

50¢ THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 5, 1996 Periodical Volume 40 Number 49 Four Sections 50 Pages plus Supplements

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Photo by BRYAN MITCHELL

Another summer gone

One last look at the summer of '96. Although the weather was cooler this summer, kids still enjoyed the beach at Novi's Lakeshore Park as much as ever, as evidenced by the photo

above. But the summer went out with a blaze of good weather, allowing park goers to take one last dip in Walled Lake before the beach was closed for the year after Labor Day weekend.

Enforcement to be tough on water ban

By JAN JEFFRES Staff Writer

If apprehended sprinkling the lawn with city water during the current state of emergency, a Novi resident or business owner first faces a warning.

Second offenders may end up slapped with a ticket bearing a fine as high as \$500. Both the Novi Police Department and ordinance enforcement officers from the city's Building Department will be out ticketing. They met Tuesday to work out details.

"With the first occurrence, we'll try to work with people and let them know. They might have been out-of-town," said Bruce Jerome, Novi's Superintendent of Public Works.

Already, 11 homeowners and one development company with new lawns and/or landscaping have appealed to city hall for

relief from the restriction. The appeals are being evaluated on a case-by-case basis, Jerome said.

The water ban kicked in Tuesday at midnight and could last as long as six weeks, as contractors replace the 36-inch Novi Road water main, the main source of water from Detroit to the community. A 24-inch bypass main is now in place to supply the city with the vital fluid. The mandatory stoppage of outside water use and the voluntary reduction of inside use is to keep domestic water pressure adequate for all customers.

The emergency has some homeowners in Willowbrook subdivision - who plan to keep watering their lawns - feeling apprehensive, said Ruth Ann Jirasek, president of the City of Novi Homeowners Association.

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Saving your lawn without sprinklers

By JAN JEFFRES Staff Writer

You love your lawn, you're proud of your landscaping.

But even though Novi's emergency ban on all the use of outdoor water began Tuesday and runs until Oct. 14, you don't have to hum a requiem every time you look at your yard.

If you want to keep things looking as lush as possible through September and possibly into October, the experts have a few tips to offer.

If a lawn is not newly-sodded or planted, the lack of water is not a big problem, said Dianna Bull, who is in charge of trees and shrubs at Anglin Landscape in Novi.

"The lawn is pretty resilient. It can go some time without water. It can look like it's totally dead and when it's watered it revives and it's OK," she said.

Bruce Jerome, Novi's Superintendent of Public Works, agreed: "The lawns are going to go dormant. Miraculously, they'll go green again in the spring."

However, Bull advises homeowners not to fertilize their lawns if they can't water because this could lead to serious damage. Typically, a lawn is no longer fertilized after Oct. 1 anyway.

"My preference is, if you can't water it, I wouldn't be fertilizing it, that results in fertilizer burn. With that, you may need to start over in spring with a new lawn," Bull said.

Originally, Jerome said the city

hoped to have the Novi Road water main - jeopardized by its placement over unstable peat - repaired in October, but the contractor wanted to do it in July. September was the compromise date. From now until the main 36-inch water main along Novi Road is back in business, city water will come from a by-pass, 24-inch main.

Residents are also asked to voluntarily reduce their indoor consumption of water.

The most serious impact of the ban is expected to be felt by those who have just put in new sod or seeded their lawns, Jerome said. It's possible the city may waive its regulations if the owner appeals to the city, but Jerome said that even if the permission to sprinkle is granted, that could be withdrawn if the water pressure is too low.

Typically, a new lawn is planted in September and needs frequent waterings. It may be possible to wait until October. Consult your landscaper, Bull said.

If it can't wait, "just pray for rain," she added.

The construction is expected to last six weeks. Novi's city water pressure will be monitored and the ban could be lifted in three weeks, if indoor water pressure remains adequate in city homes.

It's expected that the September rainfall will be average. The colder nights will also bring dew.

However, enterprising homeowners have other options when

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Road closings cut off Novi's north end

By WENDY PIERMAN MITZEL and JAN JEFFRES Staff Writers

Construction roadblocks all over the City of Novi, exacerbated by the emergency closing of Novi Road between Twelve Mile and Decker roads, are making for traffic migraines for north-end residents this month.

