

MIFFLIN COUNTY CROSS COUNTRY

Middle runners will play a role in Huskies' outcome

By **GREG WILLIAMS**

Sentinel correspondent

HIGHLAND PARK - During their heyday, runners from Mifflin County ruled the roost in the Mountain League. Banners and hardware filled the walls and trophy cases at Indian Valley and Lewistown as the Warriors and Panthers dominated the opposition.

Last season, its first in the Mid-Penn Conference Commonwealth Division, the Mifflin County Huskies got a taste of what life was like at the rear of the pack as the boys finished fourth in the league standings and the girls fifth.

"I don't think we realized how tough it was going to be in the Mid-Penn," said first-year coach Greg Loht. "We see this as a challenge and we're ready to take the tiger by the tail. We're anxious to see where we are at."

Loht certainly is familiar with the county's storied past in cross country. He ran for the Chief Logan Mingoes, graduating in 1981. His sons ran cross country and track for Indian Valley - Luke, a 2001 graduate; Seth, a 2003 graduate; and Ben, a 2006 graduate.

Loht is familiar with many of his runners, having served as the distance coach for Indian Valley's successful



Sentinel photo by BRADLEY KREITZER

Members of the Mifflin County boys cross country team are, from left, front, Joey Taptich, Lance Miller, Darien Knudsen, Tim Pearce, Trenton Yoder, Jay Ciccolini and Dion Curry; second row, Ben Falker, Evan Becker, Andrew Montgomery, Josh Velez, Anthony Allen, Chris Barger, Josh Aultz, Andrew Kline and Ian Thomas; third row, Justin Jacobs, Shane Sennett, Anthony Schifano, Tristin Iannone, Luke Feldin, Brady Yeager, Chris Falkner, Keenan Walker, Joey Bender and Tynan Burwell.

track and field team after getting his coaching start at Chief Logan in 1980.

On the plus side, the Husky boys turned more than a few heads by enduring a sub-.500 campaign then racing past State College and Altoona to win the District 6 Class AAA crown. They became the first Mifflin County team on the male side to advance to the PIAA Championships since the 1980s.

At the state meet, Mifflin County struggled to place 19th, a disappointing finish for seniors Jon Colwell, Addison Monroe, Cullen Rusler and Patrick Parker.

Colwell and Monroe were all-conference selections. But the Huskies do return three runners from their top seven: Darien Knudsen, Chris Falkner and Trent Yoder.

Loht expects Knudsen to become the heir apparent to Colwell as the Huskies' No. 1 runner. The junior finished in the top 50 at the Mid-Penn Conference championships as Mifflin County placed sixth overall then followed that up with a stellar 11th-place showing at the District 6 meet.

"We expect Darien to be leading the way this season," Loht said. "He's been run-

ning well this summer."

The No. 2 and 3 slots may be filled by underclassmen Trent Yoder and Jay Ciccolini. Loht has high hopes for the two as they return for their sophomore campaigns.

"They are workers," Loht added. "They do what they're asked to do and give me 100 percent."

The key to the Huskies' success this season may depend on the performances of their remaining runners. If they can race together, breaking up the packs of runners from opposing teams, then Mifflin County should see continued improvement.

"With Darien up front,

we're going to get our points there," Loht said. "Our No. 2 and 3 are going to be solid. But our pack has to be there to get the points for us to beat people."

Senior Chris Falkner is a

solid contender for the No. 4 slot. Senior Josh Velez could be in the mix, along with juniors Anthony Schifano, Drew Kline, Josh Aultz,

See **Huskies** / Page 33

AT A GLANCE

MIFFLIN COUNTY HUSKIES

District 6, Class AAA

Coach: Greg Loht, assisted by Seth Yearick, Deanna Russler, Holly Yeager, Jeff Miller and Ruth Yoder

2012: Boys 3-4, 2-4 Mid-Penn Commonwealth Division; Girls 1-6, 1-5 MPC

Miller's
Tree & Bucket Truck Service

Trimming • Topping • Removal
Insured for Your Peace of Mind



FREE ESTIMATES
(717) 527-4405

Kenneth Miller
Port Royal, PA 17082