

CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP

Like the flavings at Miami race track, 400 of Britain's leading harriers get down to lap one of a gruelling ten-mile test in the English Senior Cross Country Championships at Leamington Spa. Just to get 'em into the right spirit, the course begins with a nice, long, uphill pull. But they can take it; over the grass on winged feet. That is, all but one, flat foot Freddie, the happy harrier and stooge entry the wings fall off his feet. But he's game; battling on where the pounding feet drum the tune of the turf.

Up and down big hills, with not much time to look at the scenery, and an occasional five bar gate to mark the miles.

Not that way Freddie, not that way. You see; it opens.

At the end of the first of the three laps, the pace begins to tall, and you feel as if you got a lump of lead in your shoes. The hills were beginning to get 'em, too and at this point the real fight started - a long, tough pull with every new mile looking like three. By this time, flat foot Freddie's beginning to feel like Napoleon on the retreat from Moscow. Perhaps they should've marked the course out better?

It started with a hopeful four hundred - now there's only the stayers left.

Now's the time for the last long pull to the winning post. Taking a good pull of his own comes Freddie - but it'll take more than the windmill to put wind in his sails. Leading the field is Jack Holden, number 31, 39 year old Tipton Harrier coming in in great style to score his third championship win; 10 miles in 57 minutes. Down the course there's the man with the shabby feet.