The closings are expected to cause problems for the Novi Community School District which sends buses up Novi Road each morning and afternoon for students in neighborhoods around Novi Road and Decker Road.

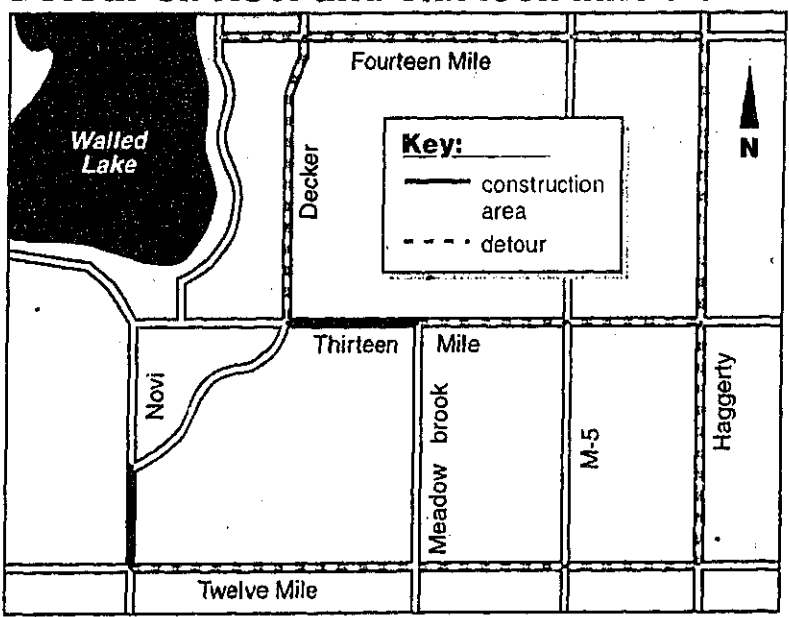
Buses will have to find a new route but if one of them is caught in traffic, it could create a domino effect throughout the day according to school officials.

"It is just awful. Who approved it all at the same time?" said north end resident Sarah Gray, a founder of the South East Shawood Homeowners Association.

She travels seven miles to get to her job in Farmington Hills in the Fourteen Mile and Orchard Lake area and expects with the construction that she'll need to allow one hour to get to work.

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Detour on Novi and Thirteen Mile Roads



Map by JUANITA LITTLE

Police patrol for minor buyers

By WENDY PIERMAN MITZEL Staff Writer

Novi police are on the prowl looking for underage alcohol purchasers and adults buying liquor for minors as a result of a new grant program called Cops in Shops.

But they are also catching other sorts of criminal behavior at the same time.

"I thought we would get a person trying to buy with a fake ID every now and then but I've seen so many different things. It's kind of been wild," said Officer Thomas Lindberg, who is heading up the program.

One undercover cop is stationed in the store to watch for illegal purchasers and one outside who watches for kids loitering to find adults to buy for them.

"What happens, more often than not, the officer walks nonchalantly behind the person to glance at the license" to check its authenticity, said Lindberg.

The cops do not get involved in the purchases but are often called to assist a clerk who is unsure of the purchase. At that time, the officer identifies him- or herself.

A combination of 12 local drug stores, party stores and bars are banding together to help police stop underage drinkers from obtaining alcohol.

It also takes some of the pressure off the clerks and bartenders who have to contend with the teens or adults buying for them

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Board sets new pay rate for teacher substitutes

By WENDY PIERMAN MITZEL Staff Writer

The Novi Board of Education is expected to approve a new pay scale for substitute teachers, this week, as well as look at new ways to keep and reward dedicated subs for their hard work.

"We do value these people very highly and we want to pay them accordingly," said Robert Schram, director of personnel for Novi schools.

The new scale will pay teachers \$65 for a whole day, or \$35 for a half day of work. If the teacher spends more than nine consecutive days filling in for one teacher then the continuing days' pay rate moves up to \$75 a day.

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And they're off...

The Novi High School cross country teams got the fall sports season off to a running start last week, along with most of the other fall teams. See this week's sports section for a preview of this year's teams.

