

Reynolds Eyes Title In Cross Country

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By Mike Mulhern

Staff Reporter

Jim Williams, Reynolds' cross-country ace and fourth-best in the state last year, is back for his final fall of churning out the miles.

And this could be the year he paces the Demons to the state title and wins the individual crown for himself.

Last season it was Chapel Hill's Tom Ward that won the top laurels in the state meet as a junior.

This fall, since the number two and number three men have graduated, Williams has only Ward to beat — "And he's the one I'm shooting for," Williams said Tuesday afternoon before practice.

Demon coach Jon Omdahl, in his third season at Reynolds, believes Williams can win the state title this time. And, with four of his top five finishers returning, Omdahl is even looking cautiously at taking the state crown away from two-time champion Greensboro Grimsley.

Reynolds finished sixth in the state meet in Chapel Hill last year. But this season the Demons should do much better.

Grimsley has lost all of its top runners. And, unless Greensboro Smith's Mike Beck, one of the top prep distance men in the state, is transferred to the Whirlies (depending on the court ruling in a current assignment case), Grimsley's chances of repeating are slim.

Depth, as well as strength, makes Omdahl's Demons the powerful favorites in almost every meet this fall. Drew Warne, Larry Folwell and Larry Poe each scored in Chapel Hill last year and all are back. Also, Jim Olson, a junior from Mineral Springs High School, and Mark Shehan, a transfer from Richmond, Va., will be pushing to join the top four.

Williams, whose father is a psychology professor at Wake Forest, has been receiving scholarship offers from a number of schools, including Dartmouth, Appalachian (where last year's number two Demon, Wes Brooks, is now attending on a grant-in-aid) and, of course, Wake.

But Deacon track coach Hal Rhea doesn't have Williams sewed up yet — "Right now," Williams said, "I have no idea where I'll be going."

Williams, who holds the Forsyth County record in the mile run at 4:25.0, thinks

"track can get kind of boring." He prefers running cross-country, "because the scenery's more varied."

"I think the best cross-country course in the state is at Freedom Park in Charlotte (where the sectionals were held last year)," he said. "The course at Chapel Hill is nice and open but the hills are bears."

"I like this course (at Reynolds) because it's flat. It can sneak up on you if you don't watch it. But I know it well enough to know where I can pick up a few seconds."

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Scott Brent, coach at North Forsyth, has two solid runners in DeNorris Bradley and Tim Saunders, a pair of seniors who finished seventh and eleventh respectively in last year's sectionals.

"Bradley was seventh in the Mountain Marathon at the Highland Games in July," Brent said, "and he was fifth in the Greensboro-to-Winston-Salem marathon a couple of weeks ago. His best time in the two-mile is 10:19. But Saunders has beaten Bradley at that distance and holds the school record of 10:09."

Other top runners for the Vikings are juniors David Jenkins and Greg Feddy, and seniors Ulysses Byrd, Ricky Money and Tommy Forkner. Forkner was the number five man on the squad last year and should move up a slot or two this season.

At West Forsyth coach Mike Buckner doesn't expect anything "really strong," but claims that he won't know how the team will do until after the first meet.

"We have two returning lettermen, Charles Conner and John Mackey," said Buckner, who is in his first year directing the Titan harriers. "But Tim Sumners looks real strong. He's beating everyone else in practice by such large distances that I'm sure we'll have a winner there."

Parkland coach Bill Carr, in his first season, like Buckner takes his Mustang runners to Reynolds for their first meet.

The Mustang squad, nine strong so far, is headed by senior lettermen Lee Tucker and Rick Mathis, who have been averaging 10 miles of road a day, according to Carr, getting ready for the season.

"We don't have a home course," Carr said, "so we practice running on the road and through the woods.

Tucker and Mathis, though, have been working out on a course of their own most of the summer."

Four juniors, Tony Tilley, Ronald Bristow, Warren Napper and Lacey Rice, should provide the rest of the squad's strength.

Jack Blalock, athletic director at East Forsyth, found himself in a spot when cross-country coach Allan Morton left for Virginia at the end of last year. Morton had been the harrier coach for the Eagles for four seasons.

Now Blalock is managing the team. That makes for some problems since he is also in charge of the rest of the Eagles' sports program, too.

The opening meet on Sept. 14, for example, will probably have to be postponed because the East football team is traveling to South Mecklenburg the same afternoon and Blalock will have to make that trip.

Jeff Trotman, a senior, figures to be the number one Eagle runner, according to Blalock. Trotman, a 440-yard sprinter during the spring track season, alternated with Randy Whicker for the top spot last year. Whicker has departed for Appalachian State University, however.

"Chip Wilson ran real well in two or three meets last year," Blalock said. "He and Marty Summerford, who's a real hard worker, should be in the top three or four."

Blalock added that he had about 12 boys on the team so far.

Central 4-A Cross-Country Schedule
Sept. 14 (Thursday) — Parkland at Reynolds, North Forsyth at West Forsyth, High Point Central at East Forsyth, Burlington Cummings at Reidsville, Burlington Williams at Greensboro Smith, Greensboro Page at Greensboro Dudley, Morehead at Greensboro Grimsley.
Sept. 21 (Thursday) — West Forsyth at Reynolds, Parkland at Burlington Williams, High Point Central at North Forsyth, East Forsyth at Dudley, Burlington Cummings at Greensboro Page, Greensboro Smith at Greensboro Grimsley, Morehead at Reidsville.
Sept. 28 (Thursday) — Burlington Cummings and Burlington Williams at West Forsyth, Morehead and Reynolds at Greensboro Smith, Greensboro Dudley and Reidsville at East Forsyth, High Point Central at Parkland, Greensboro Grimsley and North Forsyth at Page.
Oct. 5 (Thursday) — Reynolds, West Forsyth and Greensboro Grimsley at North Forsyth; East Forsyth and Greensboro Smith at Morehead; Parkland and Reidsville at Burlington Cummings; Greensboro Dudley, High Point Central and Greensboro Page at Burlington Williams.
Oct. 12 (Thursday) — East Forsyth at Reynolds; North Forsyth, Burlington Cummings and High Point Central at Greensboro Grimsley; West Forsyth, Parkland and Greensboro Page at Morehead; Greensboro Smith, Greensboro Dudley and Reidsville at Burlington Williams.
Oct. 19 (Thursday) — Conference Meet at Greensboro Grimsley.
Oct. 27 (Friday) — Sectional Meet, at site to be announced later.
Nov. 4 (Saturday) — State Meet at Chapel Hill.