

A perennial problem surfaces at title meet

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

It promised to be a classic showdown of ex-teammates, a scintillating start to what could still be an extraordinary high school rivalry.

But round one of the combined Halton/Golden Horseshoe Athletic Conference (GHAC) Cross Country Championships Thursday at Kelso failed to live up to its expectations.

That's because like every year at least one top contender ventures off the conservation area's course — which continues to be confusing for many runners season after season. The move essentially takes them out of the race.

This time it was E.C. Drury's Melissa Logue who took a wrong turn midway through the midget girls 3,000 metre trek.

So instead of offering a stiff challenge to fellow Sam Sherratt School graduate Laura Thistle, now of Milton District High, she fell way out of the title picture and didn't have enough time to pull herself back in.

Even without a local competitor shadowing her down the stretch, winning the Halton/GHAC crown proved to be a daunting task for 14-year-old Thistle.

She needed well-timed bursts of speed over the hilly portion of the course as well as the last few dozen stretches to eclipse Georgetown's Jenny Adams by two seconds in 13:30.

"I'm really happy to have started my high school career with a bang," said Thistle, a regional public school champ in the 1,500m last spring.

"This race was twice as long as any I've ever done and I was dying at the end. However, I always finish with a sprint and I just couldn't break that trend."

Her victory paved the way to a third-place team showing — and subsequent provincial qualifying berth — for MD's midget girls.

Making up the rest of the contingent were Sally Nicholls, Erin Beal, Lee Carson and Damila Dennis who placed 10th, 23th, 25th and 29th respectively.

They were the first of three Mustang teams to earn the proverbial bronze and advance to this Saturday's All-Ontario finals in Etobicoke.

The midget boys completed a qualifying sweep in the youngest age class, thanks largely to Trevor Tobin who finished ninth in the 4,600m race.

Close behind with 15th and 16th place efforts were Josh Suter and Sean Magee while Neil Lambrick took 22nd spot.

In the junior boys' 5,700m event the Mustangs snuck into the last provincial team spot despite their top runners — Zac MacKay and Jeff Anthony — only grabbing 16th and 17th respectively.

Brendan Coyle was 22nd and Sid Munro was 27th.

MD also had three individual qualifiers including senior girls' Carrie Meltzer who covered the 4,600m course in a sizzling 21:04 for fourth-place honours.

Chrissie Henderson finished fifth in the junior girls' 4,200m event while Craig O'Neil blazed his way to a 29:11 showing over 7,100m for eighth spot among senior boys.

Overall the Mustangs were third in Halton and fourth in GHAC behind Q.E. Park, Georgetown and St. Mary's of Hamilton.

E.C. Drury sent only a handful of runners to Kelso Thursday. Their top finisher was Brooke Johnson, who took sixth in the senior girls race.

Cross country ski swap Sunday

The Halton Cross Country Ski Club holds their annual ski swap and sale this Sunday at Burlington's Nelson High School, located at 4181 New Street.

Both alpine and cross country ski equipment and

clothing — new and used — will be up for sale.

Receiving will be done between 9 and 10:30 a.m. with the sale to follow from 10:45 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The club hosts a season opening social Wednesday, Nov. 18 from 7:30 to 10 p.m.

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