

# Optimism runs high

By DAVE ROSEGRANT  
For The Post

**L**EHMAN TWP. – Optimism is running rampant through the Lake-Lehman cross country program this year.

The boys team returns three runners who qualified for the PIAA championships last year, while two girls return from last season's District 2 Class 2A runner-up team.

Senior Justin Amy is expected to lead the way for the boys team. At the state meet last year, he finished the 3.1-mile course at Hershey Park Stadium's White Field in 17 minutes, 35 seconds, good enough for 69th place in the Class 2A race.

Sophomore Mike Ryan was two seconds behind Amy, finishing 74th in the field of 286 runners. The third runner on the boys team is junior Justin Mazer, who also qualified for the state meet. And the Black Knights added Adam Staricha, who is a senior out-of-state transfer.

"The guys are all beating up on each other at practice," head coach John Sobocinski said. "We don't have a definitive number one guy because they are all taking turns being num-

ber one at practice."

The fifth spot will be between juniors Jason Neare and Neil Dierolf, along with freshman Carson Baker. Sobocinski knows all this competition can only turn into good results.

"They are really motivated and are really into it," he said. "It's hard with cross country to get kids excited every day but my guys are really, really into it. They're going to be happy for a meet because our practices have been so competitive."

On the girls side, sophomore Marina Orrson and junior Sarah Austin return as state qualifiers. Seniors Tori Posatko and Kelcey Cole join junior Courtney Matus to round out the top five.

The girls lost a few contributors from the nucleus of last year's team, but should still be solid when competing in Wyoming Valley Conference meets.

This year, the WVC has adopted a new system as individual meets have been replaced with cluster-meets. Each meet will consist of six teams. Lake-Lehman will be paired with two other teams and the trio will compete against another three teams.

During those meets, Lake-Lehman will only score against teams in the opposing cluster. The

See L-L CROSS, Page 9

Neil Dierolf, Justin Amy and Justin Mazer help form the backbone of this year's cross country team at Lake-Lehman.

## Dallas hopes to stay ahead of the pack

By DAVE KONOPKI  
Post Editor

**DALLAS TWP.** – So what can the Dallas cross country program do for an encore?

The girls and boys teams cruised through the Wyoming Valley Conference last year, winning their respective championships with an unbeaten record. The girls took it several steps further, capturing the District 2 Class 2A title before winning the program's second state championship.

Despite losing many outstanding runners to graduation, head coach Matt Samuel is looking forward to the season.

"I guess it's another new adventure," said Samuel, who begins his fourth year at the helm of the program. "We feel like we're going to have a strong team again this season. It's going to be fun finding out."

The Mountaineers return a solid group of runners on the girls side, led by senior Kenslie Kerestes. Last year, Kerestes – who finished second at the District 2 meet behind teammate Lisa Giacommetti – broke her right foot during



Members of the Dallas cross country team are hoping to have another successful season in the Wyoming Valley Conference.

the state championship meet in Hershey. She finished the race, however, which proved to be instrumental in the Mountaineers winning the state championship.

"Kenslie had a great summer of training," said Sa-

muel. "I don't think it's any secret that if she didn't break her foot, she had a great chance of being all-

See DALLAS XC, Page 11

POST FILE PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

POST FILE PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK