

Prairie boys roll to state tournament

Written by Tom Fruehling

Thursday, 16 February 2012 17:55 - Last Updated Thursday, 16 February 2012 21:17



Going into the girls and boys Class 2A regional bowling tournament at Lancer Lanes Thursday morning, Prairie coaches Don Willfong and Kevin Cline knew both titles would be up for grabs.

“I thought we had a good shot,” Willfong said, “but I also knew Linn-Mar and Muscatine would right up there, too.

“Anytime you have three powerhouses in a bowling tournament, anything can happen.”

When it was all said and done, Prairie took the boys title and Muscatine the girls. Both automatically qualify for next Friday’s state meet in Des Moines.

In the individual competition, Prairie’s Kate Palmer tied for first with Kendra Ballensky of Muscatine while Iowa City High’s Kolby Melsha claimed the boys title. All three also qualify for state.

“It’s just beyond all my expectations,” said Palmer, who rolled games of 212 and 207 for a 419 series. “I was super nervous at first. But I took a deep breath and tried my hardest.”

According to the Prairie junior, “In bowling, I have my good days and my bad days. This was one of my good days.”

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Willfong said Palmer “did a very good job of staying behind the ball today and picking up some nice spares.”

Melsha is a freshman at Solon High School who competes for City High because his school doesn't have a bowling team. He put together a 511 series on Thursday with games of 268 and 243. His score was the top qualifying score in the state.



“I knew he was capable,” said longtime City High Coach Jerry Maye, who has coached Melsha for eight years in youth leagues at Colonial Lanes in Iowa City. “Kolby has been making steady progress all year.”

Brogan Fiala finished second in the boys division with a 481 and Justin Wyant of Linn-Mar was third at 459. Both qualified for the state meet.

The team races were dogfights all day long.

In the end, the favored Muskies prevailed on the girls side with a strong Baker series finish for a 2790 total. Linn-Mar was second at 2544 and Prairie third at 2410. Rounding out the girls field were City High with 2242 and Iowa City West with 2065.

The Prairie boys avenged a loss to Linn-Mar in last year's regional tournament.

“They had the exactly the same kind of energy today that we had last year,” said Linn-Mar

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Coach Andy Dierks of the rival Hawk bowlers. "We were in the pocket all day. We just missed a lot of dumb spares."

Prairie took the title with a commanding 3252 total, followed by Muscatine with 3099 and Linn-Mar with 3076. Bringing up the rear were City High with 2990 and Iowa City West with 2686.

On the winning team with the senior Fiala were fellow seniors Jeremy Cline (407), Brandon Wagner (401) and Zach Bolton (384) along with junior Chase Bicket (335) and sophomore Josh Kacena (445). The Hawk boys had a 77-pin lead over Linn-Mar and 117 over Muscatine going into the Baker series. They then fashioned a lofty 289 Baker to win going away.

"Everybody stepped up for us today," Prairie coach Cline said. "We had some pretty even scores throughout the day.

"And that great finished sealed the deal for us."

STATE TOURNAMENT QUALIFIERS

CLASS 2A BOYS

Teams

Waterloo East 3435
Marshalltown 3306
Fort Dodge 3254
C.R. Prairie 3252
C.R. Washington 3198
Clinton 3195
Dubuque Hempstead 3165
Davenport North 3156
Ottumwa 3107
D.M. Lincoln 2915

Individuals

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Kolby Melsha (Iowa City High) 511
Anthony Roberts (Ottumwa) 494
Trevor Buck (SC North) 486
Justin Weber (Waterloo East) 483
Brogan Fiala (CR Prairie) 481
Collin Weber (Waterloo East) 472
Bret Keimig (Dav. North) 470
Phill Breitbach (Hempstead) 470
Clayon Cole (Dubuque Sr.) 466
Brandon Gillaspy (SE Polk) 465
Tre Blackford (Marshalltown) 465
Charlie Neff (Pleasant Valley) 461
Cody Taylor (Marshalltown) 461
Justin Wyant (Linn-Mar) 459
Chase Messerly (Fort Dodge) 458
Tarran Sheker (Fort Dodge) 457
Joe Bormann (Johnston) 454

CLASS 2A GIRLS

Teams

Muscatine 2790
Davenport Central 2782
Waterloo West 2774
Mason City 2715
Ottumwa 2695
C.R. Kennedy 2695
Waukeee 2667
C.R. Jefferson 2620
Davenport West 2580
Southeast Polk 2327

Individuals

Paige Rauch (Dav. Central) 437
Brittany Smith (DM Lincoln) 431
Stephanie Rowland (DM North) 424
Amber Froehlich (Dav. Central) 423
Kate Palmer (CR Prairie) 419
Kendra Ballensky (Muscatine) 419
Amber Ovel (Waterloo West) 417
Kaitlyn Anderson (Muscatine) 414

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Rebecca Broerman (Mason City) 410

Brianna Payton (Ankeny) 404

Emma Bryant (Ankeny) 400

Jessica Stacy (Waukee) 399

Michaela Kelly (Bettendorf) 395

Sierra Lennie (Ottumwa) 392

Jane Kirk (WDM Dowling) 380

Megan Sims (DM North) 380

Abigail Shontos (Clinton) 371

Tanner Werthman (Dav. West) 393