

# Loyola Blakefield in position for cross country, soccer titles

Loyola Blakefield continues to send signs that it intends to repeat as cross country champion in the Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association of Maryland, as the Dons held off rival Calvert Hall, 28-29, in a pivotal A Conference tri-meet at Herring Run Park Oct. 23.

Coach Jose Albornoz's team prevailed despite the absence of Camden Gilmore, its top runner, who sat out with a minor injury.

Owen Johnson, a Calvert Hall junior, took individual honors, completing the 3.1-mile course in 15 minutes, 58 seconds. Loyola Blakefield's Connor Verrett, Ronan Sullivan and Kyle Clarke finished second, third and fifth, respectively, in a race that also included Gilman.

Loyola Blakefield ran its A Conference dual meet record to 6-0, as it also beat Gilman, 22-33. The Cardinals bested the Greyhounds, 19-36.

The MIAA championships are Nov. 7, at McDaniel College in Westminster. The Dons' senior-laden lineup expects to repeat. Loyola Blakefield's Gilmore and Calvert Hall's Johnson finished fourth and fifth, respectively, at last year's championship meet.

"We took a calculated risk in sitting him (Gilmore) today," Albornoz said. "We've been having a great season. My guys have been running hard (in practice) and they raced with heavy legs a little bit."

Calvert Hall was undaunted by its first A Conference loss.

"It was a big confidence booster, showing we can compete with them," Cardinal coach Peter Frein said. "This was another step forward for our program."

Other fall sports are also readying for their championship seasons.

- **Girls cross country:** McDaniel will also be the site of the Interscholastic Athletic Association of Maryland championships, on Oct. 30. Mount de Sales,

which has never won the A Conference title, went unbeaten in its dual meet schedule, where its only serious test came from Notre Dame Prep. Archbishop Spalding is the defending champion.

- **Volleyball:** Mount de Sales can defend and claim its third A Conference title in four years in volleyball. The IAAM finals will be played Oct. 27 at Goucher College. St. Mary's High School is the top seed in the B Conference.
- **Field hockey:** Top-ranked Notre Dame Prep is looking to repeat in the A Conference. All three IAAM championship games will be played Nov. 4 at Archbishop Spalding.
- **Girls soccer:** With its championships at Anne Arundel Community College Nov. 3, soccer could provide the most competitive of the IAAM A Conference tournaments. Spalding and defending champion McDonogh tied in the regular season; Notre Dame Prep lost to both by a goal; and Mercy is buoyed by the memory of its run to last year's final.
- **Boys soccer:** The boys take over Anne Arundel Community College Nov. 4, the next day, and Loyola Blakefield fully anticipates being in the MIAA A Conference final. The top-ranked Dons, who last won a soccer title in 2014, are the only unbeaten, untied team in the Baltimore metropolitan area.
- **Football:** St. Mary's is in position to repeat in the B Conference. The A Conference title has already been awarded to St. Frances Academy, which is ranked No. 7 by USA Today.

*Kevin J. Parks contributed to this article.*