

Longwood Back With a Surprise

By Jonathan D. Salant

Kings Park—Longwood cross-country coach Tony Toro entered his team in yesterday's Suffolk Coaches Association meet at Sunken Meadow State Park because "we wanted to get used to competition." Having competed in only two events in two years, Toro admitted to being surprised when his team finished a close second in the "DD" varsity race.

Seniors Craig Araujo, who finished first in 16:03.5, and Fred Denigris, who finished 10th, are the only two Longwood runners returning from Longwood's last cross-country team two years ago, which placed seventh in Suffolk County. Last year, the Longwood School District began the school year under an austerity budget and all fall sports, including cross-country, were canceled.

"I was hurt, very much hurt [when there was no team]," said Araujo. "I thought we had a good team last year."

"Now, I just push harder," said Denigris. "I've missed a year. This is my last year so I've got to try to get going now."

"I think we can [win], but not right now," said Toro. "They lost that year of experience. That hurts."

Sophomore Ray Cardinal made Longwood the only team in the race with three finishers in the top 10 by placing seventh. Danny Courtenay was 18th and Brian Deery placed 42nd. However, Port Jefferson, led by Bob Scopa in third place and Jim Purdy in fourth, won the event.

Scopa didn't expect the score to be so close. "I'm surprised with Longwood," he said. "I didn't know that they had that many people up there. No one expected them to do that well."

Port Jefferson and Floyd were the only two schools to repeat as winners from last year's meet. Floyd took the "D" race by a 55-91 margin over St. Peter's of Staten Island. Marty Hansen of Floyd won the race in 15:45.5, while teammate Charley Keller was third.

John Little of Northport broke the one-week-old record for the three-mile run. His 15:26.3 in the "A" race eclipsed Huntington's Dick Cartwright's 15:27 set last week, at Sunken Meadow. "I knew I was close to it," Little said. "It will be broken again, I'm sure."

Port Jefferson's junior varsity recorded the lowest score of the meet, 16, by capturing the first four places, and the sixth position, in the junior varsity "E" race. Ralph Amitrano led the team with a time of 17:06.1, more than 20 seconds ahead of his teammate, runner-up Glen Shaw.

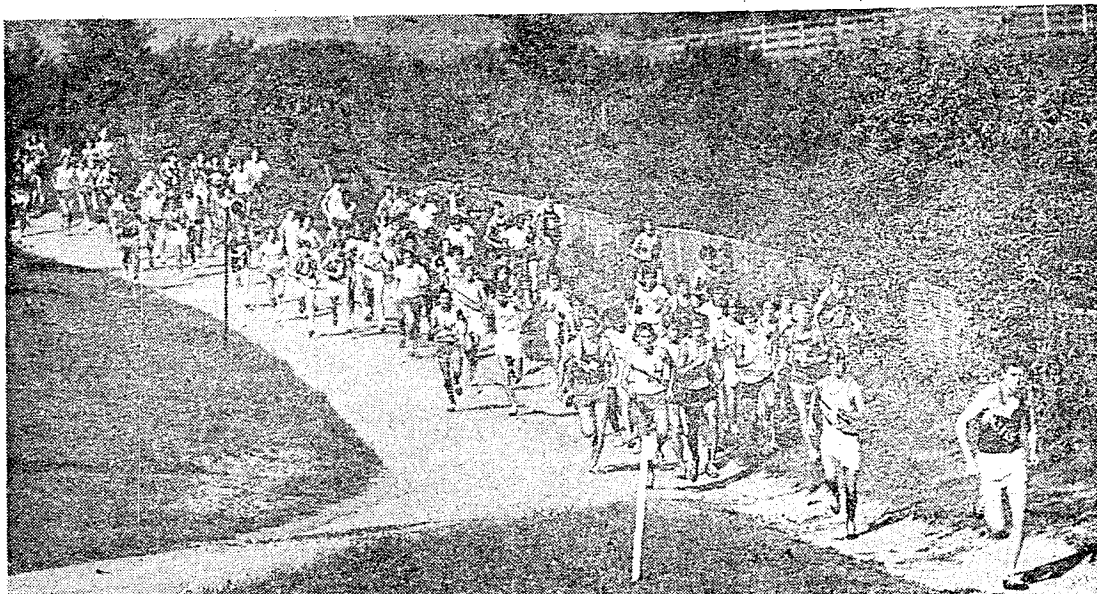
In the girls' run, Diane D. Andrade of Ward Melville took first place in 18:55.7, almost three minutes ahead of her nearest competitor.

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Albany—St. John the Baptist finished fifth in the Shaker Invitational cross-country meet but had the individual winner in John Fitzpatrick, who ran the new 2.7-mile course in 14:26. Shaker High won the meet by defeating Colonie High, 56-61.

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Schenectady—Mercy High School took fourth place in the three-mile Grout Run with 135 points. Irvington High School finished first with 159. Peter Quatralo of Mercy placed second in a time of 14:56, Jim Ryan was third in 15:04 and Mike Mapes finished seventh in 15:14.



Newsday Photos by Joe Dombroski

Coming up "Cardiac Hill" in one of yesterday's races at Sunken Meadow State Park



Don Paige of Baldwinsville in chute after winning the Varsity "C" race