster are solid Nos. 2 and 3 runners, but San Mateo was hurt when two of its top five decided not to compete this year.

Lisa Sorensen and Roberta Rodriguez are the top Bearcat girls.

Sequoia — The Cherokees are in their second year with a program after two years without. Senior Ryan McCoy and junior Sam Garcia are the best of a small group of boys and Lamiaia Hoffman is the best of three girls.

Woodside — The Wildcats could be a darkhorse to win the league title. Sophomore Dan Sorenson won the Woodside Invitational title. Junior Paul Burgess is not far behind.

Freshman Sarah Bupp, the sister of former Wildcat standout Andy Bupp, has potential, but sophomore Kristen Goodrich, the Carlmont Invitational winner, is the No. 1 runner this year.



Nolan Felix was discovered in an M-A physical education class.

6-18

Palo Alto joins the rest of the pack

Palo Alto High's boys cross country dominance in the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League has ended. That doesn't mean the Vikings won't win the league title, but it will be a much closer race.

The following is a rundown of the SCVAL boys and girls teams, in alphabetical order:

Gunn — Of the five top boys runners, four are sophomores. Mark Tompkins, the SCVAL frosh-soph champion last year, has matured into the Titans' top runner. He has support from Matt Tompkins, Neal Hurder, Grant Wayman, Brian Martin (a candidate for the national luge team), Gus Araya and Jamila Gumawardena. Together they could win the

SCVAL

SCVAL title after a fourth-place finish last season.

Heather Douglas, a senior, is best of a tightly-bunched girls team that is a league title contender. Lori Cook, Christina Underdal, Andrea Ciaranello, Amendee Dillon, Mika Flat and German foreign exchange student Lina Hofman round out the group.

Los Altos — Tracy Shoemaker, last season's league runner-up, is easily the No. 1 girl in the SCVAL. The senior, who is also an Eagle

basketball player, has run a 5:12 mile and brings speed and strength to cross country. She won the Crystal Springs Center Meet on Thursday and was fifth at the Clovis Invitational. Teammate Michelle Loperena qualified as an individual for the CCS finals last year.

The Eagles also boast strong individual boys in Justin Backs and Willy Challas. Backs won both Menlo-Atherton invitationals in the early season largely because of his good off-season base conditioning.

Milpitas — Stewart Ellington, who set a course record at the Fremont Invitational and won the Alum Rock Invitational, is regarded

in a close, wide-open SCVAL race

as the best boys runner in the CCS. Ellington is a transfer from Channel Islands High in Oxnard where he finished 14th in the state Division I finals last year.

Besides Ellington, the Trojans boast Robert Avila, the defending league cross-country champion, but not much else.

The Trojan girls, however, finished last in 1990 and will have to scrape to avoid the same fate.

Mountain View — Tom Clark, a senior, leads a team that includes three good freshmen: Matt Pitts, Colin Bailey and Ben Cain. Mountain View won the Woodside Invitational last week. Juniors Jennifer Brito and Marta Van Patten, and sophomore Elea-

nor Yang are close in ability and should provide the Spartans with a top-four league finish as a team.

Palo Alto — The Viking boys were second in CCS and sixth in the state Division III championships, but return only one of their top seven — senior Brian Weissman. Palo Alto, however, is not weak by any means. Seniors Jeff Heller, Andy Rosenblum and Rex Winterbottom give coach Paul Jones a solid top four.

"They're just now realizing that it's their team now," Jones said.

The Palo Alto girls are also capable of winning an SCVAL title. Sophomore Janice Kim, in only her second year of running, is

making rapid improvement and recently finished 27th in the Stanford Invitational Division III race. Becca Begley and Brandy Faulkner are the Nos. 2 and 3 runners.

Santa Clara — Junior Johnny Bruntz has placed high in small invitationals and leads a top three that consists of Soviet transplant Dimitri Skylar and Homestead transfer Chong Ki Li. Sophomore Jessie Rodriguez is the fastest girl.

Wilcox — The Charger girls are regarded as a league contender, but have yet to race in any major invitationals and are untested. The Wilcox boys will try to improve upon their fifth-place league finish of last year.

10-18

Bellarmino, St. Francis and St. Ignatius form one of top leagues in NorCal

The West Catholic Athletic League may be the strongest boys cross-country league in Northern California.

St. Ignatius and St. Francis were ranked among the top six in the state preseason Division III rankings. Bellarmino is the defending CCS Division I champion.

The following is a rundown of the local WCAL teams in alphabetical order:

Bellarmino — Justin Whittall, the Bells' seventh man last season, is the lone returning varsity runner, but has become an important team leader of a young group that consists of four juniors and two sophomores.

Jon Pearman, the runner-up at the Alum Rock Invite, has distinguished himself as the top runner. Jaime Cannon, Brian Lavelle, Brian Billeger, Todd Dando and Marc Boulland round out the varsity, which is running faster workouts than the championship team of last year, but needs to develop confidence in big meets.

Mitty — Baseball coach Bill Hutton took over as coach late in the summer, but his team doesn't have the base training he had hoped for. Sophomore Travis Bagby is the leader on a varsity team that is close in ability.

St. Francis — The Lancers have a preseason ranking of sixth in the state for Division III and could give St. Ignatius a run for the league crown since No. 3 runner Randy Stone became eligible Tuesday.

Tyson Thomas was fourth in the Stanford Invite (Div. III) and junior teammate Jason Yingling was 10th. Coach Brian Curley believes Thomas, a senior, can give Mark McManus of St. Ignatius a good race for the league title.

"We're going after S.I.," Curley said.

Serra — Dan Boehle won the Center Meet on Thursday and was eighth in the medium schools division of the Clovis Invitational. He heads a solid team that includes promising sophomore Tom Washington.

Castilleja dominated the Girls Private School League cross country finals last season and may be just as good, but newcomer St. Ignatius will likely run away with the league title this

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The following is a rundown of the local GPSL teams, in alphabetical order:

Castilleja — The Gators won the league title and were sixth in the CCS Division IV finals last season. Louise Tench is one of the top runners in the GPSL, but was beaten by teammate Sabrina Berry at the Stanford Invitational. Stephanie Adamson is another good runner.

Menlo School — Stephanie Midgeley is the best runner, but the Knights have only three girls.

Mercy (Burlingame) — Coach Bill Halmon hopes to field a team for the league finals.

Notre Dame (Belmont) — Rossanna Austafsen and Molly Finn are vying for the No. 1 position on the team. Erin Broderick is at No. 3.

Sacred Heart Prep — Sophomore Michelle Butte, the defending league champion, finished sixth in a preseason GPSL meet at Sacred Heart, but coach Dave McFadden said she can finish among the top three.

In the Christian-Private Schools Athletic Association, six schools are in competition in boys competition, but the three Peninsula teams won't be contenders.

Menlo School — Andrew Urbanek finished second in the league 3,200 meters during track and should contend for the cross country crown.

Mid-Peninsula — The Palo Alto school has five runners in its first year with a cross-country program. Junior Jamie Hamill is the top runner, but is being pushed by senior Dan McCrory.

Sacred Heart Prep — The Gators have four returning runners and five altogether. Mike Corpus, Shawn Santos and Tom Schoeben are near-equals in ability.

Mitty — The Monarch girls are the defending West Valley Athletic League champions. In the new five-team WVAL, Leigh should dominate. The other schools are Del Mar, Prospect and Westmont.

Latanya Johnson, the WVAL runner-up last year, missed the start of this season with bronchi-

10-18