

Evans, Hawks, Cougars shine at state meet

Written by Jim Ecker

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DES MOINES - Josh Evans made a mad dash for immortality Thursday, but he fell just a tad short of cracking 9 minutes in the 3200 meter run at the Class 4A state track meet.

Unhappy? Sad?

Neither.

Evans clocked the second-fastest time in state history in the 3200 in 9:00.97, successfully defending his state title and breaking the meet record of 9:05.25 set by Kevin Lewis of Ottumwa in 2011.

Evans ran a 9:01.55 at the Drake Relays last month in his first bid for a sub-9 minute performance, but he had to play second fiddle that day when Albert Meier of Boone won in 8:58.46 to become the first Iowa prep under the magic mark.

Meier is competing at the Class 3A state meet, leaving Evans to dominate the 4A competition from wire to wire Thursday. He led a 1-2-3 showing by Metro runners with Mitch Pritts of Prairie second in 9:12:07 and Daniel Murphy of Linn-Mar third in 9:12.46.

Pritts and Murphy both chopped more than 15 seconds off their personal bests in the 3200.

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Evans was mildly disappointed at not cracking 9 minutes, but he was delighted Linn-Mar placed first and third in the event and scored 16 points. The Lions won the Class 4A championship last year and are hoping to repeat.

"Very happy," Evans said after the race. "It's the team right now. We got 16 team points. That's more than we can ask for. That's awesome.

"I wouldn't have cared if I had beaten them by a half-second. As long as I got 10 points (for first place) it would have been OK."

The Prairie Hawks captured the 4x800 relay Thursday and the Kennedy Cougars broke the meet record in the shuttle hurdle relay preliminaries in 56.12 seconds.

Unlike the 3200 at Drake, Evans did not have anyone to chase - or push him - at the state meet, hindering his chances of cracking 9 minutes or breaking Meier's all-time record.

"I was too mentally weak to keep pushing myself," he claimed. "I could tell with about 800 to go that I wasn't going to be able to do it. I kind of resigned myself to the fact that I wasn't going to break it."

Pritts had a big day for Prairie and helped the Hawks capture the 4x800 relay with a strong opening leg. Matt Lorenz and Ross Adams got the baton to Tysen VanDraska, who used a strong kick in the final 200 meters to cross the finish line in 7:49.52.

VanDraska sped by Kaleb Greiner of Iowa City West in the final 20 meters as Prairie won the title by 41-hundredths of a second.

The Kennedy Cougars did not get any points when they won the shuttle hurdle relay prelims in 56.12 seconds, but Famiek Cook, Derek Jacobus,

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