

HERB GARBUTT / CANADIAN CHAMPION

ROYAL RUN: Bishop Reding's Scott Dermott, with Eric Labelle of Holy Trinity in pursuit, heads out in the early stages of the senior boys' race at the Golden Horseshoe Athletic Conference cross-country championships at Christie Conservation Area. Dermott finished fourth to qualify for this weekend's OFSAA meet.

Runners headed to OFSAA

By Herb Garbutt
METROLAND WEST MEDIA GROUP

Shane MacDonald likes to save his best for last, a trend he hopes to continue Saturday as he wraps up the cross-country season at the provincial high school championships.

The Grade 9 E.C. Drury student qualified with a second-place showing in the midget boys' race at the Golden Horseshoe meet last Tuesday at the Christie Conservation Area in Waterdown. MacDonald patiently stayed back, but within striking distance, before picking off opponents over the second half of the five-kilometre course.

"A lot of people sprint at the beginning and they start to lose energy," MacDonald said. "I use that to my advantage."

"He hangs in there and then he gives it his all," added Drury coach James Crowe.

MacDonald managed to track down everyone in the field except for Abbey Park's David Watson, who won by 50 seconds. MacDonald, who finished in 18 minutes and 20 seconds, had a comfortable 20-second cushion over third-place finisher Olin Flydorf of Georgetown.

MacDonald didn't start running cross country until Grade 8 after he "found out I was good at it" after posting the best 1,500-metre time at Hawthorne Village the previous year. Last fall, MacDonald won the Halton elementary senior boys' title and in the summer he began training with Athletiques International, an Oakville track club.

As he continues to improve, Crowe said MacDonald will play an important role on Drury's team.

"He's a determined young man with great ability," the coach said.

"He's only in Grade 9 so he's going to be a leader for our team in the future."

MacDonald will be joined at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) meet in Woodbridge by a pair of Bishop Reding runners, Connor LeDrew and Scott Dermott. LeDrew finished third in the junior boys' race while Dermott was fourth in a highly-competitive senior boys' race.

Reding coach Maureen Morrison said LeDrew has shown improvement this fall. He turned in a top-10 showing at the McMaster meet earlier this year and then stepped up again at the GHAC meet, running the six-kilometres in 22:36.

"He rises to the occasion," Morrison said. "He knew he had to have a good race to qualify for OFSAA."

Despite the importance of the race, LeDrew still makes sure he's having fun. Earlier this year, he dove head first across the finish line in one race and at GHAC he scooped up a handful of leaves and tossed them in the air as he crossed the line.

Dermott had tough field to conquer in the senior boys' race with two OFSAA medalists, Notre Dame's Juan Arango and Abbey Park's Dan Mathie, finishing one-two. Dermott stayed with the lead pack, which also included Holy Trinity's Eric Labelle, for the first lap of the course but they eventually spread out over final circuit. Dermott finished the seven-kilo-

metre course in 24:58, 53 seconds off the pace set by Arango.

Although he will be in tough at OFSAA — earning the third individual berth, he will start near the back of the pack — Morrison said the OFSAA course is well suited to

Dermott, who also plays hockey.

"He very agile. He can make moves and fight his way through," said Morrison. "And his final kick (at GHAC), it was like he was on a break-away. If you're anywhere in his sight, he's going to catch you. He's one of the toughest competitors I know."

