



MARK DUSTIN, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Northwood's Erika Adler (1295), center, stays ahead of the pack during Saturday's CIF-SS Girls Division 2 Championships.

ADLER, GONZALEZ HEAD TO STATE CROSS COUNTRY MEET

Crean boys are only team that will join them in Fresno this weekend.

By **BRENT SHAVER**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Northwood High star runner Erika Adler and Woodbridge standout Lora Gonzalez are headed to the CIF State Cross Country Championships this weekend in Fresno.

They qualified as individuals at the CIF Southern Section Finals on Saturday at the Riverside Cross Country Course.

But it was a tough day for local teams at the finals.

Only the Crean Lutheran boys team qualified to compete at state.

Northwood's girls team and the Woodbridge boys

team each just missed out on advancing. The Woodbridge girls team and Uni individual runner Cecilia Langlois also saw their seasons come to an end.

Northwood High coach Louie Muniz knew going in it might be tough for his squad to advance in such a loaded Division 2 field.

The top seven teams in each division moved on to state.

Northwood finished ninth with 226 points. Saugus, the seventh-place team, had 219 points.

"The girls ended the season laying their hearts and souls on the course," Muniz said. "We came up a bit short. Having the CIF champions Saugus, who has won eight out of the last 9 years, finish in the last spot tells you how deep the Division 2 group is this year."

"We ran over a minute faster team time than the

previous race, yet we could only place ninth. We were proud and satisfied with the effort our seven girls gave each other out on the course."

Adler took fourth individually in a time of 16:58.0 in the race to advance. Elizabeth Chittenden of Mira Costa won the race in 16:49.4 with Erica Schroeder of San Marcos (16:53.6) in second and Alyssa Bautista of Capistrano Valley (16:57.6) in third.

Adler held the lead in the latter part of the race, but was passed over the final 200 meters.

"What an amazing accomplishment to finish in fourth place against a seasoned group of cross country superstars," Muniz said. "It was tremendous courage on her part to put herself into that position and tell the other runners to come catch her. She was not going to back down.

She is stoked to get the opportunity to extend her season at the state championships and give herself another chance to race against the best the sport has to offer."

Northwood freshman Aleks Crampton was 34th in 18:12.5, Sami Murphy came in 52nd in 18:23.0, Chloe Muller was 66th in 18:33.6, and Hailey Villafior finished 81st in 18:56.6 to round out the five scoring runners.

"Overall our Cinderella season was a tremendous success," Muniz said. "I have to acknowledge the guidance the girls received from the legendary coach Randy Rossi. His involvement with our program has been a big help from the first day of summer practice."

Gonzalez of Woodbridge also pushed hard and ran one of her best races of the season to move on. She fin-

ished 16th overall in 17:34.2.

Woodbridge's girls team came in 23rd with 502 points.

The Woodbridge boys team was 12th out of 24 teams in Division 2. The Warriors finished with 336 points.

Brett Knutson was the squad's top finisher, placing 44th in 15:32.6. Sean McConville was 45th in 15:33.6, Ryuya Souther finished 73rd in 15:49.8, Drew Arguelles was 95th in 16:09.7, and Brandon Christ came in 96th in 16:10.1.

Crean Lutheran qualified for state in Division 4. The Saints finished fifth with 208 points.

Peter Weiss was 17th in 15:46.0, Garrett Miller came in 34th in 15:59.9, Craig Odenwald was 41st in 16:03.9, Evan Bilotta was 56th in 16:11.5 and Cole Pino placed 66th in 16:15.9.