

St. Mary's first annual cross-country invitational

By Jon Kingdon



Runners at the St. Mary's Invitational

Photo provided

St. Mary's Head Coach Marty Kinsey and his assistant coach Marc Kaiser were looking for a way to showcase their cross-country program, and to market the college. They produced a way to kill two birds with one stone by having the first annual St. Mary's Cross Country Invitational on the campus.

"Marc and I thought that an event like this would be a great way to show off the school by getting the athletes, their family, and friends to come out for the event," Kinsey said. "The bigger picture was getting 750 kids to St. Mary's to compete, not all of whom are going to run in college, and they can see how

nice the campus is and would be a good way for St. Mary's to attract more students."

With the event at St. Mary's, the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) required that a college cannot solely host a cross-country race for CIF teams and had to partner with a high school. "It was then that

we reached out to Concord High School's cross-country coach Lynette Stanziano (whose daughter Rayna ran cross-country and runs track for St. Mary's)," Kinsey said. "Lynette did a great deal of work in organizing, getting in touch with coaches and helping to set up what proved to be quite the

spectacle, which brought about 1,500 people on to the campus for the event."

Kinsey had anticipated ten teams and running four races but ended up with 23 teams and five races comprised of frosh-soph boys, frosh-soph girls, varsity boys, and varsity girls. "With so many entries, we

added a fifth race for the overflow of frosh-soph boys and even that was a little crowded. None of the Lamorinda teams competed in the event. "Campolindo has a pretty strict schedule, but Miramonte and Acalanes are good candidates to compete in our future events," Kinsey said.

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