

Lions 2nd in 4x800; Ophoff 2nd in 400 hurdles

Written by Jim Ecker
Saturday, 28 April 2012 19:07 -

DES MOINES - Jacob Aune has been through hell and back this year.

He battled a severe breathing problem at the district cross country meet, suffered a nasty concussion during the basketball season and has been plagued by legs cramps during the track campaign.

But Aune was feeling no pain Saturday after Cedar Rapids Prairie captured the 4x400 relay with a sterling performance at the 103rd Annual Drake Relays in Des Moines.

"It's been difficult, to say the least," said Aune, a reed-thin senior. "As an athlete, I've had an unlucky stretch, but it looks like it's lightening up a little bit."

Austin Dellamuth, Jarred Edmonds, Aune and Demetrius Harper toured the 1600 meters in 3 minutes, 21.15 seconds, nipping Clinton by 39-hundredths of a second in a race that was tight from start to finish for a half-dozen teams. Clinton finished second in 3:21.64 and Cedar Washington was third in 3:22.06.

Harper got the baton from Aune for the anchor leg in a bunched field. The Prairie coaches have been telling Harper to save a little for the home stretch and not spend all his energy at the start, so Harper paced himself before kicking it home for the victory.

"I decided to do that today and it paid off," said Harper. "It means so much."

Dellamuth, Aune and Harper have been running the relay all season and running it well, but Edmonds was a recent addition to the quartet after Tristan Beyer suffered a hamstring injury. On top of that, Edmonds ran Saturday on a sore ankle after getting hurt in practice.

"I'm proud of this kid," said Dellamuth, putting his arm around Edmonds. "His first year of track,

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he got thrown into the 4x4 at Drake. He stepped up."

They all did.

"We couldn't ask for a better team and better coaches," said Aune. "We all won it as a team. That's what's great about the 3:21. It was a big team effort."

The Hawks interrupted their victory lap to call Beyer out of the stands to join them as a fifth member of the unit. Beyer is recovering from his leg injury and the Prairie coaches hope he'll be healthy enough to run at the state meet in three weeks.

Aune helped Prairie win the state cross country title in 2010, but said the state title takes a backseat to winning at Drake.

"This is the best," he said. "It beats the state championship and everything. This is the best moment of my life right here. It's unbelievable.

"At state cross country, we were stacked with loaded runners. I mean, we're good runners on the 4x4, but we're not winning all the individual events. We just really buy into the team concept. We do everything together as a team. That's what makes it so much fun."

Prairie's victory in the final prep event of the day was the highlight for Metro athletes on the last day of the Drake Relays. Washington won the sprint medley on Thursday to give Metro teams a pair of victories at the 103-year-old meet.

The Linn-Mar Lions placed second in the 4x800 relay Saturday in a tight race that went down to the wire. Indianola won the event in 7:50.68, with the Lions a shade behind in 7:50.96 with Chase Grabau, Duggan Trenary, Jabez Walker and Matt Simon doing the honors.

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Linn-Mar senior Brandon Ophoff finished second in the 400 meter hurdles Saturday behind Raheem Black of Fort Madison, giving Ophoff two silver medals at the Drake Relays this year. He also placed second in the 110 meter high hurdles on Friday.

Ophoff was seeded No. 1 in both events, but ran into stiff competition both times. He wanted gold medals, but was happy with silver, for the most part.

"I really wanted it. I did what I could," he said. "I left it on the track. You have to feel good about second when you do that."

Cedar Rapids Kennedy finished third in the shuttle hurdle relay in 57.87 seconds with Tom Kaiser, Derek Jacobus, Famiek Cook and Josh Jahlas running in style. Iowa City High won the race in 56.75.

Jacobus came home with a silver medal for finishing second in the long jump on Friday and a bronze medal for placing third in the shuttle hurdle relay.

Linn-Mar had the fifth-fastest time in the shuttle hurdle relay prelims and the Marion Indians had the sixth-best time, but only four teams advanced to the finals.

Linn-Mar sophomore Josh Evans placed third in the 1600 meter run in 4:17.14, chopping three seconds off his personal best. Jason Thomas of Dowling won the race in 4:15.21 and Matt Butler of Bettendorf was second in 4:15.98. Evans also placed third in the 3200 meter run on Friday for two bronze medals.

The Washington girls placed sixth in the 4x100 relay in 49.48 seconds behind the record-setting sprinters from Des Moines Roosevelt, who captured the race in 47.55 seconds.

Drake Hickok of Washington finished seventh in the 400 hurdles in 55.30.

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Former Linn-Mar star Kyle Dunn, now a freshman at Arkansas, finished fifth in the men's 400 meter hurdles in 51.26 seconds Saturday.

[Saturday's complete prep results](#)