

By Jan Schultz
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After a 20-year reign, Chase County's hold on the SPVA Conference girls' track title ended this year.

Perkins County won this year's title, capturing the conference first place at Hershey Friday, after finishing second behind Chase County last year.

The Lady Longhorns placed fifth this year, beating Maxwell, a first year member of the SPVA.

It wasn't a surprise to Coach Al Zuege that Chase County wasn't able to hang on to the title this year.

"Part of a good track team is depth," Zuege said this week.

In Chase County's girls' track program for years, depth has been a plus factor. But with a roster of 25 this year, including just three seniors, the depth just isn't there.

In addition, Karlee Palmer only ran the two relays, and did not compete in the 100 and 200, where she would have placed. She's dealing with leg pain due to her sciatic nerve.

Rebecca Martin, another sprinter, didn't compete at all at SPVA due to an injury. She would have added some additional points, as well, Zuege said.

"Together, they would have added 20 to 25 additional points, but it wouldn't have been enough to win anyway," Zuege said.

But, injuries at this time of the year are common, and some of the other SPVA teams were dealing with that, too, last week.

It's up in the air next year, as well, Zuege said, as far as Chase County's prospects of a better showing at SPVA.

"You never know about next year. We'll have to see how the talent develops," Zuege said. In five of the events Friday, Chase County didn't score.

The team's only first place finishes came in the 400 and 1600 meter relays.

However, that doesn't mean there weren't some bright spots.

Besides the relays, Zuege highlighted the efforts of freshman Shayla Dinnel in the jumps, Kacia Smith and Chantal Heathers, also freshmen, in the hurdles, as well as senior Nichole Dickey in the 400.

Dinnel took third in the high jump and fifth in the long jump, while Heathers and Smith claimed sixths in the 100 and 300 meter hurdles, behind junior Dee Dee Pursley.

In a tough field, Dickey finished third in the 400, and also earned a fourth in the 200.

Team scoring at SPVA was Perkins County 147, Hershey 112, Sutherland 96, North Platte St. Pat's 64, Chase County 62 and Maxwell 44.