Photo by BRYAN MITCHELL

SPOON LED

Jason Witherspoon heads
Wildcats' offensive attack

Off the field, Jason Witherspoon is a well-mannered, soft-spoken, thoughtful young man. Put a football helmet on the Novi High senior, however, and he becomes a no-nonsense, get-the-heck-out-of-my-way running back. If you're not wearing green and white, you're in trouble.

"I don't think teams like to tackle me," the 18-year-old said, "because I'm not going to make it easy to take me down."

Witherspoon actually enjoys challenging would-be tacklers. It's better to give out abuse rather than take it, in other words.

"I'd rather put moves on a guy and go around him," says Jason. "That's the first option. But if I can't, I'll try to run him over."

During Witherspoon's first two seasons, opponents have been grabbing mostly air.

Witherspoon rushed for 1,192 yards his sophomore year and bettered that by about 100 yards last fall. He'll own the school record early into this season, coach John Osborne said.

"He's bigger and heavier than last year," he said. "But he's still difficult to tackle."

"I like breaking records," Witherspoon said. "But if I do I do, if I don't I don't."

Gaining any yardage at all would've been impossible without his teammates, said Jason.

"I wouldn't have the stats if someone else wasn't doing their job," he added.

The Wildcats went 4-5 last year and 5-4 in his first season. Witherspoon wants better production in the "W" category this fall.

"My goal is to have a winning season," he said. "I want to win the Kensington Valley Conference and make the state playoffs."

Witherspoon said his team can turn it turn it around.

"I think we have a lot talent - enough talent to win the KVC."

The senior dedicated himself to getting in the best shape possible over the summer. Weight training sessions focused mainly on leg work. Witherspoon routinely squatted 315 pounds.

Running supplemented his weight training activities. Jason also attended camp at the University of Michigan to work on technique.

"We did a lot on footwork," Witherspoon said, "and increasing foot speed."

It should come as no surprise that the teenager worked so diligently to become a better football player over the past few months. He's been doing it all his life.

Perhaps it was growing up in Georgia.

The state known for its red clay soil and peaches is steeped in football history and tradition. Small town diners hang pictures of high school teams proudly on the walls.

Football fields are more like shrines and newspapers cover the game as if it were being played by professionals. Kids start playing as soon as their little shoulders fit into pads.

Jason Witherspoon began in fifth grade. Back then, though, he was an offensive tackle instead of running back.

