

McKinney left out in the cold at state

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PEORIA — Jason McKinney got one of the two things he wanted Saturday.

The Georgetown-Ridge Farm senior, though, would gladly trade the temporary snowfall for the permanent hardware that comes with winning the Class A individual boys' state cross-country title.

McKinney's 3-mile time of 15 minutes, 22 seconds placed him fifth at Peoria's Detweiller Park. Chris Bailey of Westmont won in 14:55.

"The conditions were right the way I wanted them," said McKinney, a cold-weather runner who was happy it snowed Saturday. "I went out and ran the way I thought I would, but the people in front of me ran better than I thought they would."

Normal University won the boys' team

title with 72 points and Oregon finished second with 82.

Chrisman was third with 122 and two-time defending champion St. Joseph-Ogden was fourth with 131.

Urbana University High was eighth with 256.

McKinney, G-RF's lone competitor, earned praise from coach Tom Kulbartz.

"I thought (Jason) did a good job," Kulbartz said. "He was a little nervous and that entered into (his finish)."

Although Bailey broke away after the first 400 meters, McKinney was in the race for most of the way. McKinney and second-place finisher Jeff Erickson (15:08) of Eureka stayed close, but McKinney said he just didn't have enough down the stretch to stay in contention.

"I think I ran a great race. My body momentum was up and everything," McKinney said. "I just couldn't ever reel

(the leaders) in. Every time I tried to push, it seemed like they went, too."

McKinney, a sixth-place finisher last year, was running in his third state meet.

"When it's your last race, you go for it all," he said. "I came here to go for the championship and just didn't get it. I wanted first so bad, and I'll always think what if I got it."

SJ-O coach Jim Acklin had no regrets after watching his Spartans valiantly fight to defend their back-to-back state championships.

"I couldn't be more proud of our guys. I think our boys ran great races," Acklin said.

"One of the last things that we said last night is I don't care if we're 20th out of 20 teams. If you just run your best, then the rest will work itself out."

SJ-O was led by seniors Scott Weidner

and Joel Kary, who finished in 15:58 and 16:03, respectively.

Acklin said Corey Plotner, Jon Jamison, Adam Marriott and Scottie Mangers stepped up and ran well in their first-ever state appearance.

"I felt like each member of the team put themselves in position to win the race and that's all you can ask for," he said.

"I'm just really pleased with our team's performance."

SJ-O scored 364 points to finish 17th in the girls' competition, won by Winnebago with 119. Urbana University finished 15th with 138.

Uni High's Laurel Herenden was the area's top female finisher, finishing 15th in 12:56.

In a Class A girls' field of 167, Tuscola sophomore Patty McDaniel finished 27th in 13:12 and Catlin junior Mandy Weaver

C-C meet

finished 80th in 14:03 over the 2-mile course.

Two area boys cracked the top 25.

Tuscola junior Frank Tarantino was 20th in 15:41 and Unity senior Russell Houston was 22nd in 15:42.

Mahomet-Seymour freshman Scott DeWitt was 55th in 16:18 in a field of 168 runners.

Class AA

Danville freshman Kapreia Kirk was the area's top finisher in the Class AA girls' race. Kirk's time of 12:07 tied her for 10th in a field of 227.

Urbana's Sarah Stephens was 52nd in 12:36. Stephens, a senior, left the state meet immediately following her race to compete at the Big 12 Conference swim meet in Bloomington.

Danville's John Crays ran a 15:58 and finished 117th in the boys' competition.