

Lions, Warriors and Hawks took shots at title

Written by Jim Ecker

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DES MOINES -- The Linn-Mar, Washington and Prairie boys track teams all made a run for the Class 4A state title Saturday, but one by one they all fell short.

It wasn't for lack of effort.

The drama began early Saturday when Prairie moved to the top of the team standings at the state track meet when Kyle Stocker finished second in the 800 meter run.

In the very next race, Linn-Mar grabbed the lead in the tight standings when it placed second in the shuttle hurdle relay to score eight big points.

And on the next race after that, Washington tied Linn-Mar for the top when Will Griffin and Alex Carr finished 2-3 in the 100 meter dash to collect 14 points.

That tie was quickly broken when Kyle Dunn won the 110 high hurdles for Linn-Mar and Brandon Ophoff finished fifth, giving the Lions 14 points in one race and 48 overall.

Linn-Mar held the lead for two more races, but Cedar Falls nudged ahead by winning the 4x100 relay in the next-to-last event of the day, leaving the Lions out of bullets and ending the drama.

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Cedar Falls won the Class 4A title, but the Metro was well represented in the boys standings. Linn-Mar finished third, Washington placed fourth, Prairie came in sixth and Kennedy was 10th in Dennis Roloff's final season as head coach.

The Washington girls placed eighth in their Class 4A meet, putting five Metro teams in the top-10 overall at the coed meet.

Cedar Falls captured its first boys state title in school history with 59 points. West Des Moines Valley finished second with 51 points and Linn-Mar was third with 48.

"We were hoping for the top-3," said Linn-Mar Coach Ken Hopkins. "Of course we wanted to win it. Then we were going for No.2, and then we settled for No.3."

The Lions were short-handed in the meet. Nick Lucas, who qualified for state in the 400 hurdles, quit the team last week following a disagreement with the coaching staff. And Aaron Hunter, who qualified in two relays, was suspended for a violation of school rules, stripping the team of two potential scorers.

Hopkins doubts Lucas and Hunter could have lifted Linn-Mar to the title, considering its 11-point deficit behind Cedar Falls. "When it's all said and done," he said, "it didn't make a difference."

Washington hurt itself when its shuttle hurdle relay was disqualified for a bad exchange, but the Warriors finished 20 points behind Cedar Falls and out of the money after winning back-to-back 4A state titles in 2009 and 2010.

The season ended for Washington when it placed fourth in the 4x100 relay.

"We gave it our all. We came up short," said Washington senior Alex Carr, who played a primary role in the 2009 and 2010 state crowns. "It hurts when you give it your all and come up

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short."

Carr starred in football and track for the Warriors. He also played for the basketball team that made state.

"I guess it's kind of hard for me to look back on all that stuff when it's biting right now," he said. "When I do look back on it and I see all of my accomplishments, I will be proud of myself."

Prairie appeared poised to make a move Saturday, but Matt Stocker belonged in bed instead of in Des Moines, too sick to make a difference for the Hawks. He anchored Prairie to victory in the 4x800 relay on Friday, but was just a pale shadow of himself Saturday.

Matt Stocker is one of the top distance runners in the state, but not Saturday. He insisted on running, but finished 21st in the 800 and 24th in the 1600 instead of competing for titles.

Stocker said he's been sick for a week with a fever, sore throat, headaches and bloodshot eyes. "I was feeling a little slow," he remarked, leaning on a trash barrel for support.

Metro athletes won seven gold medals on Thursday and Friday, but they managed only one more Saturday with Kyle Dunn of Linn-Mar taking the 110 high hurdles.

Carter Valentine of Xavier finished third in the 110 hurdles (15.22) and Robert Hogg of Washington placed third in the 800 (1:56.45).

Kyle Stocker of Prairie finished fourth in the 1600 (4:22.00), and Kennedy took fourth in the 4x400 relay (3:23.47).

Xavier grabbed fifth place in the 4x100 relay (43.02) and Marion finished fifth in the Class 3A

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shuttle hurdle relay (1:00.14).

Timauntay Jones of Jefferson took seventh in the 800 (1:57.98) and Kennedy finished seventh in the shuttle hurdle relay (59.36).

Jordan Houdeshell of Linn-Mar placed in four wheelchair events. He finished second in the 100, 200 and 400 and took fifth in the shot put.

Brooke Foreman placed in three events for Washington Saturday, a day after winning the 400 hurdles. She finished fourth in the 100 hurdles (15.38) and helped the Warriors place fourth in the shuttle hurdle relay (1:05.50) and fifth in the 4x100 relay (49.79).

Allison Scott of Marion finished fourth in the Class 3A 800 (2:18.68) to lead the Indians.

Jefferson took fourth in the sprint medley (1:49.42) with the same quartet that won the 4x200 relay on Friday with Maliya Rattliffe, Summer Carber, Taylor Jacobson and Rachel Broghammer.

Xavier took fourth place and Kennedy finished eighth in the girls 4x100 relay. Marion was eighth in the 4x400 in Class 3A and Kennedy was eighth in the 4x400 in Class 4A.

Jefferson placed 19th, Linn-Mar 20th, Xavier 22nd, and Prairie and Kennedy shared 28th. The Marion girls finished 19th in Class 3A.