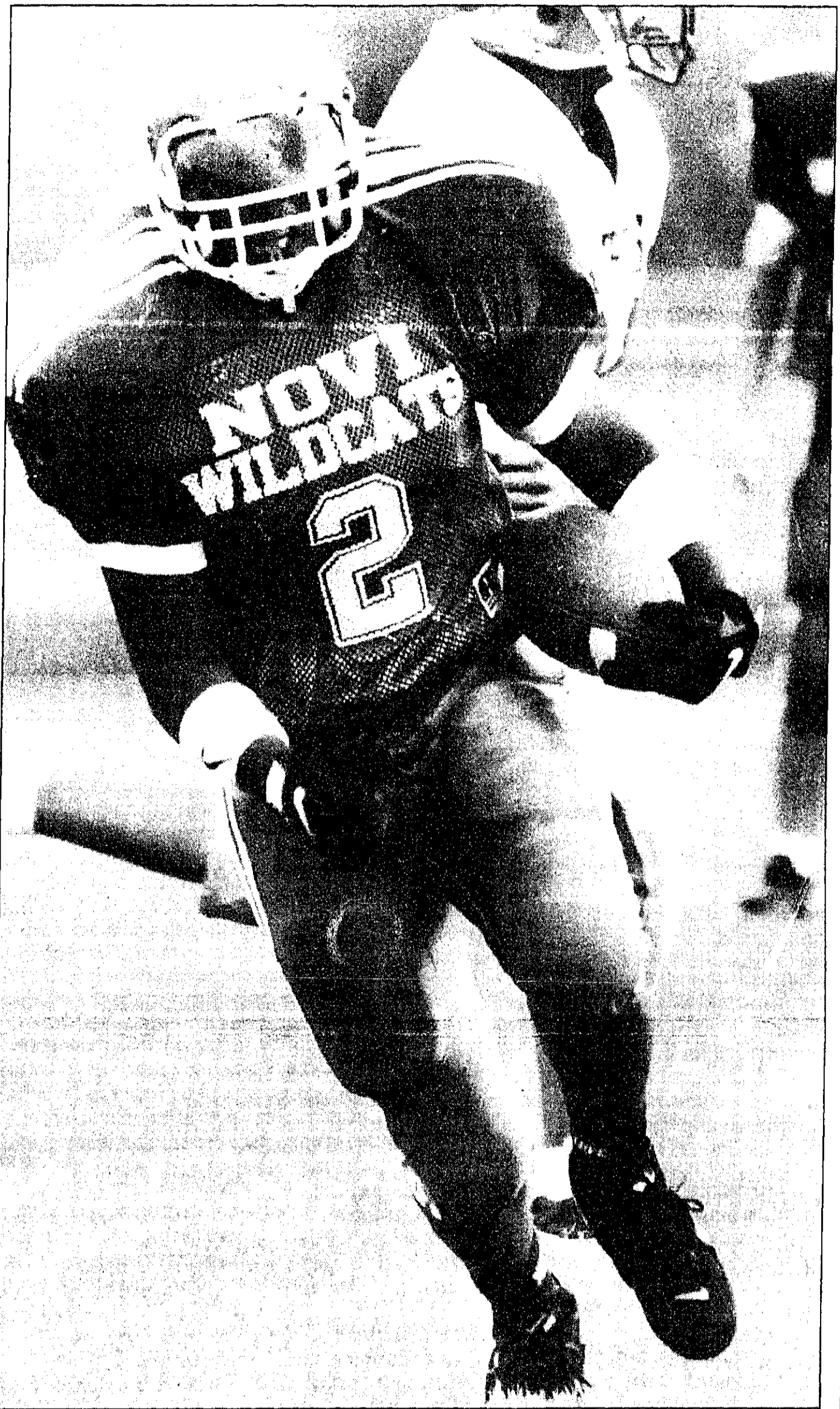
His blocking duties lasted just a year. After racing the coach's son and winning easily, Jason moved to his now familiar slot.

"I love playing running back," Witherspoon. "I love the contact."

When he reached ninth grade at Lasker High in Marietta, a northern suburb of Atlanta, he was good enough to play varsity. Jason produced a pair of 100 yard games against the older boys that season.

A job transfer to his dad, Ron Harrison, brought Jason to Novi in time for the 1994 season. He was reluctant to move north at first.

"I didn't want to leave Atlanta," Witherspoon said. "I loved it so much."

