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SPORTS: High Schools

Hornberger runs away with record

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Lake Shore's TJ Hornberger broke the Fireman's Park mark by almost 36 seconds. Photo by John Hickey / Buffalo News

TJ Hornberger had two feasts on Saturday. One was on the competition at the 17th West Seneca West Cross Country Invitational and the other was on the chicken dinners that were for sale for runners afterward.

Hornberger brought his appetite for victory Saturday as he ran away with the large school race title in 15 minutes, 49.91 seconds, shattering the 5K-course record at

Fireman's Park in West Seneca. The Lake Shore sophomore averaged a 5:05.8 mile as he tamed the flat course on a perfect day for running. The previous mark of 16:25.67 had been set in '09 by Rush-Henrietta's Nathan Kozyra.

"The whole time I was just telling myself that I've got this race," said Hornberger. "I try to keep as calm as I can when I'm running. I just keep telling myself to 'pick it up, pick it up.' I pretend there's someone behind me trying to pass me."

There was little threat of that as Hornberger won by a 38-second margin. His impressive feat highlighted the six-race invitational that drew a record field of 1,025 runners from 42 schools.

The run of Livia Chase capped a big day for Starpoint. The petite sophomore had the fastest time of the day for girls with an 18:49.02. The Spartans also swept the boys and girls team titles among large schools. Chase took the lead 800 meters into the race and ran away from the field showcasing her smooth stride along the way.

"She's amazing. She's just so good at everything," said Starpoint coach Brian Lasher. "For someone that age, it's hard to come up with the superlatives. She's so soft-spoken, but I made her one of the captains because she leads so well by example."

Junior Adam Murphy of Amherst won the small school boys race, his 16:26.19 coming one second off the course record before Hornberger put his stamp on it. Murphy said he ran the race he wanted, staying behind

for the first mile before taking over. At some point he got spiked, evidenced by a streak of dried blood on his shin.

Like Starpoint, East Aurora's boys and girls swept the small school team titles. To no one's surprise, freshman Marta McLaughlin of East Aurora won the small school girls race in 18:58.92. She had plenty of support as all seven EA runners finished in the top 10.

Paige Anderson was runner-up followed by Sarah Anstett, Madeline Murray, Megan Barritot, Mackenzie Donahue and Gwen Frederick.

"We try to group up in the beginning and then go," said McLaughlin. "This was a solid workout/run. It was definitely hard."

For the EA boys, Sean Phillips, Elli Martynkiewicz, Gene Barritot and Brendan Keany finished 2-3-4-5.

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