

Pontiac boys, girls run to Corn Belt titles

MAHOMET — Craig Black and Mark Balota finished second and third, respectively, to lead Pontiac High School to its eighth straight Corn Belt Conference boys cross country title yesterday.

Pontiac totaled 41 points over the 3.1-mile "White Barn" course north of Mahomet-Seymour High School. The host Bulldogs, ranked No. 4 in the latest Class A poll, finished second with 61. University High was third with 64, Clinton fourth with 78 and Olympia fifth with 95.

Pontiac also won the girls meet, sweeping the first three places to outdistance second-place Olympia, 19-51. Clinton was third with 71 and Mahomet-Seymour fourth with 89.

"We're happy to win it because the conference is getting tougher," said Pontiac coach Kevin Forney of the boys meet. "We had some people who didn't run particularly well, but other teams had some people who ran very well and you have to give them credit."

Mahomet-Seymour's Dan Nielsen was the individual winner in 16

minutes, 3 seconds. Following Black and Balota were Clinton's Joe Alexander in fourth and U High's Barrett Moore in fifth.

Besides Mahomet-Seymour, other Class A-ranked teams in the meet were U High (No. 11) and Clinton (No. 12).

Pontiac's Tracy Eskesen won the girls meet, traversing the two-mile course in 12:52. Teammates Michelle Myers and Jody Cermak were second and third, respec-

tively. Sheila Bowles of Olympia and Danielle Butler of Pontiac rounded out the top five.

The outcome was not without some controversy, however. Three Olympia girls who were leading the pack in the first mile, along with one Pontiac girl, were misdirected at a turn. They were quickly directed back onto the course, but lost time while retracing their steps, according to Olympia coach Jim Sunday.