

SPORTS

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Neenah cross country a team approach

Special training methods prove to be successful

By JOE ZIEMER
FOR THE NEWS-RECORD

NEENAH — Six conference championships.

Eight trips to the state meet, one of them resulting in a state title in 2001.

Neenah boys cross-country coach John Morgen certainly knows how to get results.

He was named state coach of the year in 2001, District Four coach of the year twice, Fox Valley Association coach of the year five times and *The Post-Crescent* All-Area Coach of the Year twice.

His secret? A unique style.

For the past nine years, Morgen has kicked off the cross country season by taking his team to Onaway Island in Waupaca County for team-building.



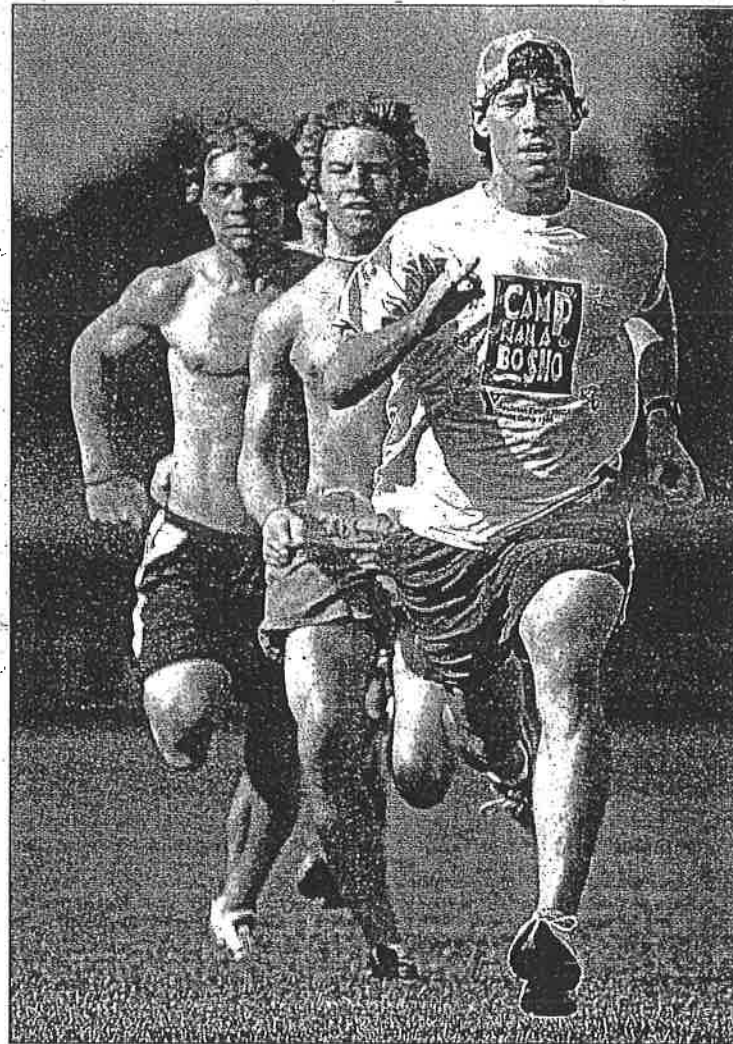
Morgen

At Camp Onaway, the Rockets not only train physically — through exercises like cross country courses, military courses and canoe relays — they also

get to know their teammates.

"It's a great chance to take a large team and have them get to know each other," Morgen said. "After three or four days not only are the kids in better shape but they have gotten to know each other."

This year's Neenah squad is 79 Rockets strong—the largest in Morgen's 11-year tenure (When Morgen first took over



News-Record photo by Sharon Cakada

NEENAH HIGH SCHOOL cross-country runner Ross Younger (right) runs sprinting drills with the rest of the team during a recent practice at the school.

as Rockets coach, there were just 20 members of the boys cross country team). With such a large squad, the boundary-breaking and team-building activities come in quite handy.

"I think for one it gives team unity like you would not believe," Neenah senior Ross

Younger said. "It's the highlight of my season, except for the competitions themselves. It's just phenomenal."

"It brings us all closer," senior Mike Stiff added. "It helps us push to see where our limits are."

Morgen is more than just an

organizer and a motivator. When it comes to cross country, he is as much of a participant as he is a coach.

A major in the National Guard, Morgen is not afraid of a little running.

"It's nice to have a coach who can get in there," Younger said. "He's not just some overweight guy who says 'Go do this.' He's right there beside you."

