

Josh Evans runs to 3rd straight title

Written by Jim Ecker

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Linn-Mar sophomore Josh Evans is turning the 2011 cross country season into his personal playground.

Evans ran away from the pack and won the Cedar Rapids Invitational by more than 23 seconds Thursday at Noelridge Park for his third major title this year.

He finished first at the Cedar Rapids Prairie Invitational by 18 seconds, captured the Pleasant Valley Invitational by 34 seconds and set a personal best Thursday when he covered the 5 kilometers in 15 minutes, 44.73 seconds.

Evans has established himself as one of the top long-distance runners in the state this season with three convincing triumphs.

"Yeah. It's weird to think about it," he said. "It's a weird thought."

Evans was injured for part of the 2010 cross country season and did not run at the state meet. He placed eighth in the 3200-meter run at the Class 4A state track meet last spring as a freshman and now could have a shot at a state title.

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"It would be fun to do that," he said.

Evans stands just 5-foot-7 and maybe 112 pounds, but he's been a tower of strength in the distance races. He toured the opening mile in about 5 minutes Thursday, then pulled away from the field during the second mile and won easily.

"I can keep a pace going pretty good," he said.

With no runners around to push him, he set his sights on the small vehicle that leads the way around the course.

"I was trying to chase down the go-cart," he said, smiling. "It didn't work."

Evans said he did not anticipate winning the race so easily. "I was looking to try and be in the top-2, but I didn't expect it to be like this," he said.

Evans looked a little wobbly after the race as he came through the chutes, but quickly recovered after grabbing a cup of water.

"I was dying there," he said. "I was thinking they were going to blow by me. I guess I just held on."

"All the different people cheering on the course helps a lot, too."

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