



By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Longhorn juniors Tyler Talbott and Kyle Bottom will run in the Class D cross country meet Friday in Kearney.

Talbott took second in the D5 district at Grant last Thursday while Bottom captured 12th to punch his ticket to the state meet.

The top three teams and top 15 individuals at the district meet qualify for the state meet.

Talbott placed 14th at the state meeting last year and both he and Bottom can compete for medals this year, Coach Carl Zuege said this week.

While Zuege's excited for the pair, he's disappointed the Longhorns won't get the chance to defend their state-runner-up finish last year.

Early in the season, Chase County ranked among the top two teams in Class D.

However, in the closing weeks of the season, Zuege lost Shane German to a knee injury.

German had developed into the team's #3 runner and provided the depth that Zuege felt the team needed to make another run at the state title this year.

However, it wasn't meant to be as the team, battling both injury and the flu bug, finished fourth in the district meet by just five points.

Going into Thursday's meet, they had already lost German and then had to run without Joel Fisher, who got the flu.

In addition, the rest of this team wasn't 100 percent after battling illness during the week.

Alec Spady finished 26th in the field and Tom Sullivan was 32nd.

"We did the best we could with who we had there," Zuege said.

He said it was an unfortunate time for the kids to get sick and lose German to injury.

However, he noted a lot of other runners were battling flu and illness last week as well.

The flu bug hit the girls' team as well with only three of the six girls able to run.

Zuege said he wished the girls would have been able to compete as a team at districts.

Shanna Carter led the girls with a 47th-place finish followed by Jilanne German in 49th and Hannah Harmon in 54th.

Dundy County/Stratton swept the meet, winning both the girls' and boys' titles.

Talbott and Bottom will compete at 3:30 p.m. CT Friday in their quest for a state medal.



Two Longhorn cross-country runners, senior Sam Smith and junior Matt Smith, qualified for the state meet in Austin, Texas, on Friday.

