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Cross-country sectionals roundup: Sages, Knights run best

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Nov 1, 2020



Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond boys' cross-country runner Layton Hall finishes the Class 1A St. Teresa Sectional in first place Saturday at Hickory Point Golf Course in Forsyth.

Megan Beckmier/provided

FORSYTH — Monticello's girls were looking to reassert themselves.

Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond's boys were seeking a program first.

Saturday's Class 1A St. Teresa Sectional delivered a rousing success in both regards.

The Sages and Knights topped their respective cross-country fields at Hickory Point Golf Course to cap the IHSA's season. No sanctioned state meet will take place this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, though an unsanctioned event is being held next week in Chillicothe.

On the girls' side, Monticello's Mabry Bruhn and Grace Talbert finished inside the top-five individuals to key the Sages past Illini Prairie Conference rival Unity 51-69.

The Rockets won the previous week's regional, but Monticello was missing Rachel Koon for that meet. She returned Saturday and took eighth in 19 minutes, 7.9 seconds to go with Bruhn's runner-up time of 18:32.1 and Talbert's fourth-place clocking of 18:51.2.

"There certainly was motivation," said Sages coach Dave Remmert, whose girls' sectional win was their second in program history and in as many years. "Unity is such a tough team. ... The only time we lost to Unity all season was last week, and we were not able to run with Rachel last week. That certainly played a role in it."

Erica Woodard paced Unity's effort with a sixth-place finish in 18:59.9, while Taylor Joop (11th, 19:18.5) and Caelyn Kleparski (13th, 19:24.8) also contributed.

Uni High settled into fourth place as a club and received the race's No. 1 time as Kate Ahmari squeezed past Bruhn in 18:29.4. Fellow Illinek Mikayla Blanke also wound up in the top 10 (seventh, 19:05.7).

St. Joseph-Ogden placed fifth and St. Thomas More eighth in the 15-team field. The Spartans and Sabers were led, respectively, by Ava Knap (19th, 19:37.3) and Kennedy Ramshaw (16th, 19:32.8).

Bismarck-Henning/Rossville-Alvin's Gabriella Moreman (third, 18:37.4) and Judah Christian's Aleigha Garrison (14th, 19:25.6) posted the best times by local individual competitors.

In boys' action, ALAH took home its inaugural sectional plaque with 62 points to second-place SJ-O's total of 76.

And the Knights rolled back into Arthur with a fire truck escort, as they did for the previous week's regional success.

"I told Layton Hall, 'A couple years ago, did you think you'd ever get to do this two weekends in a row your senior year?'" ALAH coach Lyle Dorjahn said. "What a great way to send our senior stalwart out."

Hall secured first place by 16 seconds, via a time of 15:27.6, and was joined in the top 10 by teammates Logan Beckmier (fifth, 16:02.0) and Lyle Adcock (10th, 16:20.9).

This was the latest chapter in the Knights' recent rise, which started with the program's first regional trophy last season. ALAH repeated that feat last week.

Another entry in that history book will occur at next week's unsanctioned state meet, in which the Knights will run under the non-school banner of the Four City Striders.

“I told the kids when we got done taking pictures when we got back to school, ‘I want you to go through that foyer in the gym on Monday morning, and I want you to look around for sectional trophies and I want you to tell me Monday night how many you find,’” Dorjahn said. ALAH’s only other sectional title as a school came in the 2017-18 bass fishing season. “It just doesn’t happen.”

Runner-up SJ-O took in top-15 finishes from Carson Maroon (12th, 16:31.0), Charlie Mabry (14th, 16:37.0) and Brandon Mattsey (15th, 16:37.1).

Monticello, Unity and BHRA finished third, fourth and seventh as squads, respectively.

The Sages’ top performers were Jackson Grambart (fourth, 15:50.5) and Josh Baysore (sixth, 16:04.7). The Rockets and Blue Devils were paced by Connor O’Donnell (11th, 16:28.8) and Eli Mojonnier (third, 15:49.1), respectively.

Tuscola’s Josiah Hortin (13th, 16:31.7) and Uni High’s Henry Laufenberg (26th, 17:03.8) led the local individual contingent.

Even though next week holds an unofficial state meet, Remmert described Saturday’s sectional proceedings as unusual.

“It definitely did not have the same feel,” Remmert said. “It’s some degree of a little bit anticlimactic. ... Without the promise of a state meet, you kind of scratch your head.

“I’m definitely looking forward to getting back to our normal meet schedule and the promise of Detweiller Park and hopefully a state meet again.”

M-S snags two top-fives. The Mahomet-Seymour girls placed second and the Bulldog boys took fourth at the Class 2A Richland County Sectional, hosted by Olney Central College.

Elizabeth Sims’ fifth-place time of 19 minutes, 15.49 seconds paced the M-S girls’ 134 points, which landed them behind only Chatham Glenwood (44) in the 15-team outing. Klein Powell added a 23rd-place clocking of 20:10.54 for the Bulldogs.

Among area individuals competing, the Centennial duo of Brooklynn Sweikar and Bella Ramshaw

most stood out. They placed 13th and 32nd, respectively, with times of 19:51.82 and 20:27.66.

The M-S boys racked up 146 points in their effort, with Kyle Nofziger's seventh-place result of 16:10.17 the top showing. Joseph Scheele contributed a 16:41.64 outcome in 23rd place.

Champaign Central took ninth and Urbana 15th in the 15-team showcase. The Maroons were led by Alex Ahmari (51st, 17:19.17), and the Tigers were keyed by Sam Lambert (ninth, 16:16.65).

On the individual front, Centennial's Aaron Hendron turned in a 13th-place time of 16:24.70.

PBL's James, Johnson shine. Ryder James' seventh-place time of 16 minutes, 44.60 seconds was the Paxton-Buckley-Loda boys' top result as they notched eighth place of 15 programs at the Class 1A Harvest Christian Academy Sectional, hosted at the academy in Elgin.

The Panthers finished with 216 points as a unit. PBL's Ashton Goss was important to that output, ranking 16th with a time of 17:31.10.

Right after Goss was Iroquois West's Connor Price, who ran alone and took 17th in 17:31.80.

In the girls' meet, PBL's Trixie Johnson crossed the line in ninth as the Panthers secured 11th of 15 clubs. Johnson's clocking of 20:21.10 was best among PBL's 259 points, and Madeline Royer's 55th-place time of 22:42.10 was next.

Iroquois West's Samantha Hartke (11th, 20:47.20), Hoopston Area's Allison Pickett (77th, 23:32.70) and Cissna Park's Addison Seggebruch (83rd, 23:54.80) raced individually for their schools.

Black concludes season. Clinton's Ethan Black finished 88th in the Class 1A Elmwood Sectional boys' race, contested at Maple Lane Country Club in Elmwood, by clocking a time of 18 minutes, 18.24 seconds. He was the only area athlete in the sectional.

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