

Bennett leads Jeff girls to state bowl

Written by Tom Fruehling

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To say that Rylea Bennett was down in the dumps coming into Thursday's Iowa high school Class 2A qualifying bowling meet would be an understatement.

"My confidence level was pretty low," the Jefferson sophomore admitted. "I wasn't feeling up to snuff."

Competing in her regular Wednesday night league along with her mom, Jefferson assistant coach former state prep champion Stacie Bennett, Rylea had rolled three games totaling 475.

Not only was her score almost 100 points below her average, Rylea was trounced by her mother by more than 200 pins.

"I bowled lousy," she said.

But apparently all it took to lift her spirits (and her score) Thursday morning at the Cedar Rapids Bowling Center were a few encouraging words from longtime head coach and bowling guru Virg Cerveny.

"He kind of got my mind right," Rylea explained after winning the individual district title and leading her Jeff girls team to an overwhelming team championship.

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Both automatically qualified for next week's state tournament in Des Moines.

On the boys side, Kennedy senior Troy McKiernan upset more than a dozen bowlers with higher season averages to claim the individual title.

The undefeated Linn-Mar team, as expected, advanced to state in convincing fashion.



As is the case with most of the prep bowlers, Rylea Bennett comes from a bowling family.

Grandparents Mike and Theola Hauskins are accomplished keglers, as is her uncle Kirk.

And her mom, Stacie, was a four-year all-stater and back-to-back state champ on Cervený's Jefferson team in the mid 90's.

"I've been bowling since I could walk," Rylea said.

Sporting a 185 average this year for Jefferson, she rolled a 247 for her first game Thursday, then followed up with a 194.

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With three of her teammates all finishing in the top five in individual competition, the J-Hawks topped runner-up Linn-Mar 2986 to 2535.

“We had a real good chance to go over 3000, which none of our teams has ever done at districts,” said Cervený, who has taken a girls team to the state every year but two during his 23 years at the helm. “This is an outstanding group of girls. They work hard and jell as a team. When one is down, the others pick it up.”

Fourth-year Linn-Mar boys coach Andy Diercks said the same for his senior-laden group.

“These guys came in and wanted to work and get better,” said the energetic young mentor who’s now 34-14 as the Lions’ leader, including a perfect 12-0 this season. “Their scores have gotten better each of the last three meets, and today we peaked at just the right time.”

With a season team average of 3135, Linn-Mar rolled over runner-up Jefferson 3274 to 3075.

It’s the second time in three years that Linn-Mar has advanced to the state meet. And in Thursday’s district, the top five bowlers all averaged over 200, led by Austin Swanson with a two-game score of 479 and Justin Wyant with a 458.

“It was a very good team effort,” said Diercks.



For Kennedy’s McKiernan, it will be his first trip to the state tournament after being the team’s top bowler for most of his four years on the varsity.

He, too, comes from a long line of bowlers, including his grandfather Don Kilts, the Cougars’

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head boys coach.

"I've been bowling since I was five," he said.

He entered the meet as a underdog with his 190 season average. The field ahead of him included 10 with averages above 200.

But McKiernan rolled a 268 in his opening game and followed up with a 230 for a strong 498 total.

"It helped," he said, "that this is our home alley where we practice and have our meets. I know how the lanes are.

"And my teammates really helped me get into my game. They cheered me on the whole way."

CLASS 2A STATE-QUALIFYING MEET

At Cedar Rapids Bowl

Boys

Team scores

1. Linn-Mar 3274, 2. CR Jefferson 3075, 3. CR Kennedy 2886, 4. Iowa City West 2843, 5. Iowa City High 2805

State qualifiers - Linn-Mar, Troy McKiernan (CRK), Austin Swanson (LM), Justin Wyant (LM)

LINN-MAR (3274): Trent Jochimsen 163-257=420, Andrew Prowse 182-194=376, Austin Swanson 237-242=479, Seth Tegtmeier 201-204=405, Justin Wyant 249-209=458, Dreyson Robe 232-201=433

Round 1 - 2195. Baker round - 1079.

JEFFERSON (3075): Will James 245-205=450, Sean Ely 178-185=363, Christian Hindt 212-150=362, Noah Tiedtke 243-195=438, Zach Ficken 247-167=414, Austin Kluth

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217-203=420

Round 1 - 2085. Baker round - 990.

KENNEDY (2886): Seth Nutt 175-213=388, Doug Svoboda 159-184=343, Aaron Smith 203-187=390, Alec White 188-162=350, Kyle Custer 173-196=369, Troy McKiernan 265-233=498

Round 1 - 1995. Baker round - 891.

Girls

Team scores

1. CR Jefferson 2986, 2. Linn-Mar 2535, 3. Iowa City West 2507, 4. CR Kennedy 2502, 5. Iowa City High 2396

State qualifiers - Jefferson, Rylea Bennett (CRJ), Savannah Fowler (CRJ), Amanda Weidemeier (CRK)

JEFFERSON (2986): Savannah Fowler 245-178=423, Lindsey James 159-205=364, Rebecca Early 159-224=383, Jesse Alff 214-173=387, Rylea Bennett 247-194=441, Nicole Petersen 181-209=390

Round 1 - 2024. Baker round - 962

LINN-MAR (2535): Kayla Johnson 133-146=279, Courtney Bates 151-152=303, Paige Miller 223-136=359, Nicole McMahon 141-143=284, Brooke McMorran 156-194=350, McKenzie Routhe 180-158=338

Round 1 - 1634. Baker round - 901.

KENNEDY (2502): Niki Dean 127-196=323, Laura Fischer 145-169=314, Lisa Warnock 115-132=247, Zariell Oldfield 118-145=263, Jessi Schoettmer 146-169=315, Amanda Weidemeier 182-233=415

Round 1 - 1630. Baker round - 872.