Morrison also believes that Dermott

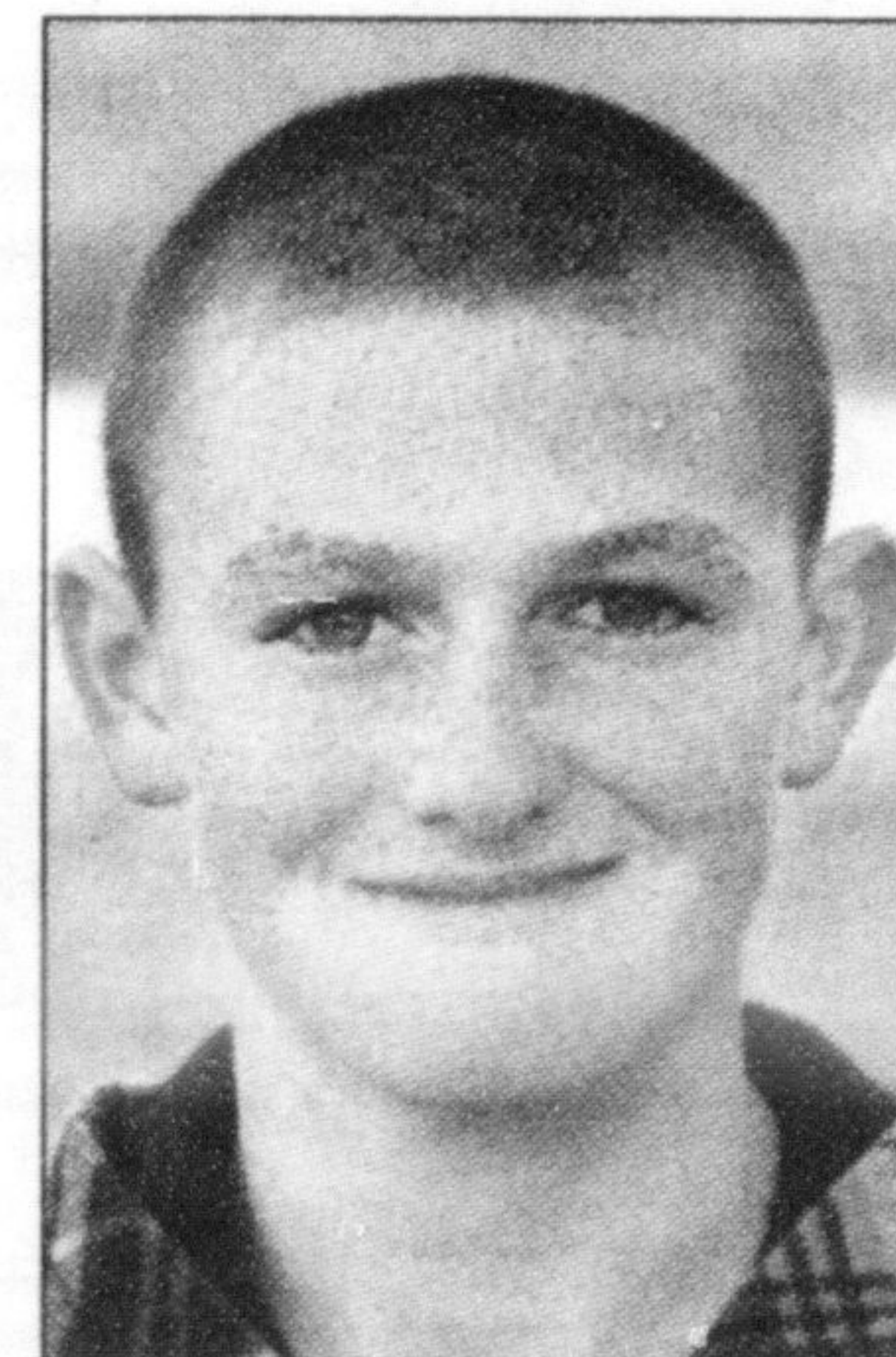
will thrive on a steep hill on the OFSAA course that is sure to give many runners trouble.

"It's a long one and the beginning of it is quite steep," she said. "Then just when you think it's over it keeps going, just not as steep. But he'll put forth whatever effort he needs."

Milton District's Melissa Gabel, last year's GHAC junior champion, just missed out on an OFSAA berth, finishing seventh in the senior girls' race.

Combining with LeDrew, Mitch Adamson (12th) and Daniel Dcruz (22nd) helped Bishop Reding's junior boys earn a fourth-place finish, the best team result by a Milton school.

Other top-20 finishers included E.C. Drury's Brendan Danielson, 12th in the senior boys' race and Bishop Reding's Rachel Lingard, 13th, and Katie Healy, 20th, in the midget girls' race.



Shane MacDonald

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