

J-Hawks break record in 4x200 at Drake

Written by Jim Ecker

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DES MOINES - For awhile Friday morning, it looked like Jefferson's dreams of a golden journey at the 106th Drake Relays had been shattered.

By Friday afternoon, however, the J-Hawks and gutsy sprinter Jasmine Blue had their championship flags and a coveted place in the Drake record book.

Abbie Ranschau, Blue, Morgan Meese and Lucy Schneekloth broke the Drake record in the 4x200 relay in 1 minute, 40.96 seconds, barely missing Jefferson's own all-time Iowa best of 1:40.94 set in 2013.

It nearly didn't happen.

Blue appeared to hurt herself at the end of the sprint medley relay earlier in the day when the J-Hawks finished third in a tight race, but a lengthy leg massage had Blue back in business for the 4x200 relay about three hours later.

Blue vowed to run in the 4x200, even when she was lying in the grass after the sprint medley in pain. True to her word, she answered the bell.

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"I knew I was going to run it even if I was missing a leg," she said. "The coaches and everybody rubbed my legs out and I was able to relax for a little while."

The 4x200 relay is a special race for the J-Hawks, who have won it the last two years at the state meet. Now they've conquered the field at Drake as well.

"This is our race," said Meese. "We finally got it in our last year."

Meese and Schneekloth are seniors. Blue and Ranschau are juniors, but this is the last year the quartet will run together as a highly successful unit.

"We knew we could do it," said Blue.

"It feels so good," said Meese. "We worked so hard for this. Now that it's actually happened, it's kind of surreal."



It was the first relays title at Drake for the Jefferson girls since 1986, when Schneekloth's mother - Julie Davis - helped the J-Hawks win a crown.

"I think it was long overdue," said Schneekloth, proud to carry on the family tradition.

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Schneekloth ran the anchor on the 4x200 and held off a spirited bid by Waukee to win the race. Blue ran the anchor on the sprint medley and had a slight lead coming down the stretch, but faltered on her last two strides in an effort to hold the lead.

Boone won the sprint medley in 1:46.43. Pleasant Valley finished second in 1:46.73 and Jefferson was third in 1:46.87, with all three teams just a smidgeon apart.

"I don't know what was happening," said Blue. "I was just stumbling, trying to get the win. I was giving everything else I had.

"I don't know ... I just got ahead of myself almost," she said. "I was just running until I couldn't run anymore."

At first, it appeared Blue may have torn a muscle in the sprint medley, which would have ruined Jefferson's chances in the 4x200 Friday and in the 4x100 Saturday.

"No, I'm fine," she said after the medley while getting a rubdown. "My legs are really burning right now, but that's OK. It may be burning right now, but I'll be able to do it (run the 4x200)."

Blue ran the second leg on the 4x200, then pressed her hands in prayer as Meese and Schneekloth ran the third and fourth legs. Less than a minute later, Blue was hugging her teammates with the mission accomplished.

Jefferson broke the Drake record of 1:41.66 set by Des Moines Roosevelt in 2012.