

VanDraska, Lions win titles in Marshalltown

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 23 October 2014 19:40 - Last Updated Thursday, 23 October 2014 21:54

MARSHALLTOWN - The Linn-Mar Lions and Prairie Hawks have battled all season to see who has the best boys cross country team in Eastern Iowa.

They'll settle things at the Class 4A state meet in Fort Dodge Nov. 1.

Linn-Mar captured top honors Thursday with an impressive performance at the district meet in Marshalltown, but Prairie placed second and also earned a trip to state.

It was the fifth time the two powers have clashed in a meet this year. Linn-Mar leads the series, 3-2, but it's not over yet.

Prairie is the defending state champion and boasts Tysen VanDraska, who won the individual title Thursday at Marshalltown Community College.

"They're a great team and they're always pushing us," said VanDraska. "I don't want to say we're rivals. We're buds with them. We like the right kind of competition."

Prairie beat Linn-Mar at the Mississippi Valley Conference Super Meet two weeks ago and finished ahead of the Lions at the Heartland Classic in Ames earlier this season. Linn-Mar topped Prairie at the Prairie Invitational, the Cedar Rapids Invitational and now the district meet.

Prairie is ranked second in the state. Linn-Mar is ranked third.

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It won't be settled until they get to Fort Dodge.

"It's back and forth," said Linn-Mar junior Daniel Murphy, who finished second behind VanDraska Thursday by two seconds. "We're preparing and aiming for the finish. You can't think of anything else. We have to put everything on the line."

Linn-Mar claimed four of the top-six spots in the individual standings Thursday with Daniel Murphy second, his brother Ryan Murphy third, a healthy Michael Mather fourth and Dalton Gosch sixth. Bryan Fogerty finished the scoring for the Lions in 14th place.

Mather has been plagued by an Achilles' tendon injury and this was only his fourth race this fall, but he looked ready to help the Lions contend for the state crown.

Prairie ran a good race, but could not match Linn-Mar's overall strength at the top. Matt Lorenz placed eighth, Jake Moore 12th, Zack Fiser 13th and Cam Steffens 16th.

VanDraska is ranked No. 2 in Class 4A behind Daniel Soto of West Des Moines Valley and appears to be a serious threat for the state title with his great endurance and speed. He was a big winner at the MVC Super Meet and looked good again in Marshalltown.

"The wins I've been having give me a lot of confidence," he said. "And next week is state. I'm going to be ready."

"That's definitely one of my goals," VanDraska said about winning the individual title. "But the team championship comes first, and so I think winning individual would be a big part in that."

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Waukee finished third in the boys race Thursday and earned a trip to state.

The Linn-Mar girls placed second in their race in Marshalltown to claim a trip to the state meet despite a subpar performance by Amber Decker, normally their top runner. Decker got off to a fast start but faded and finished 21st.

"I don't know how to explain it," said Decker, who is ranked 12th in the state. "It just wasn't my day."

Maddie Saville led the Lions in sixth place. Morgan Garcia was eighth, Bryce Jones 17th, Maddie Mann 18th and Deanna Newhouse 19th. Decker's score did not count for Linn-Mar Thursday, but she'll get another chance at the state meet.

Rachel Brush of Waukee won the girls race and led her team to the district title. Southeast Polk placed third and also earned a trip to state.

BOYS RESULTS

Team Standings

1. Linn-Mar 29, 2. Prairie 50, 3. Waukee 72, 4. Indianola 84, 5. Southeast Polk 159, 6. Mason City 189, 7. Newton 215, 8. Ottumwa 222, 9. Marshalltown 227.

Winner - Tysen VanDraska, Prairie, 16:01

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Linn-Mar - 2. Daniel Murphy 16:03, 3. Ryan Murphy 16:05, 4. Michael Mather 16:06, 6. Dalton Gosch 16:11, 14. Bryan Fogerty 16:48, 20. Jay Halverson 17:02, 21. Grant Chlystun 17:04.

Prairie - 1. Tysen VanDraska 16:01, 8. Matt Lorenz 16:28, 12. Jake Moore 16:37, 13. Zack Fiser 16:44, 16. Cam Steffens 16:54, 18. Luke Huedepohl 16:56, 28. Levi Lefebure 17:26.

GIRLS RESULTS

Team Standings

1. Waukee 38, 2. Linn-Mar 68, 3. Southeast Polk 89, 4. Prairie 114, 5. Indianola 145, 6. Newton 186, 7. Ottumwa 188, 8. Mason City 209, 9. Marshalltown 217.

Winner - Rachel Brush, Waukee, 15:03

Linn-Mar - 6. Maddie Saville 15:26, 8. Morgan Garcia 15:54, 17. Bryce Jones 16:17, 18. Maddie Mann 16:19, 19. Deanna Newhouse 16:19, 21. Amber Decker 16:27, 26. Sydney Johnston 16:39.

Prairie - 12. Cayla Renwick 15:58, 20. Hannah Frazee 16:19, 22. Eilish Stanek 16:27, 28. Kirstin Skriver 16:46, 32. Sarah Meyers 16:51, 39. Victoria Enyart 17:21, 40. Alissa Neubauer 17:22.