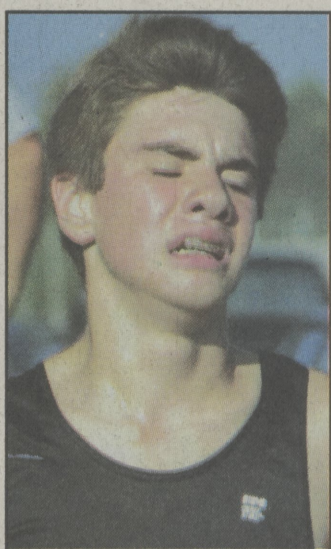


A giant stride toward a title

Lake-Lehman's Carson Baker captured second place in the meet against Dallas and Hanover Area.



Kyle Piazza and Jimmy Brown finished in a tie for first place as the Dallas Middle School cross country team cruised to a 14-85 win against Lake-Lehman in a Wyoming Valley Conference junior high school cross country meet. Stephanie Strasser of Dallas won the girls race as the Mountaineers boys and girls teams improved their record to 5-0.

Lake-Lehman's Carson Baker finished third, eight seconds behind Piazza and Brown in 11 minutes, 10 seconds. Rounding out the top 10 finishers are Chris Dailey, Dallas, 11:20; Griff Adams, Dallas 11:32; Russ Jenkins, Dallas 11:35; Strasser, Dallas, 11:58; AJ Thomas, Dallas 12:06; Shane Stark, Lake-Lehman 12:23; and Adam Harry, Lake-Lehman 12:42. "It's been a great season for us thus far," said Dallas coach Marjorie Adams.

"I have athletes who are committed. This is the most competitive boys team Dallas has had in quite some time. They have their goals set pretty high for the conference and District (2) championships."

Adams says the girls team is trying to keep pace with the high school varsity team, which won a state championship two years ago and is considered one of the favorites to win a state title this season.

"The girls are continuing the winning tradition of Lady Mounts cross country," she said. "They feel they have a legacy to uphold and they take it seriously. Stephanie Strasser is a rare combination of talent and work ethic. She hasn't been beaten since she came out for track last spring. She's also a great team leader."



Stephanie Strasser of Dallas won the girls race in a tri-meet against Lake-Lehman and Hanover Area.



Janice Ratowski of Dallas, center, gets some help from teammates Stephanie Strasser and Rachel Buckman after turning in a gutsy performance during Tuesday's cross country meet against Lake-Lehman and Hanover Area.



Kyle Piazza and Jim Brown of Dallas join Lake-Lehman's Carson Baker near the front of the race.



Lake-Lehman's Carson Baker and his friend Kyle Piazza of Dallas share a few words before the start of the race. Hanover Area's Johnny Gibbons, left, won the race.

Photos For The Post by Charlotte Bartizek