

## Decker helps Lions drink Valley titles

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 17 October 2013 22:05 - Last Updated Friday, 18 October 2013 09:42

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If you see a blue-eyed sophomore guzzling water at Linn-Mar High School some day, don't be alarmed.

It's just Amber Decker getting ready for another race.

Decker followed her routine perfectly Thursday and won the MVC Valley Division cross country title by more than nine seconds on a sunny day at Noelridge Park.

Josh Evans claimed the boys title by more than 10 seconds as Linn-Mar swept the individual and team championships.

Decker was exhausted after she crossed the finish line and needed a few seconds to catch her breath and drink a cup of water, but that's nothing compared to what happened two years ago at the state cross country meet for eighth graders.

"I actually had to go to the hospital," she said, recalling that unhappy occasion. "I passed out from dehydration and had to go in an ambulance.

"I didn't drink any water that day," she said ruefully. "I learned my lesson on that one."

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Now she guzzles the stuff when she's got a race. "Probably close to 200 ounces," she reported.

For those of you scoring at home, that equates to more than 1 1/2 gallons in less than eight hours.

Decker said she begins drinking at 7:45 in the morning, then stops about two hours before a race. She drinks vitamin water 90 minutes before the gun goes off to absorb calories, plus the sugar in the vitamin water helps with her blood pressure.

She eats lunch on race-day, but at a prescribed time. "Four hours before the race. Always," she said.

The routine is working nicely. Decker placed second at the Mississippi Valley Conference Super Meet last week when the Lions won the overall league title.

"It's great. I'm so proud of my teammates," she said. "We've improved so much in the last three weeks."



Decker is a top half-miler for the Linn-Mar track team, but she played for the Linn-Mar softball team during the summer and fell behind some of the competition with her training. Now she's coming on strong at the right time of the year.

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"Amazing. So good," she said. "I've been working so hard all season. I got a late start, and it's finally coming (so I can) do what I want to do."

Decker won Thursday's race in 14 minutes, 33.80 seconds. Shannon Gorman of Washington stayed on Decker's heels for much of the race and finished second in 14:42.83.

"I just remember telling myself during the whole race to keep pushing it, keep pushing it," said Decker. "I have a lot of confidence in my foot-speed. I work on that all winter with my trainer. I just know if I can get the lead with 800 (meters) to go, I've got the race."

Decker likes running in front, like she did Thursday.

"I feel much better," she said. "If I hang on someone's shoulder, I don't feel right. I feel worse."

Decker is looking forward to the Class 4A district meet in Marshalltown next Thursday and to the state meet in Fort Dodge Nov. 2. She said winning Thursday's race at Noelridge Park will help her confidence.

"It will help me down the line and help with the pre-race jitters a lot," she said.

The Linn-Mar girls grabbed five spots in the top-10 Thursday with Maddie Saville fourth, Morgan Garcia fifth, Sydney Johnston ninth and Rachel Perry 10th for 29 points.

Prairie finished in second place with 85 points. Cayla Renwick placed eighth for the Hawks. Xavier placed third behind a sixth-place showing by Jenny Dickes. Washington finished fifth.

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Evans captured the boys 5K race in 15 minutes, 16.77 seconds as Linn-Mar and Prairie waged another fierce battle for the championship. The Lions finished with 33 points and the Hawks finished with 39, with the difference being the fifth man for both squads.

Linn-Mar's top four runners finished 1-3-6-8 for 18 points and Prairie's top four runners finished 2-4-5-7 for an identical 18 points. Ryan Murphy placed 15th for Linn-Mar, beating his counterpart from Prairie by six spots for the victory.

Linn-Mar finished 3-6-8 with Tanner Rathje, Michael Mather and Daniel Murphy. Prairie took 2-4-5-7 with Jake Moore, Isaiah Vlasek, Mitch Pritts and Tysen VanDraska.

Xavier finished sixth in the boys race and Washington was seventh.

### VALLEY DIVISION

#### GIRLS RESULTS

4K

#### Team Standings

1. Linn-Mar 29, 2. Prairie 85, 3. Xavier 97, 4. Cedar Falls 98, 5. Washington 114, 6. Wahlert 142, 7. Waterloo West 151.

Winner - Amber Decker, Linn-Mar, 14:33.80

Linn-Mar - 1. Amber Decker 14:33.80, 4. Maddie Saville 15:05.58, 5. Morgan Garcia 15:07.31, 9. Sydney Johnston 15:22.83, 10. Rachel Perry 15:23.19, 11. Hanna Saville 15:30.42, 12. Maddie Mann 15:30.72.

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Prairie - 8. Cayla Renwick 15:16.33, 16. Katie Costigan 15:46.26, 18. Eilish Stanek 15:49.46, 20. Victoria Enyart 15:52.49, 23. Sarah Meyers 15:57.36, 27. Sophia Smith 16:08.70, 45. Holly Wisnousky 17:37.76.

Xavier - 6. Jenny Dickes 15:11.25, 13. Emiko Corffey 15:31.53, 17. Addy Hoffman 15:49.01, 24. Marinna Schroud 15:59.03, 37. Maddy Bailey 17:00.26, 38. Sydney Oakley 17:00.66, 41. Brady Hoffman 17:18.22.

Washington - 2. Shannon Gorman 14:42.83, 19. Morgan Stuckenschneider 15:50.18, 25. Madison Stuckenschneider 16:02.37, 29. Kristi Mackenburg 16:14.22, 39. Sarah Witt 17:05.15, 43. Brett Visser 17:30.85, 44. MJ Kamin 17:33.29.

## BOYS RESULTS

5K

## Team Standings

1. Linn-Mar 33, 2. Prairie 39, 3. Cedar Falls 55, 4. Waterloo West 125, 5. Wahlert 134, 6. Xavier 137, 7. Washington 210.

Winner - Josh Evans, Linn-Mar, 15:16.77

Linn-Mar - 1. Josh Evans 15:16.77, 3. Tanner Rathje 15:31.62, 6. Michael Mather 15:40.38, 8. Daniel Murphy 15:44.06, 15. Ryan Murphy 16:21.52, 16. Greyson Dolezal 16:31.94, 26. Jay Halverson 16:41.31.

Prairie - 2. Jake Moore 15:27.37, 4. Isaiah Vlasek 15:34.93, 5. Mitch Pritts 15:39.54, 7. Tysen VanDraska 15:40.76, 21. Ross Adams 16:36.97, 23. Zack Fiser 16:39.47, 31. Connor Neuhaus

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17;16.19.

Xavier - 18. Steven Culpepper 16:32.63, 24. Jacob Schmitt 16:40.20, 25. Luke Koechner 16:41.11, 32. Jonathan Francois 17:25.37, 38. Nick Koechner 17:46.28, 45. Luke Lesnik 18:55.73, 46. Bryce Volk 19:16.68.

Washington - 36. Robbie Gearhart 17:36.12, 41. Wyatt Forster 18:12.67, 42. Sam Kline 18:18.82, 44. Jacob Spurrell 18:43.72, 47. Sam Werner 19:17.51, 48. Oliver Hammond 19:17.78, 49. Michael Andersland 19:18.02.