

Evans, Linn-Mar girls seek state X-C titles

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Linn-Mar High School cross country teams will have their eyes on top prizes at the state meet in Fort Dodge Saturday.

Linn-Mar sophomore Josh Evans is one of the favorites for the individual Class 4A boys title after being ranked No. 1 or No. 2 in the state for much of the season.

The Linn-Mar girls are ranked No. 2 in the state in Class 4A and hope to battle Dowling Catholic for the team championship.

"I like Josh's chances," Linn-Mar Coach Todd Goodell said. "It should be a good race between Josh and Ben Anderson from West Des Moines Valley."

Anderson is currently ranked No. 1 in Iowa and Evans is No. 2, but Evans defeated Anderson in their only head-to-head meeting at the Heartland Classic in Ames last month.

Keegan Cook, Chase Grabau, Daniel Murphy, Bryce Poellet, Tanner Rathje and Matt Simon will join Evans in Fort Dodge.

Linn-Mar senior Carolyn Newhouse has battled a problem with her right foot and has experienced pain in her left knee, so she might be less than 100 percent Saturday.

"Her treatments are coming along well and I think she'll still be pretty strong," Goodell said.

Linn-Mar has a balanced team with Newhouse, Brooklynn Kascel, Olivia Miller, Caitlin Novak,

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Rachel Perry, Maddie Saville and Morgan Uridil all capable of running in a pack.

"I feel our girls have a very good chance," Goodell remarked. "Dowling beat us pretty good six weeks ago, but we're a better team now.

"Our girls are good enough to be state champs," he said. "There have been many years where this group would be strongly favored. However, the question is will we beat Dowling this Saturday?"

Cedar Rapids Washington will be looking for a strong finish in the boys race with Robert Hogg and Etienne Nzoyisaba leading the way.

"We're healthy and hoping to have our best race of the year this Saturday," Coach Will Harte reported. "Robert and Etienne are shooting for a top-10 finish in a competitive field, but either one could go top-5 on a good day.

"As to how we might finish as a team, I believe we have the runners to get us in the top-3."

Joe Berry, Laurent Hakizimana, Trevor Luebe, Jon Rockwell and Matt Wittman will join Hogg and Nzoyisaba in Fort Dodge.

Cedar Rapids Prairie won the Class 4A boys title in 2010 and qualified for the state meet again this year, but the Hawks are not as strong this season due to heavy graduation losses. Jacob Aune leads Prairie and has recovered from his medical problems at the district meet in Marshalltown last week.

Aune ran last week with a broken toe and had trouble breathing at the end of the race, saying he heard a "pop" in his rib cage area.

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"He is healthy," Coach Bill Schwarz reported. "He has had a good week of practice."

Mitch Pritts, Ross Adams, Christian Counts-Choplick, Walker Thompson, Isaiah Vlasek and Zach Waite will join Aune at the state meet.

The Cedar Rapids Kennedy girls team qualified for the state meet this year with Alyssa Averhoff, Allison Culver, Lauren Meyer, Tara Mittelberg, Jessica Rodman, Megan Terukina and Katie Wampole.

Cedar Rapids Washington sophomore Shannon Gorman qualified for state as an individual and will be running in the 4A meet.

Marion High School will be competing in the Class 3A boys race with Lukas Mees, Colton Forster, Jordan Garthwaite, Cole Kuethe, Peter Rethwisch, Greg Sam and Isaac Smith.

The state meet is scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. Saturday at the Lakeside Municipal Golf Course in Fort Dodge. There are 15 teams in each division.