

Haddonfield wins 5th straight title

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HOLMDEL

By all accounts, you could understand if 2010 turned out to be an off year for the Haddonfield High School boys' cross country team following the loss of several talented runners to graduation last spring.

Instead, the dynasty continues, with seemingly no end in sight.

The Bulldawgs reaffirmed their status as the class of South Jersey cross country teams, rolling to their fifth straight Group 2 state championship Saturday and 13th overall at Holmdel Park. The 13th state crown tied the 'Dawgs for third overall with Westfield for most boys' state championships in state history.

Thanks to a 1-2 finish from the dynamic duo of Ben Potts and Matt Nussbaum, and solid outings from teammates Greg Halla, Tim Malloy and Eric Lacy, Haddonfield easily captured team honors with 48 points, outdistancing runnerup

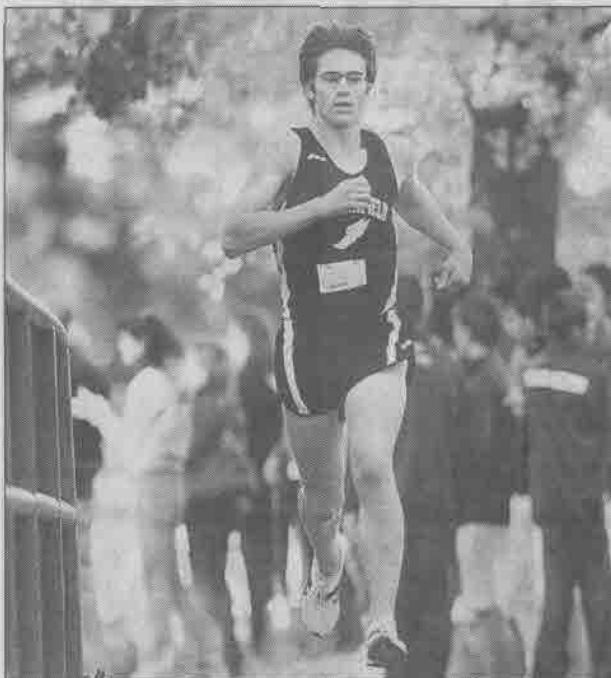
Ramsey's 141-point effort.

"These guys worked hard over the summer and were always on a mission to win this fifth straight championship," said coach Nick Baker. "This is a first for our school — to win five titles like this in a row — and I couldn't be prouder of the efforts from everyone."

The state crown was South Jersey's second of the afternoon as Bishop Eustace surprised the Non-Public B field to win its first championship since 2002 and fourth overall. Haddon Township, meanwhile, grabbed third place in the Group 1 title meet.

Haddonfield's Potts capped a magnificent senior season by clocking a winning time of 16:09. The victory over Nussbaum, runnerup at 16:24, was surprisingly easy given the fact that the two have raced neck and neck in major meets the past two seasons.

But it was all in a day's work and was accomplished in typical Haddonfield fashion, which placed its top four — Potts (first), Nussbaum (second), Halla (seventh) and Malloy (12) among the top 12



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Ben Potts and the Haddonfield boys' cross country team had that championship feeling after Saturday's meet.

with Lacy 30th overall. Halla checked in with a time of 16:47, Malloy finished at 16:56, and Lacy at 17:35.

"It feels great to win the state championship again," said Potts, who has participated on four state title teams. "But no matter what

anyone tells you, this is never as easy as it might look. Everyone worked hard and made a lot of sacrifices to get here."

With the graduation of standouts such as Jon "Boo" Vitez, now at Princeton, and Colin Baker, now at Penn,

the Bulldawgs benefitted from a total team effort. Not only did Potts and Nussbaum perform well, but so did teammates such as Malloy, Halla, Franklin, Ethan Quanci and Conor Jacobs.

Each of the supporting runners consistently turned in workman-like efforts throughout the season to keep Haddonfield well on top in South Jersey cross country circles.

"This was great to win like this and it gets us ready for the Meet of Champions," said Malloy, who covered the Holmdel course in 16:56 and whose sister Meghan is a standout for Cinnaminson. "My goal today was to finish under 17 minutes — I knew that would put me somewhere near the top and give me a chance to help out my team."

But the Bulldawgs were not the only successful team on this day.

Bishop Eustace started the Group championships for South Jersey on a high note, capturing its fourth overall state crown in Non-Public B and doing so in the first race of the morning. The Crusaders' other state

crowns came in 1960, 1962 and 2002.

Eustace used a simple strategy of keeping its pack close together — and it worked beautifully as six runners placed in the top 20 to help the Crusaders (46 points) upend favorites Roselle Catholic (54 points) and Saint Rose (118).

The Crusaders benefitted from three top 10 finishes as Ron Griswold (fourth, 17:07), Luke Mazzochette (fifth, 17:19) and Eric Franklin (sixth, 17:20) got the job done. Bolstering the effort were solid showings from Eustace teammates Dvonne Trumbo (16th), Jon Seator (17th) and Matt Thompson (18th).

Griswold narrowly missed out on a higher finish when he cramped up heading into the last mile of the race.

"That had never happened to me before so I was thankful I could finish the race," said Griswold, who has run track for three years but took part in cross country for the first time this fall. "I really enjoyed this meet and the season in general, and hope to run cross country and track in college."