Morgen also is not afraid of a little biking. During his free time this summer, Morgen biked up the east coast, from Atlanta to Portland, Maine. The trip took him 16 days, though it paled in comparison to last summer's trek from Everett, Wash., to Yorktown, Va.

"I think it's just amazing for that guy to do that," Stiff said.

Morgen also took part in an Ironman in Florida. He competed in his first Ironman in Lake Placid in 2000 and has been trying to compete in every one held in North America.

"They keep adding them," Morgen said.

Neenah assistant coach Mike Jovanovich also is an avid Ironman participant. To the Rockets cross country athletes, their coaches' determination and dedication gives them extra motivation.

"I think it helps us out," Younger said. "It's someone to look up to. I think everyone on the team looks up to Coach Morgan and Coach M.J. It gives us a sense of pride."

"Let's face it, these guys are getting old, but they're right there with us," Younger said. "That's definitely a very cool thing."

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West Bend CC 2005 Time Sheet

Last Name	First Name	Grade	1 Mile	2 Mile	Final	
Stiff	Mike	12	5:22	11:30	19:16.0	5k
Young	Brent R.	11	5:43	11:50	19:16.1	5k
Wunderlich	Matt	11	5:46	11:57	19:16.5	5k
Heindel	Drew	12	5:53	12:15	19:54	5k
Behnke	Kaiser	9	5:50	12:15	20:02	5k
Kuen	Ried	12	6:09	12:37	20:05	5k
Younger	Ross	12	5:54	12:29	20:11	5k
Harding	Richard	12	5:44	12:23	20:15	5k
Parker	Chris	9	5:51	12:25	20:29	5k
Canner	Josh	12	5:44	12:28	20:38	5k
Rayden	Chris	12	5:57	12:44	20:38	5k
Bacon	Greg	12	5:56	12:30	20:40	5k
Borsecnik	Ian	12	5:52	12:38	20:41	5k
Rohe	Dan	11	6:09	12:54	20:42	5k
Chrstiansen	Andrew	10	6:12	12:24	20:46	5k
Schraufnagel	Tim	10	5:46	13:05	20:49	5k
Lehman	Jeremy	11	6:10	13:02	21:19	5k
Schulz	Tim	12	5:55	12:57	21:20	5k
Shantz	Eric	11	5:57	12:54	21:26	5k
Rued	Cory	10	5:58	13:05	21:28	5k
Gruse	Jackson	9	6:16	12:55	21:31	5k
Rynearson	Dan	11	6:00	13:04	21:32	5k
McDonald	Ben	12	6:04	13:12	21:32	5k
Schedler	Jon	11	6:31	13:27	21:49	5k
Stanley	Jimmy	12	6:10	13:53	22:47	5k
VanDyke	Mike	10	6:16	14:05	22:52	5k
Steckbauer	Kyle	12	6:26	14:04	23:02	5k
Veaser	Matt	9	6:16	13:21	23:08	5k
Masin	Dustin	10	6:30	14:06	23:09	5k
Kaufman	Nate	11	6:50	14:15	23:13	5k
Buchen	Jacob	11	6:34	13:49	23:14	5k
Irvine	Nate	12	6:34	14:38	23:26	5k
Ciske	Sean	10	6:53	14:42	24:04:00	5k
Kittel	Andrew	11	6:57	14:43	24:06	5k
Nelessen	Eric	11	6:54	14:45	24:19	5k
Hanstedt	Noah	12	6:21	15:09	24:57	5k

Neenah Awards

Senior Letter Winners:

Greg Bacon
Ian Borsecnik
Josh Canner
Noah Hanstedt
Richard Harding
James Hedman
Drew Heindel
Nate Irvine
Michael Green
Reid Kuen
Ben McDonald
Chris Rayden
Cort Rowe
Tim Schultz
Jimmy Stanley
Kyle Steckbauer
Mike Stiff
Patrick Strain
Sam Vandenlangenberg
Cory Vorland
Ross Younger

Junior Letter Winners:

Matt Wunderlich
Brent Young

Sophomore Letter Winners:

Andrew Christiansen
Tim Schraufnagel

Freshmen Letter Winner:

Kaiser Behnke

Fox Valley Association First Team All Conference

Mike Stiff
Brent Young

Fox Valley Association Second Team All Conference

Tim Schraufnagel
Ian Borsecnik
Kaiser Behnke

Fox Valley Association Honorable Mention All Conference

Matt Wunderlich
Ross Younger

Ian Borsecnik: Oshkosh North Junior Varsity Champion
Eric Shantz: Fondy Relays Junior Varsity Champion
Greg Bacon: Junior Varsity FVA Conference Champion

Rockets reloading roster



News-Record photo by Duke Bahrike
NEENAH HIGH SCHOOL senior Mike Stiff, here at the Neenah Invitational, leads the Rockets into WIAA sectional competition Friday. The Rockets took second last week in the Fox Valley Association meet.



