

Big Red harriers have more depth with multi-sport athletes

By Cory Forshaw

Advertiser Sports Editor

Finally, cross country coach Mike Follett has a full team.

Because PHS athletes are now allowed to participate in more than one sport per season, the Big Red harriers will not only be showing up in the individual statistics, but in the team standings as well.

"This is a dream," Follett said. "This makes coaching fun when you have a number of kids who want to work. They all listen to what you say and don't gripe about it.

"It's a lot of fun having a full team. I'm elated. It couldn't be better."

Athletes are allowed to participate in two sports to a certain extent. For example, football and volleyball players and members of the golf team are all allowed to run cross country. But in the winter time, a wrestler would not be allowed to play basketball because of the number of conflicts.

Some of the cross country runners are merely running to keep in shape or get into shape for a winter sport and that's just fine with Follett.

"I have no problem with that at all," he said. "I have encouraged kids to run to get into shape. I think it's a great thing."

Plymouth's top returning letterman is Jay Follett. His top time from last year came at Old Fort and was 18:30. Follett is a senior and his dad has lofty goals for 1998.

"We've set three goals," Mike Follett said. "We wanted to do well at the county meet, we want to possibly get into the 16s and we want him to be first team all conference. All three are possible, it just depends on the mental atti-

tude.

"In the past he's always been congenial right up to the start of the race. Over the summer his attitude was much different."

Eliot Fackler also returns for the Big Red, having turned in a time of 21:00 last year. Senior Josh Conley and freshmen Joe Childs and John Justice round out the roster except for when some football players run.

"Jay and Eliot have both been working hard in the weight room," the Big Red boss said. "They would come in and lift for 30 minutes and then go run.

"Under the right conditions I think Jay can get into the 16s. I've never had a kid reach the 16s.

"We don't want Eliot to do any worse than second team

all conference and we want him to get into the 18s.

"Joe and Josh are starting to come around. John is working himself slowly into shape."

On the girls side, April Schwaderer, Tiffany Shepherd, Amanda Reeder and Heather Roll make up the roster. Reeder and Roll come over from the volleyball team when they are available. Schwaderer is a freshman, while Shepherd is a sophomore.

"April is the defending junior high one mile champion in the conference," Mike Follett said. "Amanda and Tiffany are both looking to get into condition for basketball and I think that's great."

Western Reserve's boys and girls are the favorites in terms of the Firelands Conference.