

Honoka'a Harriers Sweep BIIF Opener

by Walter Mosch

Published: 9/16/08

Kea'au, HI - Honoka'a swept individual honors as senior Jake Shiraki and sophomore Tialana Greenwell took their respective races at the 2008 Kamehameha Schools Hawaii Cross Country Invitational in Kea'au on Saturday.

Shiraki pulled away from Hilo's Mark Turner on the hills in the last half mile of the race to win by seven seconds in 16:44. Shiraki indicated that he had been sick the previous week at the Canefire Conditioner meet at Christian Liberty Academy, but he was on top of his game this week. "Usually I tend to be the front runner, but I let him (Turner) set the pace today. I saw he was slowing down at one point and I decided to make a move," said the Dragon's top harrier. Turner captured six BIIF races during the 2007 cross-country season and the Hilo senior ranks with Shiraki as the co-favorites to capture individual honors at the BIIF championships on October 24th at HPA.

Hilo and defending BIIF champion Honoka'a dominated the boys' varsity event as each school placed four runners among the top twelve on Saturday. Shiraki was supported by an impressive quartet of underclassmen to take the team title with 40 points. Sophomores Chris Mosch (3rd), Josh Robinson (11th), and Geo Chavez-Pardini (17th) teamed up with top freshman Chayce Moniz (8th) to lead Honoka'a. Seniors Scott Hunter (5th), James Yoshimoto (10th) and Manny Ortiz (12th) followed Turner to take the runner-up spot for the Vikings.

HPA was the only other team to place a pair of runners in the top ten as siblings Tyler Tsubota (junior) and Korey Tsubota (senior) finished 6th and 9th, respectively. Both the BIIF and the Hawai'i State Championships will be contested at the daunting HPA course in Waimea this year.

Two of the top four girls' teams from 2007 State meet, Kamehameha-Kapalama and Iolani, led the way in the girls' varsity race on Saturday. The Warriors ran away with team honors by placing five runners, Ashlee Jimenez, Kelly Opedal, Maile Scarpino, Asia Rosehill, and Malia Preza in the top eleven. The Iolani girls used the opportunity to take a look at the site of this year's state championship as they held practice at the HPA course on Sunday.

The girls race was expected to feature an individual dual between defending BIIF champion Greenwell and Jenna Wong of Iolani who finished third in the 3000 meter run at the state track meet last spring. However, Greenwell took charge after the opening mile and dominated the field - winning by 34 seconds.

Honoka'a finished tops among Big Island schools with the Dragon duo of Greenwell and junior Athena Oldfather taking first and fifth, respectively.

Greenwell expressed confidence that the Honoka'a girls might be able to compete for their first BIIF championship. "The training is a lot harder than last year. Hopefully, we can find our fifth and sixth runners so that we can compete at BIIF." The Honoka'a girls finished third behind the two O'ahu schools.

Honoka'a coach, Josh Abner was pleased with the Honoka'a team performance. "We've still got a lot of work to do, but it was good to get some experience that will serve us well for the BIIF meet. We're just so young."

Ian Laird of Honoka'a and Kaili Taniguchi of Iolani won the boys and girls open races, respectively.

The BIIF season continues this coming week with a meet at the HPA campus in Waimea on Saturday.

For complete results visit <http://www.kautech.com/results>