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## Los Gatos, Saratoga: Peterson places first, leads Falcons to CCS D-III cross country title

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POSTED: 11/10/2015 06:09:23 PM PST | UPDATED: 24 DAYS AGO

# COMMENTS

Two-thirds of the way through the Central Coast Section Division III championship race Saturday afternoon, Matthew Peterson was in a pack of seven front-runners. So were two of his Saratoga High School teammates: fellow senior Stephen Law was the leader at the 2-mile mark, and sophomore Amit Nag was seventh, less than two seconds behind.

The trio stayed strong, but it was Peterson, who pulled away to win in a personal best 16:02.6 at the 2.95-mile Crystal Springs course, replacing former Saratoga ace Steven Sum as CCS D-III champion and leading the Falcons to the first CCS team title in school history.

Several Falcon squads have finished second at CCS, most recently the 2014 boys and the 2006 girls, but no other Saratoga cross country team did what the boys accomplished Nov. 14 under first-year coach Scott Bang, according to the CCS website, [cifccs.org](http://cifccs.org).

Nag finished sixth (12:22) in his first CCS final and Law (16:24.5) placed eighth, his best showing in three CCS meets, giving Saratoga three of the top eight finishers. Sophomore Ronin Staunovo (16:58) finished 22nd and senior Kevin Duong-Le (17:41) placed 41st. Freshman David Berkowitz-Sklar (52nd, 17:48) and junior Nick Sum (82nd, 18:40) did not factor in the Falcons' first-place score of 75 points, but earned medals as the team's sixth and seventh runners and could make a difference at the state meet Nov. 28 at Fresno's Woodward Park.

The victories by Peterson and Saratoga were part of a big day for SCVAL teams and individuals. Lynbrook senior Justin Robison posted the fastest time of the day, running 15:11.5 in the Division II boys race, after Palo Alto junior Kent Slaney romped 15:22 to win the D-1 title. Paly (65 points) placed second and Homestead (88) third in the D-I team race, qualifying for the state meet along with D-I winner Bellarmine College Prep (29).

Seniors Brent Mogensen of Monta Vista and Zahid Anjum of Wilcox won D-I individual bids to state after placing fourth and 11th, respectively. Robison and fellow seniors Ben Zaeske of Los Altos and Sanjay Mohan of Los Gatos qualified as individuals for the state meet, joining the top three teams in D-II, St. Francis (59), Willow Glen (66) and St. Ignatius (89). Zaeske