

Smith To Battle MacMitchell For IC4-A Harrier Honors Monday

Between The Lions

WITH DICK PETERS

Headline Story

Four years have rolled by since a spindly-legged freshman reported for his first cross country trial Monday, that young man, still spindly-legged, but now a senior, will make his last run over inter-collegiate hills and dales. We let Collegian headlines of the past four years tell you the story of Willy The Wabbit Smith, who winds up his x-country career in the IC4-A meet Monday:

"Smith-Olexy Exchange Marked Hares Season." (Headline in Collegian, following Smith's freshman season, in which he went undefeated and won the freshmen IC4-A crown. Pete Olexy, Lion harrier ace, was just graduating, and Smith was coming along to take his place.)

"Harriers Upset Jaspers As Bill Smith Sets Pace." (Following Smitty's first varsity race in his sophomore year.)

"Smith Sets Record As Harriers Wallop Lehigh." (His second varsity attempt.)

"Smith Sets Record As Lion Harriers Down Syracuse." (Third varsity run.)

"Smith Breaks Third Record." (His fourth varsity race against Pitt.)

"Smith Winner By 200 Yards, Sensational Penn State Sophomore Captures IC4-A Championship." (The climax to The Wabbit's sophomore campaign.)

"Bill Smith Loses." (Bob Fehr, Michigan State harrier, upset the Lion ace over a four-mile run. Smith, however, is yet to be licked in dual competition over the regulation five-mile course.)

"Smith Tops Course Record, Wins Meet." (Against Syracuse in his third junior year match.)

"Smith Places First As 3 Lions Set Best Times." (Against Pitt last year.)

"Smith Loses IC4-A Title; Stitch In Side Hampers Billy In New York Run." (A tough break in winding up his second varsity year.)

"Smith Shatters Record In His Last Dual Race." (The story to date, after an all-victorious senior campaign this fall.)

So, at the writing, Billy Smith is awaiting his last curtain call for Penn State x-country fame, the IC4-A's in New York Monday. He's been pointing to it all year.

We'll let him write his own headline for next Tuesday's Collegian.

Seven Lion Frosh Enter IC4-A Cross-Country Meet

Seven members of the undefeated freshman cross-country team will compete in the IC4-A freshman cross-country meet in New York Monday.

Freshmen making the New York trip are Tink Candy, Charles Hobbs, Curt Stone, Bob Hazel, Bob Faloon, Jerry Eno, and Dick Cressman.

NYU Runner Promises To Succeed Cunningham

Hailed by Glenn Cunningham as "the runner to do the four-minute mile," Les MacMitchell, last year's NYU IC4-A champion will be riding the crest as favorite in the IC4-A harrier championships Monday.

MacMitchell is the exception to the rule that milers never make good cross-country runners. He is the only famous harrier since John Paul Jones who can run the mile better than 4:14 minutes.

Never beaten, MacMitchell was called the "wonder boy" of high school track. He broke the national mile record for high schools in 4:21 and showed his track versatility by winning the 880 and 1000-yard runs. Still in high school, he trained with Glenn Cunningham and other famous milers.

Big and strong-winded, he swept the college IC4-A titles in the indoor mile, outdoor mile, and cross-country, and set a new Van Cortland Park record this year when he speeded to a 26:22 minute mark.

The NYU speed merchant is noted for his gaining ground during the first three miles of his harrier duels and then striking a two-mile steady pace to the tape. On the other hand, the Lion's Bill Smith runs his races like a Paavo Nurmi, timing his miles like clockwork.

Monday's duel may threaten to upset both plans of MacMitchell and Smith as cream-of-the-crop competitors from all points of the nation may not concede the probability of a grudge race between the Nittany and NYU leaders.

Smith Bares Reason For Harrier Success

During four years of sensational running for the Nittany harrier team, Captain Bill Smith has never betrayed the secret of his record-breaking triumphs. But now, on the verge of his last IC4-A race, he has come through.