Post-Crescent photo by Sharon Casado
NEENAH RUNNERS PAUL GESSLER (right) and Jake Irvine take part in a distance run during the Rockets' practice on Wednesday.

Neenah expects to succeed despite losing 17 runners

By Joe Ziemer
 Post-Crescent staff writer

In his 11 years of coaching, Neenah boys' cross country coach John Morgen has seen and gotten used to a lot of things. One of them is replacing runners. That is exactly what Morgen and the Rockets will have to do this year. Neenah lost virtually its entire varsity squad from one year ago — 17 letterwinners to be exact.

Inside
 ■ A team-by-team look at area prep boys' cross country / D-4

"That's something that's just part of the sport," Morgen said. "It's not uncharted waters for us." While Neenah has become accustomed to losing talented athletes throughout the years, those graduated seniors represented a very successful class. As a group, they were a part of

three Fox Valley Association titles, a state championship in 2001 and three additional trips to the state meet.

"They were really big leaders for us," Neenah senior Mike Stiff said of the departed class. "They always pushed us through practice."

Graduation losses or not, the Rockets expect success. In Morgen's 11 years as head coach, Neenah has won six Fox Valley Association titles and reached the state meet eight times, including the last seven years in a row.

"So much of a team's success is often their perception," Morgen said. "You've heard the old saying, 'Success breeds success.' I think the tradition of winning gives our athletes a sense they can achieve great things."

Neenah is not content to merely rebuild. The Rockets



Stiff



Younger

expect to contend in the always tough FVA, a conference that includes Kimberly, one of the top teams in the state, as well as tough teams like Appleton East and Fond du Lac.

To continue their winning tradition this season, Morgen will look to his seniors for leadership, particularly Ross Younger and Stiff.

"There is a lot of pressure to live up to the Neenah standard," Younger said. "But, that also keeps us going. This is our time now. What the program does from here has a lot to do with us."

Younger, a one-time JV conference champion and a member of the 2004 FVA all-conference second team, is relishing that opportunity.

"The team really looks to Ross for leadership," Morgen said. "He's really taken on that

role. He's really going to help us, not only because of his ability but because of his leadership."

Like Younger, Stiff is also a past JV conference champion and was on the 2004 all-FVA second team.

"Mike is a very talented runner," Morgen said. "We hope he can inspire some other people to run with his performance."

In his final year at Neenah Stiff does not intend to be just another also-ran.

"Our senior class is looking to win it," Stiff said.

Some preseason predictions have Neenah in the conference's second tier. The Rockets are not ready to resign themselves to that fate.

"I wouldn't be saying that too quick," Younger said. "I think we have a pretty strong team."

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Kimberly, Neenah qualify teams for state meet

Papermakers boys, Rockets boys, girls make state field

WIAA SECTIONAL CROSS COUNTRY

By Dick Knapinski
Post-Crescent staff writer

WINNECONNE - While the Kimberly Papermakers were very pleased with their winning times at Friday's WIAA Division 1 cross country sectional, Neenah was elated to make seconds count.

The Papermakers won the boys' team title and both the boys' and girls' individual races at Lake Breeze Golf Course. Neenah added to the Fox Valley Association dominance of the meet by finishing second among both boys' and girls' teams to secure places at the state meet.

"I don't think I've ever been so happy about finishing second at a meet," said Rockets boys' coach John Morgen.

"Kimberly and West Bend West both beat us solidly earlier in the year, but we've had several guys step up for us."

The top two teams in each race, along with the top five individuals from other teams, qualify for the Oct. 29 state meet at The Ridges Golf Course in Wisconsin Rapids.

The Kimberly boys' team put four runners in the top 15 to defend its title. The Papermakers finished with 55 points, 16 fewer than Neenah, behind a one-two finish by Tyler Morey, last year's sectional runner-up, and fellow junior Kevin Romnesko.

"This was a very good day for us today," Kimberly coach Luke Demerath said.

Morey and Romnesko dashed away from the field at the start of the 5,000-meter race. Romnesko led the first 1,000 meters before Morey pulled ahead and eventually won in 15:29, 21 seconds faster than his 2004 time.

"I came through the first mile with Kevin at 4:52, and we were planning to be there in 5:05 or 5:07," Morey said. "I saw my dad there and I just rolled my eyes a little bit, but he was like, 'It's OK.'"

