

Erika Adler leads Northwood girls cross country team to special finish

By BRENT SHAVER
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Northwood High girls cross country coach Louie Muniz jokingly told the runners on his team heading into the 50th Orange County Championships that he would be mad if they didn't finish in the top 10 in the featured sweepstakes race.

It was nothing but happy faces all around on Saturday morning at Irvine Regional Park in Orange for the Timberwolves.

Northwood, which was ranked No. 8 in Orange County going into the meet, placed an impressive fourth overall.

"I thought a realistic goal was top five, and we hit that," Muniz said. "It is what I believed that they could do and they bought into it. Everyone did - the coaching staff, the girls and the parents. They all really believed in that."

Northwood took fourth with 155 points. Dana Hills won the title with 91 points. Canyon was second with 111 points and Capistrano Valley finished third with 113 points.

Senior Erika Adler led the way and Northwood had a solid pack of runners behind her.

Adler battled Capistrano Valley junior Haley Herberg most of the way for first place.

Herberg pulled away on the final hill of the 3-mile course and won in a time of 17:01.6.

Adler, who is in her first year as a cross country runner at Northwood, finished second in a time of 17:09.2. She was the top senior runner in the meet.

"She is so coachable," said Muniz of Adler, who just started running competitively for Northwood during the track season this past spring. "The other girls in this race, this is their 30-something cross country race. I told her that this is your fifth race ever and you have to let them set the pace and then at the 2-mile mark you have to go."

"She hung in there with them. What a great find she is. And she



NICK AGRO, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Northwood senior Erika Adler approaches the finish line to earn second place in the girls sweepstakes race during the Orange County Cross Country Championships at Irvine Regional Park on Saturday.

is a great kid. She listens to everything that we try and help her with. We knew she had talent, but we never expected anything like this. She is special."

Freshman Aleks Crampton was 28th in 18:13.7, Sami Murphy came in 39th in 18:28.4, freshman Mary King took 55th in 18:49.2 and Chloe Muller was 56th in 18:50.3 to round out Northwood's scoring runners.

Hailey Villaflor was 66th in 19:02.0 and freshman Autumn Clarke took 85th in 19:21.6 for the Timberwolves.

"Aleks had a great race and Sami is coming back strong (from injury)," Muniz said. "They all did fantastic. It is pretty special. We really have a great group."

University sophomore Cecilia Langlois ran in the sweepstakes race and finished 42nd in 18:31.5.

The Beckman and Woodbridge girls teams competed in the Division 2 race. The Warriors were without top runner Lora Gonzalez, who had just gotten back from a recruiting trip.

Beckman came in third with 130 points. Valencia won with 86 points and Aliso Niguel was second with 129 points. Woodbridge placed seventh with 216 points.

For Beckman, Briana Pelayo was 14th in 18:58.9, freshman Mackenzie Elo was 19th in 19:06.0, Amy Lambert finished 27th in 19:19.2, Leila Manneh placed 37th in 19:36.0 and Susana Ferro was 38th in 19:36.2..

Mariam Masud was 11th in 18:54.8, Meagan Oefelein came in 17th in 19:04.8 and Elizabeth Dahl was 34th in 19:34.8 for Woodbridge.

The Woodbridge and Beck-

man boys teams competed in the sweepstakes race. Woodbridge finished 12th out of 18 teams with 298 points.

Beckman was 18th with 476 points.

Sophomore Brett Knutson was Woodbridge's top finisher, placing 38th in 15:34.8. Sean McConville came in 49th in 15:47.0, Ryuya Souther was 64th in 15:54.5 and Drew Arguelles came in 66th in 15:58.7.

Beckman was paced by sophomore Caleb Suhr, who finished 82nd in 16:18.3. Freshman Rahul Aggarwal was 87th in 16:21.7.

Northwood's boys team was 15th in the Division 2 race with 359 points.

Caleb Nelson placed 25th in 16:16.7 and David Crampton was 51st in 16:36.5 for the Timberwolves.