

Postal competition

P.A. cross-country coach challenges entire nation

By BERT NELSON

Claiming to have the finest high school cross-country team in the United States, Palo Alto High Coach Forrest Jamieson today challenged all other schools in the nation to prove otherwise.

The confident Viking mentor says he will match his best five runners against any and all other high schools in a two-mile team race. Since nationwide man-to-man competition is out of the question, Jamieson suggests a "postal" meet as the answer.

IN "POSTAL" competition each team runs on its home track, is officially timed, and the verified results are submitted by mail. Thus it is possible to compare accurately schools situated hundreds of miles apart.

"We had the best high school cross-country squad in America's history in 1955," Jamieson said, "and I feel this squad is even better. Surely there might be one or more schools better than we are, but I have never heard of them. This challenge of ours will give them a chance to prove us right or wrong."

In 1955, Palo Alto won the Northern California championships with a strong squad headed by Ron Larrieu who went on to win the state mile title in a speedy 4:20.1. Two others on the team—Tom Cathcart and John Morrison—broke 4:29 and Jamieson says he knows of no other high school that ever had three such fast milers in the same year.

This year's squad is headed by little John Northway and long George Linn. Last year Northway turned in the fastest time ever run by a junior on the Stanford course and was the first junior home in the Northern California finals. Linn likewise led the area's sophs, both in time and in placing in a NorCal meet.

ALSO BACK FROM last year's squad, which won the

North Coast Section and was third in the NorCal championships, are Jack Beahrs and Richard Fregulia. Norman Eliason, Howard McLeod, and Mike Chilton round out the top seven of a team which is unbeaten to date this year.

Jamieson plans that all "Palo Alto challenge races" be run on the track, rather than over cross-country courses. The latter are impossible to measure accurately and terrain is so variable that it is not possible to make accurate comparisons.

"Two-miles is the average distance run in high school cross-country all over the U.S.," the Palo Alto leader stated. "It is also a standard track distance and so the results will be meaningful to all."

It is proposed that the team races be run any time during the month of November. Jamieson feels the month-long leeway will be fairest to all because the weather and schedules are so variable.

"AND LET'S NOT forget the flu," said Jamieson with a wry grin. "Three of my top five boys are out right now, and this could happen to anybody. With a full month available, most any school can find an opportunity to meet our challenge."

In order to simplify the scoring, Jamieson proposes that times of the first five men be added, and that the team with the lowest time be declared the winner.

"Of course if anybody wants to meet us with regular cross-country scoring that's all right by us" the coach added. "With no bad luck between now and the middle of November we'll be ready to back up this challenge and make it stick."