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Muscle mystery worries favourite Ken Norris

By ROY MOOR

KEN NORRIS (Thames Valley), favourite to win next Saturday's South of England cross-country championship at Windsor, is again troubled by a mysterious muscle ache in his legs. He is to have a check-up today.

He first experienced the muscle complaint on returning from Brazil, where he won two big races at the beginning of the year.

In the inter-counties title race that followed at Peterborough he was surprisingly beaten by the Surrey champion and England international Peter Driver.

Revenge

The muscle trouble disappeared and Norris took his revenge when he defeated Driver in San Sebastian a week later. Now he is due to meet Peter again at Windsor on Saturday and, not surprisingly, Ken is worried because the pain in his legs has returned.

Both the Norris-Driver clashes this season have been over courses of about six miles. The Windsor race will be at nine miles—a gruelling distance even for the fittest runner.

A broken toe keeps Hugh Foord, of Brighton, out of the championship, and the chief threat to the Norris-Driver supremacy may come from Frank Sando (Aylesford), now returning to his best form. Pat Ranger (South London) and Alan Perkins (Ilford).

Fred Norris again

The Duke of Edinburgh will be the starter.

The North of England championship also will be run on Saturday—at Port Sunlight. Here the 33-year-old Bolton miner Fred Norris should have too much speed for his old rivals Albert Chorlton, Derek Walker, Ken Gates and Bill Boak.

The British Amateur Athletic Board have been invited to send competitors for Canadian indoor meetings next month.

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KEN NORRIS SHOULD GET HIS REVENGE THIS TIME

PRIDE of place in reviewing the area cross-country championships on Saturday must be given to the Southern race to be held in Windsor Great Park.

Not only because the Duke of Edinburgh will attend this event, but also because the south has produced better cross-country running in recent years than any of the other areas.

If you question my view, take the last National championships and the international team as a guide. Gordon Pirie, Pat Ranger and Ken Norris were the first three home in the National at Cardington last March and six of the nine chosen to run for England in the International at San Sebastian were from the South.

Admittedly, last year the south had a bad national championship and, in supplying only one runner to the English team, may have been below their true form, but these figures speak for themselves.

Slight edge

Although they had only a slight edge on their northern rivals in this year's inter-counties championship, the southern men were without three of their best runners, Gordon Pirie, Hugh Foord and Mike Maynard. All three will almost certainly miss the area race as well.

But, with such as Ken Norris, Peter Driver and Frank Sando in the field, it should be a great race. I don't think Driver will repeat his inter-counties win over Norris, because this race is longer—over nine miles.

South London should keep the team title from Thames Valley and Harne Hill. But look out for Surrey A.C.

Fred Norris tells me that he is "running better than ever." So

By Olympic

unless he decides to take a rest before the National race, I do not think anyone will be capable of beating him in the Northern area event at Port Sunlight. He ran like a true champion at Peterborough and San Sebastian.

Although Albert Chorlton finished the inter-counties like a greyhound, I think Derek Walker is the more consistent runner to tip for second place. Ken Gates, Ron Beechcroft and Bill Boak must not be overlooked, and John Wild, of Cheshire, is improving nicely.

Another man in with a great chance, if he runs, is Derek Ibbotson.

In the team race Bolton United may have their work cut out to beat Sheffield United, whose young contingent is about to break into the senior grade with some effect.

The standard in the east is likely to be much lower than in the other two areas, and I expect the former cyclist, Reg Smith, of Cambridge City, to win their race at Newmarket. He was easily the best of the Eastern contingent at Peterborough—where the east placed only one runner in the first 50 home.

Not so difficult

I don't think, in fact, that Smith will have as much difficulty in winning again as he did last year—when he narrowly beat Leeds University star D. Haw, and his Cambridge colleague, A. Phipps.

The team race might well prove to be quite a fight between Lincoln, Wellington, Ipswich and Cambridge City—who finished in that order last year. It would not surprise me to find both Cambridge and Ipswich ahead of the holders this time.

Juniors and youths also race at Windsor, Port Sunlight and Newmarket. The North and East also stage races for boys, but the South has made no move to copy them in this respect, and I don't think they will in view of the amount of running promoted in the winter, by schools in the South.

With entries totalling just over 1,800 to accommodate, an extra race would send southern officials crazy in the search for dressing room facilities. And no one has yet convinced them that racing for boys is desirable.