

Decker races to MVC title

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 09 October 2014 19:42 - Last Updated Friday, 10 October 2014 22:39



Linn-Mar junior Amber Decker established herself as one of the top distance runners in Iowa a long time ago, but she stands only 19th in the current state cross country rankings and had not done anything truly special this season.

That changed Thursday.

Decker raced to the front of the pack and posted an impressive wire-to-wire victory at the Mississippi Valley Conference Super Meet in 14 minutes, 32 seconds for the 4K course at Prairie.

Decker thinks she may have been sub-consciously waiting for the bigger races to come around - like the MVC Super Meet and the postseason meets that are on the horizon.

"My parents described it a little bit as teen-age procrastination. I don't know," she said, smiling. "It's been kind of a struggle this year, but I'm glad that I pushed through."

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"It was a good race. It was a good time to finally push through and do what I needed to do."

The official results gave Decker a one-second victory over Iowa City West freshman Bailey Nock, but it was a much bigger verdict than that. Decker enjoyed a 25- to 30-yard lead for most of the race and beat Nock to the finish line by about 20 yards, regardless of what the official results had to say.

Nock is ranked 17th in the state. Emmie Skopec of Iowa City West, who placed third, is ranked sixth in the state and they led Iowa City West to the team championship ahead of Linn-Mar.

Decker figured Skopec and Mary Arch of Iowa City High would be her main rivals Thursday. She took a quick lead over both girls in the early stages, but that was not supposed to be the script.

"That really wasn't the plan" she said. "I was supposed to wait and see what Emmie and Mary did and use them, but I felt really good."

"It's been a long time since we've raced," she said. "I kind of did what my body felt best doing and it ended up working for me, I guess. It feels really good."

Decker kept glancing over her shoulder, wondering where everyone was.

"Quite a few times," she said. "That was a bad idea, but I did it anyway because I didn't know where they were at. I like to know."

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Decker ran herself to exhaustion, as usual, and was a little wobbly after crossing the finish line. But she felt good a few minutes later and was happy with the results on a calm, sunny 62-degree day for running.

"It was a big confidence booster," she said. "I'm the type of runner who, every year, I look forward to the end of the season, I look forward to the big meets so I kind of lose focus in the beginning.

"It was definitely a needed boost for my confidence."

Decker finished second at the MVC Super Meet last year as a sophomore and placed eighth at the state meet.

Sarah Altemeier of Washington placed seventh Thursday in 15 minutes, 18 seconds. Cayla Renwick of Prairie finished ninth in 15:25. Hannah Fusselman of Kennedy placed 11th in 15:26, Jenny Dickes of Xavier was 13th in 15:27 and Maddie Saville of Linn-Mar was 14th in 15:28.

Iowa City West had four runners in the top-10 and beat Linn-Mar for the title, 38-95.

GIRLS RESULTS

TEAM STANDINGS

1. Iowa City West 38, 2. Linn-Mar 95, 3. Hempstead 98, 4. Iowa City High 105, 5. Cedar Falls 118, 6. Prairie 175, 7. Dubuque Senior 182, 8. Kennedy 232, 9. Jefferson 235, 10. Wahlert 163, 11. Xavier 292, 12. Washington 305, 13. Waterloo West 408, 14. Waterloo East 418.

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TOP FIVE INDIVIDUALS

1. Amber Decker, Linn-Mar 14:32
2. Bailey Nock, IC West 14:33
3. Emmie Skopec, IC West 14:40
4. Mary Arch, IC High 14:52
5. Olivia Moore, IC West 15:05

LINN-MAR - 1. Amber Decker 14:32, 14. Maddie Saville 15:28, 23. Deanna Newhouse 15:42, 28. Sydney Johnston 15:50, 29. Morgan Garcia 15:51.

PRAIRIE - 9. Cayla Renwick 15:25, 33. Hannah Frazee 15:53, 41. Eilish Stanek 16:04, 44. Alissa Neubauer 16:10, 48. Victoria Enyart 16:16.

KENNEDY - 11. Hannah Fusselman 15:26, 25. Lauren Meyer 15:45, 61. Kate Nus 16:39, 67. Laura Feld 16:55, 68. Peyton Borgeois 16:58.

JEFFERSON - 26. Sarah Hanna 15:47, 42. Adriana Hargrove 16:05, 49. Megan Ely 16:18, 55. Meredith Koenigsfeld 16:35, 63. Caleigh Meyer 16:48.

XAVIER - 13. Jenny Dickes 15:27, 52. Emiko Coffey 16:30, 70. Kiana Stanek 17:04, 78. Liz Hessman 17:25, 79. Annie Sigmon 17:35.

WASHINGTON - 7. Sarah Altemeier 15:18, 65. Serena Eck 16:53, 76. Brett Visser 17:22, 77. Ashley Hageman 17:24, 80. Joi Johnson 17:41.