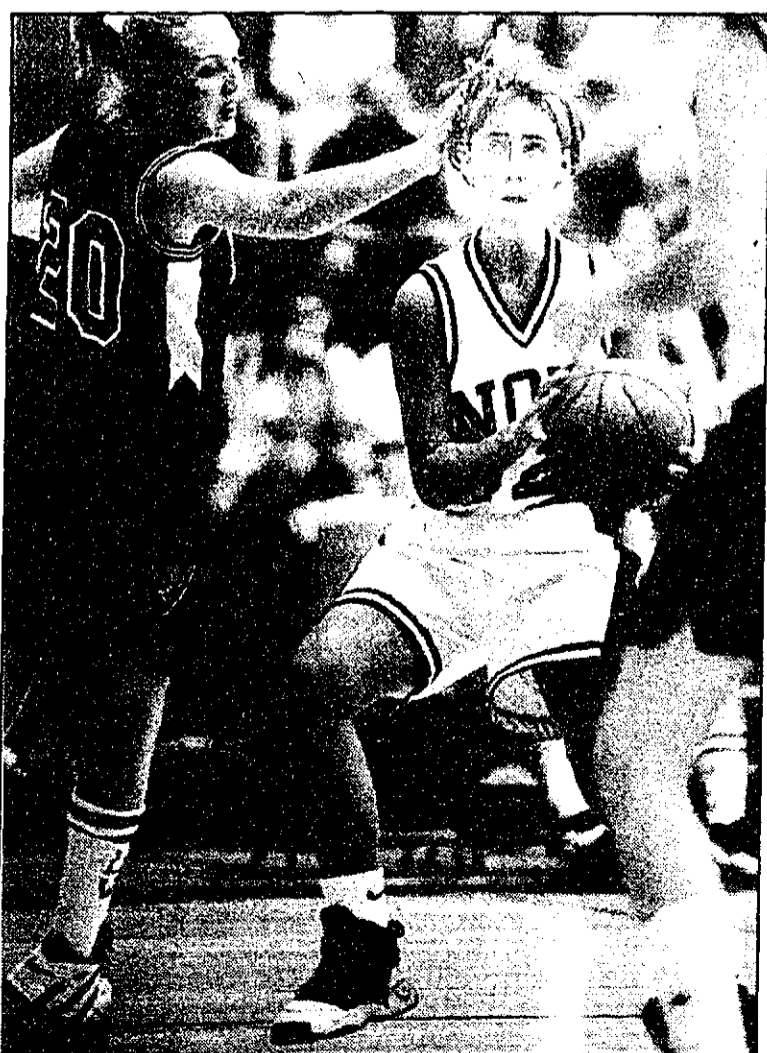


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Jason Witherspoon has run for more than 1,000 yards in each of his two seasons with Novi High.

STORY BY SCOTT DANIEL • PHOTO BY BRYAN MITCHELL

BASKETBALL



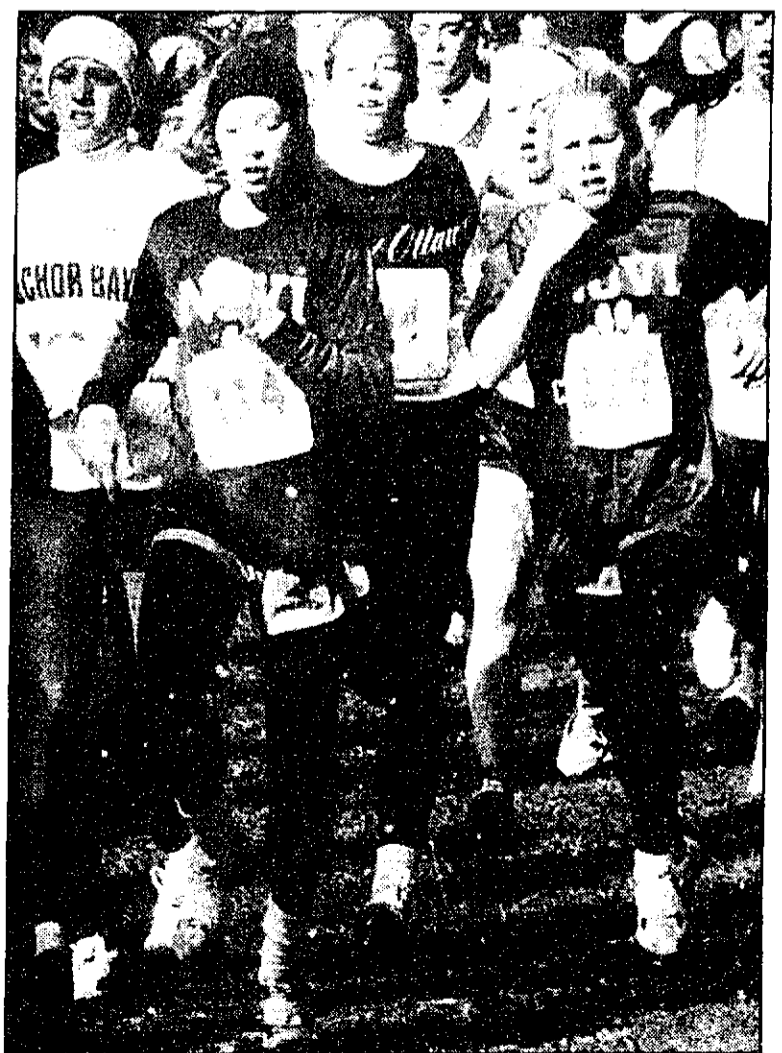
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BOYS CROSS COUNTRY



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GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY



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