



Holden Dreiling finishes as district champion

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Chase County's Longhorn boys' cross country team brought home the school's first district title since 2004, winning last week's D6 meet in Bayard.

The team also crowned their first individual district champion since Scott Ohlson in 2004 when Holden Dreiling crossed the finish line first.

All the miles throughout the summer and training this fall paid off with a trip to the state meet in Kearney Friday.

Four Longhorns placed in the top 15 including a second place finish by Indy Smith. Andrew Vaverek finished eighth, Ike Maxwell 13th, Garret Thompson 16th and Stephen Welsh 20th in the 71-runner field.

Chase County's 21 points proved 13 better than second place Dundy County. North Platte St. Pat's finished third to round out the state-qualifying teams from the district.

Executed a plan

Coach Carl Zuege said the season-long training plan put together by assistant Jonathan Beverly put the team into peak conditioning going into the meet.

He said he and Beverly were both excited to see the plan all come together at the most important stretch of the season. "It's an exciting deal," Zuege said.

Zuege praised Beverly for "an outstanding job of having them ready to run" in last Thursday's district.

From summer conditioning to step-up training this fall, Zuege said the team executed Beverly's plan this season.

Zuege said they've conditioned with lots of high volume, low intensity running to build up their base.

They held off stepping up the intensity of speed running until the last couple of weeks. Zuege said he could really see that difference play out in the district meet. "Our legs looked fresh and springy."

Zuege said the plan for district meet was to hit pace goals at the one- and two-mile marks.

After the first mile, the Longhorns were back in the pack around 12th to 15th. It would have been easy to panic with their positioning.

By the second mile, Dreiling and Smith had moved up into third and fourth with the team continuing to hit their pace goals.

In the last 400 yards, Zuege said his team took over the race en route to the title. It was fun for him and Beverly to watch.

Zuege credited his two seniors on the team, Vaverek and Thompson, as the biggest reasons the team is where they are right now.

He said Vaverek has really come on as a runner this year, improving almost every week. Thompson gets the nod for his leadership and enthusiasm.

Zuege said that his two senior girls have also shown their muster, competing hard all season long.

Mallory Coleman and Emma Engbrecht finished 22nd and 25th respectively in the girls' field of 53 runners.

State meet expectations

Zuege said the Longhorns will have to challenge a strong field in Friday's state title race.

He said they stack up solidly against the field filled with some outstanding runners.

Realistically, Zuege said their goal is to finish in the top five.

Defending champion Nebraska Christian comes in as one of the favorites, having brought back most of their team from last year. Zuege expects them to battle with Ainsworth for a repeat title.

Going into districts, Ainsworth was ranked first with NE Christian in second. The Longhorns were ranked eighth in the final regular season Class D rankings.

The Longhorns will run at 2 p.m. MT on the Kearney Country Club course.

The Perkins County girls finished second at districts and will run at 1:30 p.m. MT.

D6 District Results

Boys team scores—1, Chase County, 21; 2, Dundy County Stratton, 34; 3, North Platte St. Patrick's, 78; 4, Paxton, 81; 5, Hemingford, 84; 6, Gordon-Rushville, 105; 7, Kimball, 112; 8, Bridgeport, 124; 9, Sutherland, 140; 10, Perkins County, 165.

Top 15 individuals—1, Holden Dreiling (11), Chase County, :18.33; 2, Indy Smith (10), Chase County, :18.34; 3, Ryan Muneio (11), Kimball, :18.39; 4, Bailey Peckham (9), Dundy County Stratton, :18.41; 5, Tyler Cassell (12), Paxton, :18.51; 6, Ty Swenson (10), Dundy County Stratton, :18.58; 7, Quinton Phillips (12), Maywood, :19.01; 8, Andrew Vaverek (12), Chase County, :19.02; 9, Jason Randolph (10), Hemingford, :19.03; 10, Christian Hughes (11), Dundy County Stratton, :19.04; 11, Merritt Eastman (10), North Platte St. Patrick's, :19.05; 12, Jared Schmit (9), Cody-Kilgore, :19.05; 13, Ike Maxwell (9), Chase County, :19.06; 14, Brandon Adkins (12), North Platte St. Patrick's, :19.06; 15, Jayson Rezek (12), Sutherland, :19.07. Other CCS runners: 16th, Garret Thompson, :19.073; Stephen Welsh, :19.250.

Girls team scores—1, Dundy County Stratton, 40; 2, Perkins County, 49; 3, Gordon-Rushville, 51; 4, North Platte St. Patrick's, 59; 5, Bridgeport, 71; 6, Kimball, 72; 7, Chase County, 80.

CCS results: 22, Mallory Coleman (12), :23.19; 25, Emma Engbrecht (12), :23.37; 36, Rose Sullivan (9), :25.08; 40, Alexandra Valenzuela (9), :25.49.