"I was worried it was too fast, but I just felt awesome today."

The Rockets, who returned only two runners from last year's sectional runner-up team, qualified for state for the ninth time in the past 10 years. They were led by senior Mike Stiff, who placed seventh despite running with nine stitches in one foot - the result of an accident last weekend.

The Neenah girls' team qualified for state for the first time since 2001 by finishing second with 81 points, just five behind West Bend West. Bronwyn Mutchler's third place led the Rockets, who put all five of their scoring runners in the top 25.

"These girls had state as their number one goal when we started the year," Neenah girls' coach Mike Heide said. "We had good senior leaders and they supported me, a first-year coach here, and did every training workout that we asked."

Kimberly swept the individual championships as sophomore Kelly Bogard won the 4,000-meter girls' race in 14:17, 41 seconds faster than her 2004 sectional runner-up time. Bogard was pursued closely for more than a mile by Kaukauna junior Abbey Novak, who eventually fell back and finished second in 14:49.

"Abbey ran a great race today and I think that kind of pushed me," said Bogard, who placed 25th at state as a freshman. "I just wanted to improve my time here from last year and that's what I want to do at state next week, too."

Novak was joined by teammate Allison Wolter, who will be making her third straight state trip, as the area's only individual qualifiers to come out of Friday's meet.

"I knew state was a reachable goal," Novak said. "The only reason I didn't make it before is because I would mentally break down during a race. I just had to stay positive, and listen to your mind over your body to keep yourself going."

BOYS (5,000 meters)
KIMBERLY 55*, NEENAH 71*, WEST BEND WEST 97, FOND DU LAC 130, MANITOWOC 136, SHEBOYGAN NORTH 185, HARTFORD 211, OSHKOSH WEST 216, SLINGER 216, WEST BEND EAST 237, MENASHA 276, KAUKAUNA 292, PLYMOUTH 307, OSHKOSH NORTH 411, SHEBOYGAN SOUTH 456, BEAVER DAM 494 (*-state team qualifier)
1, Tyler Morey KIM 15:29; 2, Kevin Romnesko KIM 15:44; 3, Nick Thomma FDL 15:57; 4, Jacob Jurs WBW 16:32.

16:05*, 5, Tyler Dassy MAN 16:17
FDL 16:18*, 7, Mike Stiff NEE 16:20
MAN 16:21*, 9, Tad Lynch SL 16:25
Others KIM 16:25 (*-individual state c
Other top area finishers
Kimberly: 14, Mike Manoske 16:2
to 16:35:
Neenah: 11, Brent Young 16:27; 1
16:33; 18, Ian Borsack 16:40; 20, K
Menasha: 29, Scott Kersten 17
17:14; 52, Ryan Woolgar 17:28; 7
18:00; 80, Kurt Spang 18:05
Kaukauna: 16, Michael Bice 16
17:13; 58, Casey Dinos 17:38; 81, C
88, Michael Kluga 18:25

GIRLS (4,000 meters)
WEST BEND WEST 76*, NEENAH 1
129, KIMBERLY 138, PLYMOUTH 1
1 BEAVER DAM 215, SHEBOYGAN SO
GAN NORTH 230, KAUKAUNA 231
OSHKOSH WEST 288, HARTFORD
EAST 333, OSHKOSH NORTH 333, M
plate team (*-state team qualifier)
1, Kelly Bogard KIM 14:17; 2, Abbey
3, Bronwyn Mutchler NEE 15:09; 4,
15:10*; 5, Allison Wolter KAU 15:11*,
HART 15:18*; 7, Jennifer Oley FDL
Ridge WBW 15:26; 9, Betsy Jeanes
Muller WBW 15:29 (*-individual stat
Other top area finishers
Neenah: 15, Danielle Gable 15:41;
sta 15:42; 23, All Smith 15:48; 24, M
Kimberly: 17, Dean Pozzillo 15:48
15:48; 45, Stephanie Ethen 16:21; :
16:32.

Kaukauna: 60, Kore Van Baxel 1
Kersten 17:16; 87, Kelly Van Benke 17
Mensha: 28, Johene Sell 15:49; :
16:07; 59, Karie Meisler 16:41; :
16:51; 67, Jennifer Manner 16:54.

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KAUKAUNA:

Ghosts end season for



Terrors sweep

WIAA first round state football pairings

Here are the pairings for the 17 high schools in The Post-Crescent's circulation area who have qualified for the playoffs and the rest of the state pairings.

Games at 7 p.m. Tuesday

