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Irvine, Uni and Beckman compete in first PCL cluster meet

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The first Pacific Coast League boys cross country cluster meet of the season couldn't have been any closer at the top.

When runners finished the 5K course at Mason Regional Park Thursday, University and Beckman were tied for first place with 49 points.

But University moved a step closer to its first league title since 1995 after the results showed that its sixth runner (first non-scoring runner) came in one spot ahead of Beckman's.

Freshman Phil Norton was 20th in 16:30.28 and Beckman sophomore Jared Allison was 21st in 16:32.48.

"I knew it was going to be between us and Beckman looking at all the times from the previous meets," University Coach Eric Davies said. "I told the guys to forget about times and go for the place. We will take it."

One more cluster meet at Laguna Hills High later this month and then the league finals in November will determine the league champion.

Senior Daniel Ryan led the way for University. The defending league champion won the race in a time of 15:25.69. Ryan made his move from the field 100 meters into the race and never looked back.

"My game plan today was just to finish first," Ryan said. "Whatever it took to get first."

Irvine senior Ryan Torres finished behind Ryan in second in 15:39.90.

Laguna Hills' Matt Stoner was third in 15:47.57.

Next for University was junior Alexander Kiperman, who was fourth in 15:49.53.

"This was the second straight race where he finished second for us," Davies said. "He had a phenomenal time up at Stanford and then really came through for us again today. He looked great. That was his personal record today."

Junior James Bachelor came in ninth in 16:03.49, junior Matsuoka Shyusaku was 16th in 16:26.53 and rounding out Uni's top five runners was freshman Jacob Brouwer, who finished 19th in 16:29.59.

"Our freshmen were fifth and sixth for us and they both ran good times," Davies said. "Those freshmen are really starting to get those legs under them and some race sense. They are getting stronger and stronger."

Beckman was paced by sophomore Elijah Wells, who finished fifth in 15:58.03. Junior Aaron Perry came in seventh in 16:01.95, senior Jimmy Shiba was 11th in 16:17.17, sophomore Brandon Perry placed 12th in 16:22.04 and freshman Kevin Dewey finished 14th in 16:24.21.

"It was exciting," Beckman coach Bob Day said. "We were right in it and we are going to continue to give it a good run."

"I am still so proud of the guys. They have been working hard every single week. They are training well and their work ethic is way beyond what I expected. Plus we have some pretty good talent. It has been unbelievable so far."

Corona del Mar, which was led by Sebastien Welch's sixth-place effort (16:01.71) came in third in the standings with 72 points and Irvine was

fourth with 94 points. San Juan Hills (110 points)

and Laguna Hills (136 points) rounded out the teams.

Behind Torres was senior Emmanuel Chang in 13th in 16:22.25, junior Dennis Cook in 17th in 16:28.40 and sophomore Cameron Palm in 26th in 16:52.01 for the Vaqueros.

"I was happy with Ryan's race and him finishing second, especially since he didn't run all summer because of an injury," Irvine coach Brenton Youngren said. "He is running on all guts right now.

"Our first three guys ran well, but we need to pick it up. We are still way behind CdM. We just need to stay positive and try and go after them again in three weeks."

GIRLS MEET

The University High girls cross country team was ahead of Corona del Mar until the fifth runners came in for each school at the first Pacific Coast League cluster meet Thursday at Mason Regional Park.

The Trojans had four runners finish in the top 10 and earn 26 points overall. Corona del Mar had its four best runners in the top 14 and 30 points.

But it is the five best runners from each team that count.

And Corona del Mar's fifth was 17th, giving the team a winning total of 47 points. University ended up finishing second with 58 points.

"I thought CdM was going to win it, but we were competitive and right in there," University coach Dan Wroblicky said. "We are just one runner away. We can't worry too much about it. We just need to keep working hard, improving and getting better."

Corona del Mar's Melanie Powers won the race in 18:05.57 and Laura Bilder was second for the Sea Kings in 18:16.29.

Junior Andrea Divok finished third in 18:18.13 for University.

"She ran well and I think she still had a little bit left in her," Wroblicky said.

Junior Caroline Wu was sixth in 18:32.15, freshman Allie Freed came in seventh in 18:52.82 and sophomore Ellie Quinby was 10th in 19:00.56 for the Trojans.

Irvine hung tough in the meet despite being without its top two runners due to injury.

Sophomore Carrie Shargay and junior Analicia Silva had to miss the meet.

The Vaqueros finished in third with 88 points.

"Finishing third is a huge thing," Irvine coach Randy Rossi said. "I am thrilled. I just told the girls how proud I am of them. We've had some key injuries and we knew it was going to be tough today. We talked about what it was going to take to get the job done. I thought they all ran really well."

Junior Lisa Yardley was eighth in 18:52.97, freshman Julianne Cook came

in ninth in 18:56.84 and sophomore Grace Han finished 18th in 19:33.60.

Sophomore Sharon Liu, who finished 10th in 20:02.40 and freshman Davina Chang, who was 27th in 20:06.10 rounded our Irvine's scoring five.

"I think we are still going to be a factor once we get everyone healthy," Rossi said. "Our goal is to get everyone healthy and make sure we finish in the top three in league."

Beckman was fourth with 93 points. Freshman Sophie Shiba paced the Patriots, finishing fifth in 18:28.31.

"She will be breaking our school record real soon," Beckman coach Bob Day said of the school's 18:16 mark.

Sophomore Lauren Clemens came in 16th in 19:28.72, senior Samantha Midigaspe placed 20th in 19:40.02 and junior Danielle Melgarejo was

23rd in 19:52.62.