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## Point Taken

*Gonzales, Reyda Run To Titles At Red Dragons Invite*

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ELLERY - Northern Chautauqua County took home the gold on Saturday at the third annual Red Dragons Invitational at Long Point State Park.

Runners from throughout the Southern Tier take off at the start of the third annual Red Dragons Invitational at Long Point State Park on Saturday. Other photos found on pages 2-3. P-J photos by Scott Kindberg



Senior Alex Gonzales of Dunkirk and eighth-grader Lauren Reyda of Fredonia captured the boys and girls championships respectively in the kickoff of the high school cross country season.

Gonzales toured the scenic 3.1-mile course in 16:47.6 to hold off Maple Grove freshman Corey Wefing (17:03.3) and Fredonia junior Josh Szukala (17:11.5).

"I was really nervous coming into the race," Gonzales said. "I wasn't sure how I was going to perform. I didn't perform much over the summer. It was kind of a mistake."

But Gonzales made the most of a trip last month to El Paso, Texas where he had the opportunity to train at altitude.

"I think the elevation in Texas helped," Gonzales said. "I was there for about a week and I got out four times and ran three miles each time."

Gonzales said he was able to get some separation from Szukala with about a mile and a half remaining. He won going away, followed by Wefing, who came on at the end to overtake Szukala for second.

"I just had the better kick or something," Gonzales said. "This was just to try and find out where I was in ability level. I just surpassed expectations. I'm really happy."

Rounding out the top 10 were Brandon Delgado, Jamestown (17:36); Kevin Brown, Gowanda (17:40.5); Nate Smith, Pioneer (17:44.7); Chaz Mancino, Fredonia (17:47.3); Matt Meredith, Fredonia (17:49.8); Alex Crise, Fredonia (17:52.9); and James Cardot, Falconer (17:53.2.).

Fredonia claimed the team title with 44 points, followed by Pioneer (83), Gowanda (86), Olean (120), Jamestown (136), Maple Grove (145), Falconer (175), Dunkirk (250), Frewsburg (252), Eisenhower (261), Silver Creek (300), Southwestern (303), Allegany-Limestone (318), Randolph (374), Ripley (425) and Franklinville (430).

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Earlier in the day, Reyda took the lead within the first mile and went on to claim the girls title with a time of 19:21.6. Maple Grove sisters Caroline (19:48.8) and Katelyn Benson (19:50.4) were second and third respectively to help the Lady Red Dragons to the team title.

The rest of the top 10 girls were Kristen Holmberg, Falconer (19:59); Megan Marsh, Maple Grove (20:15.5); Shannon Murphy, Falconer (20:30.1); Hope Pietrocarlo, Maple Grove (20:44.9); Rachel Prutsman, Pioneer (20:46.8); Emily Steves, Gowanda (21:00); and Katie Saff, Falconer (21:03.4).

A year ago as a seventh-grader, Reyda went out for the cross country team because she figured it would get her in shape for basketball. She was also fulfilling a promise to her aunt, Rita.

"I was going to do volleyball as a seventh-grader, but she was such a motivation," Lauren said. "She said that I had to do cross country, because it will change my life, and I'm glad I did."

Race director Robert Rappole didn't have to be reminded of the virtues of the sport he loves.

"Obviously, I think we have the greatest venue for a race," he said. "Thanks to the park for letting us run it here, thanks for a perfect day and having all the great teams that are here to run."

After Maple Grove's 29 points, the remainder of the girls teams scores were Falconer (97), Fredonia (101), Jamestown (116), Gowanda (147), Randolph (148), Allegany-Limestone (182), Pioneer (182), Southwestern (204), Frewsburg (219) and Silver Creek (241).

In the junior varsity races, Paul Armstrong of Southwestern claimed the boys race in 18:37.9, while Sarah Grubbs of Gowanda was the girls champion in 24:54.





Maple Grove's Corey Wefing



Dunkirk's Alex Gonzales



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Maple Grove's Caroline Benson

Fredonia's Lauren Reyda