



By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Carl Zuege's Longhorn boys captured the SPVA conference cross country title Thursday, along with winning the Perkins County Invite title at the same time.

The Longhorns placed all six runners in the top 10, lead by Indy Smith who won the meet.

Behind him were Andrew Vaverek in third, Holden Dreiling in fifth, Ike Maxwell in sixth, Garret Thompson in seventh and Stephen Welch in 10th. Jayvee runner Ryan Moline finished 11th.

Zuege said Smith set the pace for the race and continued to get stronger as the race went on. He won by more than 19 seconds.

Smith placed third in last year's conference meet so this was a big step for him, Zuege noted. He has really emerged this season, the coach said, noting that he's running strong with speed down the stretch.

Vaverek turned in his best finish ever, taking third. Zuege said Vaverek is another runner who has really taken off in the last month.

In addition, Vaverek plays a key role in team leadership, Zuege said. The senior works to keep the team up and is talking to the others during the races, Zuege added.

Zuege expects Dreiling to rebound after last week's race, which wasn't one of his best. To have an off-day and still finish inside the top five shows what Dreiling is capable of, the coach said.

Zuege said he conference title was the Longhorns' to win or lose coming into the meet.

"I was really happy with all of the efforts turned in. We left no doubt as to who the top team in the conference is," he said.

Two sets of medals were awarded as Perkins County runs their meet in conjunction with the SPVA meet.

On the girls side, Mallory Coleman led the team with a 7th place finish to earn a pair of medals.

Emma Engbrecht finished 11th, just outside of the medals.

The Grant course hasn't been kind to Engbrecht in the past. During her sophomore year, she suffered an asthma attack in one race and suffered an injury in districts there that year and was unable to finish.

So finishing the race strong proved to be a personal victory for her, Zuege said.

For his two freshman Rose Sullivan and Vianey Marquez, Zuege said they ran well for their first time on the course.

He said there are a lot of up and downs on the course that makes it a tough course to run.

Districts today

The Longhorns will get their chance to qualify for the state meet today (Thursday) at the district meet in Bayard.

Zuege feels his boys team has a good shot at qualifying for state if they continue to perform as they have.

Dundy County-Stratton is also one of the favorites going into the meet. It could well be another face-off with DCS, Zuege said.

The girls' race begins at 2 p.m., followed by the boys' race at the Bayard golf course just north of Bayard.

Teams competing in the D-6 district include: Banner County, Bayard, Bridgeport, Chase County, Cody-Kilgore, Crawford, Dundy County Stratton, Gordon-Rushville, Hay Springs, Hemingford, Kimball, Maywood, North Platte St. Patrick's, Paxton, Perkins County, SMC, South Platte and Sutherland.

SPVA/Perkins County cross country invite

High school

Boys' varsity team scores—1st, Chase County, 15; 2nd, NP St. Pat's 35; 3rd, Kimball, 57; 4th, Perkins County, 72; 5th, Sutherland, 75.

Boys' individual results—1st, Indy Smith, CCS, 19:21.73; 2nd, Brandon Adkins, NPSP, 19:42.40; 3rd, Andrew Vaverek, CCS, 19:47.80; 4th, Ryan Muneio, Kim., 20:11.80; 5th, Holden Dreiling, CCS, 20:17.99; 6th, Ike Maxwell, CCS, 20:25.89; 7th, Garret Thompson, CCS, 20:32.10; 8th, Julis Dickmander, SP, 20:39.32; 9th, Jayson Rezek, Suth., 20:40.03; 10th, Stephen Welsh, CCS, 20:44.94; 11th, Ryan Moline, CCS JV, 20:59.75; 17th, Tagan Mays, CCS JV, 21:29.42; 22nd, Caleb Bubak, CCS JV, 22:41.33; 23rd, Mason Meeske, CCS JV, 22:41.64; 26th, Korey Krutsinger, CCS JV, 22:51.68.

Girls' team scores—1st, NP St. Pat's, 31; 2nd, Perkins County, 33; 3rd, Sutherland, 49; 4th, Kimball, 50; 5th, Chase County, 55.

Girls' individual results—1st, Anna O'Malley, NPSP, 21:24.10; 2nd, Emily Kemling, PC, 21:49.90; 3rd, Laura Flores, Kim., 22:48.70; 4th, Courtney Lyon, PC, 23:44.80; 5th, Bailey Clark, NPSP, 24:13.50; 6th, Josie Burke, Suth., 24:31.50; 7th, Mallory Coleman, CCS, 24:51.60; 8th, Kailey Dickerson, Kim., 25:02.40; 9th, Kendra Hoffert, PC, 25:28.30; 10th, Elli Buhrman, NPSP, 25:48.70; 11th, Emma Engbrecht, CCS, 25:58.10; 15th, Rose Sullivan, CCS, 27:11.00; 27th, Vianey Marquez, CCS, 34:56.50.