

'Regulars' win Lynn Woods race

By MARY BOYLE
For The Item

LYNN — For those who have used the weekly Wednesday night Lynn Woods cross country races as workouts and indicators of summer running progress, last night's annual 10-mile Lynn Woods relay was an opportunity to shine.

A team of four runners (appropriately named "The Wednesday Regulars,") — Lou Ristaino of East Boston, W.F. Newhall of Swampscott, Paul Croft of Swampscott and Bill Harrington of Swampscott — took top honors with a winning time of 51:59 in a close race that featured 56 teams.

Five seconds behind the regulars was "Peabody Health and Self Defense," composed of Bill Nichols of Amesbury, Mark Behan of Newton, N.H., Gary Leavitt of Peabody and Michael Lavallee of Swampscott, who made up 18 seconds in the last leg to bring Peabody within striking distance of the leaders.

Lavallee, the course record-holder, had the fastest time of the night with a blistering 12:21 over hilly, muddy terrain.

"It was very satisfying to win tonight," said Newhall, 31, after a 13:53 2.5-mile leg and a successful summer racing season. "We knew we had a shot at it. It helped that we were all use to the course."

Ristaino, 30, who contributed a 12:50 leg, was coming off a win Friday night at the Hamilton-Wenham Midsummer Night's Dream 8-miler, in which he edged out Lynn's Rick Dawe.

Croft, 28, showed he is on his way to returning to the racing scene after some time off following his outstanding Boston Marathon effort in April.

Harrington, 20, this fall's cross-country captain at the University of Pennsylvania, ran a 12:34 anchor leg coming off a win at last week's Salem Heritage Day 10K.

Harrington had some tough competition on the last leg as Lavallee just missed catching him at the tape.

"Mike Lavallee owns this course," said Leavitt, 28, (12:44) of his teammate. "There is nobody around here who can run it like he can."

The North Shore Striders Team A of Rick Dawe (13:31), Mike Mudge (13:22), Bill Green (13:20) and Mike Toomey (13:07), took third place in 53:20.

In the masters race, the top locals teamed up as the "North Shore Connection," to clobber the competition. Paul Ducey of Salem (13:38), Jack Norton of Lynn RACE, Page 34

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(13:50), Earl McGilvery of Lynn (14:26) and Ken White (14:22) ran a combined 56:20, almost three minutes ahead of the Lynn Athletic Club masters (Bob Clarizia, Al Peterson, Bill Mullen and Roger Perham).

Ducey finished 15th in the masters division of Sunday's Falmouth Road Race.

Several high school cross country teams also participated, in preparation for the season.

In the boys division, the Beverly team of Darin Shearer (13:16), Matt Crean (14:18), Carl Clarizia (14:19) and Brian Foley, showed promising signs as the "The Purple Cow."

They ran 56:12, beating Swampscott's "Big Blue's Best," of Chris

Bonner, Matt Cobbett, John Butterworth and Bill Madden, who ran 58:31.

In the girl's high school division, the "Peabody One" team of Lori Romano (18:03), Debbie Russo (19:42), Rhonda Rosenthal (19:54) and Darlene Lane (22:20) took top honors, followed by the "Peabody Two" team. (Beth Brennan, Amy Crocker, Amy Brooks and Maureen Lyons.)

The first coed team was the "North Shore Striders Mixed A," of Gary Freedman (14:49), Angela Merryman (14:43), Carol Malinowski (16:36) and Peter Malinowski (18:30).

The Lynn Woods summer racing series will conclude next Wednesday at 6 p.m. with a 5¼-mile handicapped race, based on last night's results.