

# Health of runners holding back Rangers

Combination of veterans, youth gives Rincon hope when at full strength

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The question for Rincon/University's boys cross country team as state approaches has less to do with talent and more to do with health.

The talent is there. From last year's top team finisher, Noah Kenyawani, to newcomers Ochor Odol and Ryan Silva, the Rangers are confident a healthy top three can improve on last year's fourth-place finish.

But Kenyawani has missed several meets with a hip injury, Odol is recovering from ear surgery, and Silva recently suffered a broken collarbone. Five more are currently out with the flu.

Those issues did not, however, prevent Rincon from winning its dual meet against Catalina on Wednesday. Despite a dominating 15-minute-35-second performance from Catalina's Alejandro Montano, the Rangers edged the Trojans 27-28.

The Rincon girls also notched a victory Wednesday. Sophomore Emily Page finished the 3-mile course in 21:01 to lead the Rangers to a 19-38 win.

Odol was Rincon's top boys runner at 16:17, and Silva wasn't far behind at 16:47.

Odol's time was a personal best at the Reid Park course. The junior is still getting back into the swing after being held out last season.

The Ethiopia native ran at Amphitheater as a freshman, then transferred to Rincon as a sophomore but had to sit out in accordance with AIA transfer rules.

Silva, a freshman and the nation's fastest runner of the mile for his age group, is still adjusting to running three miles at a time instead of the one he ran in middle school.

"I wasn't used to anybody beating me, and the first race was like, 'whoa, these guys are for real,' " Silva said.

While Silva is not expected to challenge Ironwood Ridge's Steve Magnusson or Sunnyside's Fabian Romero for the 5A-II individual crown, he is doing enough to help ensure that Rincon is at least a contender for a team title.

"If we have a strong, healthy team, I'm thinking we should definitely come in the top three," Rincon coach Anneli Henneke said. "I'm not going to say first. Ryan is outstanding, but he's a freshman and he's coming out of middle school where he's still used to the shorter races. So, he's still adjusting. And Ochor, since he didn't run it last year, he's getting stronger every meet."

In addition to Odol and Silva, the Rangers had three other runners, senior Steve Gaynor and juniors Daniel Becklund and Mathew Trouard, finish in 17:26 or less on Wednesday.

Add in Kenyawani, who was out because of a death in the family, and the Rangers might give Sunnyside and Ironwood Ridge a scare.

"I will run fast at state. I will run as fast as I can and try to beat all my other times," Odol said with the help of interpreters. "We have a good team to win."