Smith blossomed into the greatest record-smasher Penn State has ever claimed as her own, after an uneventful career as a mediocre high school runner.

Even in his first freshman workouts, the spindly-legged Smith was not counted on as a winner, but his development thereafter was phenomenal.

The reason for his vast improvement? "Simply, Penn State spirit," Smith contends.

"I never had a word of encouragement from my high school coach or knew what school spirit could mean," Smith says. "But, here at Penn State, I have had interest shown by my coach, fraternity brothers, and classmates.

"The more I work under Coach Chick Werner," Smith concluded, "the more I realize how great a coach he is. He and Pete Olexy spent hours in teaching me all I know about cross-country and building up my running technique."

Hits Comeback Trial



Captain Bill Smith, 1938 IC4-A harrier champ and holder of many course records, will set out across Van Cortland Park's cross-country course in quest of his second title in Monday's IC4-A championship run. NYU's Les MacMitchell, last year's winner, is conceded a slight favorite over Smith.

Nittany Captain Set For NYU Harrier Ace

Another star in Nittany Lion athletic history will reach the zenith of his career when Captain Bill Smith, Penn State's leading harrier for four years, race against a favored Les MacMitchell in the IC4-A's over New York's Van Cortland Park course Monday.

Seeking revenge victory over the rangy MacMitchell, who wrested the title from him last year in 26:31 minutes, the little Nittany captain plans to make good in his last chance to outrun the NYU harrier.

Mediocre in mile and two-mile runs, Smith is a dyed-in-the-wool cross-country runner. A distance plugger, who dotes on hills, he has offered a harrier career that is incomparable to any of the nation's other cross-country leaders.

"Mysterious Billy" has smashed a five-mile record on every course he has competed. Defeated only twice in his life, by MacMitchell and Bob Fehr in a special four-mile contest last year, Smith has copped 14 out of 15 dual meets.

Hitting a new high in cross-country fame, the Nittany captain set a new precedent by flashing for a new record in each freshman and sophomore meet, including two IC4-A championships. His 1938 time of 26:33 minutes broke the varsity IC4-A mark.

In his 1938 Syracuse dual meet, the slender Nittany runner broke the Penn State course record in 25:25 minutes, considered by authorities as one of the fastest harrier races ever run. No one has come near this Nittany course mark, Smith holding the next best time at 26:23.

Last year, because of a minor stomach ailment and a few bad breaks, Bill Smith slumped when he lost his only two races to MacMitchell and Fehr. This season, however, he has come back stronger than ever, bursting the tape at least 300 yards against Michigan State, Syracuse, Manhattan, and Pitt runners.

Monday's IC4-A battle will be another great duel which comes only once in a decade. As for the winner being a slender hill-plodder like Smith or a brawny cylinder of perpetual motion like MacMitchell, only time will tell, and probably record time at that.

Smoky Joe, Negro trainer at North Carolina State for many years, has thrown away his rabbit's foot and acquired a fox's foot as a luck charm.

Lion Cross-Country Squad Strengthened For IC4-A's

Strengthened by the improved running of Chet Snyder and the addition of Al Bourgerie, the Nittany Lion cross-country team will be prepared to stack up against the nation's leading harrier squads at the IC4-A championship race Monday.

Snyder and Pop Thiel, two Lion harriers who never competed in a high school cross-country meet, Bourgerie, and Vern Kotz will be counted on to support Captain Bill Smith in stealing harrier honors away from such opponents as Manhattan, Pitt, Syracuse, Cornell, Princeton, and other eastern and western squads.

Frank Burkhardt and Dusty Rhodes are the other additions to the Nittany Lion trip to New York. Both harriers made the varsity team this year.

Promise of a keener competition between harrier teams has been indicated by the close scores that leading cross-country teams have tallied this year.

Eddie Casey, former great Harvard halfback and coach, is piloting the Boston Bears of the American Pro League.

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