

## **9/18/2010 3 Course Challenge Oregon**

Temp: warm and rainy

### **RESULTS: 2<sup>nd</sup> Place out of 93 teams!**

The three course challenge is unique to any cross country race that I am aware of. As the name of the race indicates there are three different courses. Each runner does not know which course they will be running. There is a drawing of the course to race. The courses themselves are also unique. The terrain is very soft, either beach type sand, grass or dirt. Depending on the course that was drawn for the runner, there is a course which is a deer trail; A super narrow course, where to duck under tree branches, jump over downed trees or side step obstacles is common.

In my 15 years involved with the running program here at Esperanza I've never witnessed each kid on the team feel satisfied if not better with their performance until this race. It's true. Each runner really did much better than expected. It was nice to see every athlete hold his head up after the race.

#### **Hard Course (396 runners)**

17:35 Human 29<sup>th</sup>

18:16 Harlan 56<sup>th</sup> (raced with a broken toe)

#### **Harder Course (497 runners)**

18:28 Myers 4<sup>th</sup>

19:26 Merget 15<sup>th</sup>

19:45 Collins 20<sup>th</sup>

19:54 Lindsay 30<sup>th</sup>

19:55 Llamas 31<sup>st</sup>

#### **Hardest Course (532 runners)**

19:59 Dholakia 8<sup>th</sup>

20:13 Ogan 13<sup>th</sup>

20:29 French 16<sup>th</sup>

20:46 Palmer 20<sup>th</sup>

21:07 Sommer 27<sup>th</sup>

21:14 De Ley 33<sup>rd</sup>

22:01 Figueroa 62<sup>nd</sup>

If they kept a team score for each race (which they don't) we would have won both the Harder and Hardest courses! Excellent composure after such a big ordeal to get there, guys!

**Time does not matter** on this course. And this is a nice lesson for all runners. It is not about time. The real factor is place. Place truly demonstrates your competitive drive. Let's look at a few of our athletes. Elliot placed 4<sup>th</sup> out of roughly 500 runners. Where

does this put him percentage wise in the field? Top 1%. Maybe even a little better. Right? How about Chris Collins? He placed 20<sup>th</sup> out of 500. Top 5%. The clock does not tell the entire story and yet it is so easy to get up in time.

There is a fine line between being **courageous and being ridiculous** (stupid) when we race. Finding and fine tuning our race effort is very important. Kurtis Merget, Chris Collins and Thomas French demonstrated much needed patience in their race. Not really knowing the distance of the race before them, they did a wonderful job of calculating their effort over the duration of the course. When the drums are beating and there are huge crowds and nearly 500 competitors in a race, it is easy to go out too hard only to find yourself fading over the final mile. Kurtis was probably around 40-50<sup>th</sup> after the first ½ mile. Chris Collins was even further back than Kurtis and Thomas could not have gotten out any better and yet found himself back in the pack. But, yet, over time... they passed runners. Actually, I have to mention sophomore Austin Human here too. He was brilliant with his race strategy and was set up so perfectly at the 1200 mark. Their places at the end of the race indicate what a fine job they did.

**A breakthrough of sorts**... happened with J.P. Ogan. His 13<sup>th</sup> place and 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish for our team was tremendous. Easily his best race of his high school career, J.P. looks to be an impact runner for us in the future. His performance in Oregon was huge! Not knowing the field might have played a factor? If J.P. continues to compete and train the way he has, it will be very nice for the entire team. It will be interesting to see what J.P. does at Orange County Championships and better yet, he is more suited for a Mt. Sac type course.

**Broken? Not really?** Soph Chris Harlan in his first year of competing in cross country broke his toe doing something other than running before our race in Ventura. Chris did not tell me anything about it before his race and threw down a 17:40! Then, after I tell him I'd like him to go to Oregon, he tells me "I have a broken toe." I think to myself, "maybe we need to break another if it helps making you faster?" At any rate, the kid came to Oregon to run with the toe. We put some duct tape on it, rubbed a little dirt in between the toes and got him on the line. Chris managed to finish 56<sup>th</sup> out of 396. That's pretty good for a first year runner? I predict sub 17 soon.

**Running Varsity....** It's nice to see Kurtis do well. He's been on this varsity team off and on now three seasons. His place of 15<sup>th</sup> overall in the Harder Race is the best run I've seen him do in a long time. He's got to feel good about it! Keep rolling Kurtis, we are going to need you on the line with all of your experience!

I really can't pick an athlete of the meet. Elliot put together a great race! Looked awesome and he is still getting in shape! Kurtis ran awesome! Amar looked good as well... and Ogan just looked amazing! I think the team was a class act working well with the chaperones during the event. And I thought shined against Edison's behavior. (they are young guys) I have to tell ya. That was one of the best trips I've taken with this group. I can't pick one guy. You all deserve it. Thanks for the good memories guys. Gonna miss this group!

