

Indoor track season starts Tuesday

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 28 February 2011 16:10 - Last Updated Monday, 28 February 2011 16:19

Four Metro high school teams will start the indoor track season at the Wartburg Indoor Meet Tuesday in Waverly.

Linn-Mar and Prairie are sending members of their boys teams to the Hoover Fieldhouse at Wartburg College. Members of the Washington and Prairie girls teams also will compete.

There are 13 indoor meets on Metro schedules around the state this March with events in Waverly, Cedar Falls, Iowa City, Ames, Mount Vernon and Pella.

The outdoor track season will begin in late March and early April. Coaches use the indoor meets to prepare for outdoor competition.

"It gives us an opportunity to get together," said Prairie boys coach Bill Schwarz. "It makes it easier to get this kind of work done this early in the season."

Teams were allowed to begin official practices Feb. 14, allowing only two weeks of workouts before the first meet. As a result, coaches are inclined to ease into the indoor meets.

"We don't go real gung-ho on them," said Linn-Mar boys coach Ken Hopkins. "We use them as time trials."

Teams have practiced outside the last few weeks, as much as possible, on their own outdoor tracks and the streets.

Washington girls coach Frank Scherrman said he's not a big fan of indoor meets, but thinks they are useful in some respects.

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"We like to treat it like a basketball team would treat a scrimmage," he said. "It does break the monotony a little bit."

Tuesday's meet will give an elite athlete like Linn-Mar senior Kyle Dunn a chance to get started. Dunn won the Class 4A 400-meter dash and 400-meter hurdles at the 2010 outdoor state meet and has signed to compete at the University of Arkansas next season.

Prairie will enter most of the top distance runners who helped the Hawks win the Class 4A boys state cross country title last fall with Matt Stocker, Kyle Stocker, Jordan Burns and Justin Burns.

None of the schools are taking full squads to Waverly. Some track athletes are still involved in winter sports, while others have had only a few workouts.