

McCrary soars away from trouble to state crown

Written by Jim Ecker

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DES MOINES - Curtis McCrary grew up on the mean streets of Detroit, where trouble was a constant and evil companion.

Compared to what he knew, Iowa is paradise for the Linn-Mar senior and new state champion.

McCrary sailed 23 feet, 1 inch to claim the state title in the Class 4A long jump Friday in his first and only year of competition in high school track.

"It feels great," he said. "First time here, last time here for high school. So it feels pretty good."

McCrary, 19, moved to Marion several years ago to live with an uncle and his uncle's wife. He left his mother and problems behind in Detroit for a better life in Iowa.

"I love it," he said. "I love it."

"Good school systems. And it pretty much keeps me out of trouble."

McCrary helped Linn-Mar climb into a tie for first place in the Class 4A team standings after Day 2 of the three-day meet with 42 points. Waukee also has 42, with eight events left Saturday.

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Kennedy is sitting in third place with 35.5 points. Prairie is sixth with 22 points. Washington is 20th and Jefferson 23rd.

The Lions, seeking to defend their state title from a year ago, took another big step Friday when their distance medley unit broke the meet record in 3:24.39 with Austin Flieder, Tim Wolfe, Duggan Trenary and the incomparable Josh Evans speeding to victory.

It was the second-fastest time in the distance medley in state history and the fastest in the country this year, according to the IHSAA. Flieder and Wolfe ran the 200-meter legs, Trenary took care of the 400 and Evans pulled away from everyone on the 800 leg.



Evans and his buddies have been a big story in Iowa for several years, but McCrary has been a new and welcome addition to Linn-Mar. He fell behind academically while living in Detroit and had to catch up after he moved to Iowa.

He admitted he also needed to develop a better attitude about school.

"At first when I moved down here, I wasn't too much into the schooling," he said. "I had to turn my life around. I had to make a better life for myself."

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McCrary lived in several spots during his stormy years in Detroit and its rough environs. "East side, West side. Pretty much both," he said.

Trouble was always right around the corner. "It would find me," he said. "I was pretty much getting into a lot of fights. A lot of fights."

McCrary plans to attend summer school and get his high school diploma in July. After that, he'd like to attend college and continue his track career.

"I love doing this. I love running," said McCrary, who is also a sprinter for the Lions.

He said he's proud of what he's accomplished at Linn-Mar, now as a student and athlete.

"A couple of months ago I wasn't too proud of myself, where my life was at," he said. "I'm 19 and still in high school.

"I'm graduating this year, so that's an accomplishment."

McCrary defeated two of the best long jumpers in the state Friday. Famiek Cook of Kennedy finished in second place at 22 feet, 3 1/4 inches. Derek Jacobus of Kennedy, the state champion last year, placed third at 21 feet, 8 1/2 inches.

Kennedy, Linn-Mar and Jefferson gave the 4x200 relay a strong Metro flavor by finishing 2-3-4 behind Waukee.

Jacob Shannon, Jacobus, Marcus Perkins and Cook were clocked in 1:27.83 for the Cougars.

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Flieder, Tristan Freese, Wolfe and Daniel Gorsich were next in 1:28.06 for the Lions. Jacob Beaton, Nate Karlan, Dan Larson and Dylan Chittick were a stride behind in 1:28.62 for the J-Hawks.

Waukee captured the 4x200 relay in 1:27.26, nipping Kennedy by 57-hundredths of a second.

Drew Heitland of Kennedy finished fifth in the shot put at 53 feet, 4 inches. Michael Lamparek of Prairie was eighth in the shot put at 49-7 1/2.