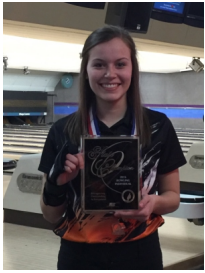


Blood wins state bowling title

Written by Tom Fruehling

Wednesday, 24 February 2016 18:59 -



Prairie senior Rylee Blood capped her stellar four-year high school career by capturing the Class 3A state bowling championship Wednesday at Plaza Lanes in Des Moines.

“It was all good today,” she said of her 470 series on games of 246 and 224. “But I wasn’t thinking of my individual score. I was bowling for the team, and I wanted us to get that first team trophy.”

It was not the day for that, however, as a team of youngsters from Johnston bowled almost 400 pins higher than their season average to easily claim the team title. With four girls (including three freshmen) in the top 10 individual scores and a Baker round average of 210, Johnston recorded a score of 3171.

Prairie came in second at 2910, close to their season average of 2931. Their season average was by far the best in state coming into the tournament.

“We bowled really well today, and I’m proud of all of the girls,” said Prairie Coach Don Willfong. “But the Johnston girls were well over their average. They deserved it.”

Johnston had entered the championship like Prairie with an undefeated season but ranked third in team scoring. Muscatine was ranked second and finished in third place on Wednesday.

The Prairie Hawks came in third last year and fourth the year before.

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Bolstered by their high individual games, Johnston went into the team Baker round on Wednesday with a 93-pin advantage over Prairie. They extended their lead even further even with a Baker total of 1051, compared to Prairie's 883.

"We had about an hour of idle time in there," said Willfong. "I think our energy level dropped a little bit."

Besides Blood's top individual score, Prairie placed three others in the top 13.

Sophomore Mikayla Hite rolled a 410 series (194+216), junior Ashley Grady 409 (194+215) and senior Sabrina Keiper 403 (195+208) to finish 11th, 12th and 13th respectively.

"I was a little nervous at the start," said Grady, whose series was 69 pins higher than her season average. "But it ended up being a pretty good day."

Hite's series was 56 points above her season average.

Keiper, who will attend Iowa State University next year to study animal ecology, said the end of her four-year prep bowling career was bittersweet.

"We pulled together today when we needed to, and it's good to finish on a high note," she said. "But they (Johnston) were on fire today."

Blood made her fourth straight trip to the state tournament and finished in style.

"She found her groove today," said Willfong. "She's had a fantastic career. She's set goals and achieved every one of them. And the girls will vouch that she's been a great team leader."

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Blood will bowl next year at Mount Mercy University but has yet to decide on a major.

“We definitely bowled our best today,” she said. “We gave it our all.”

CLASS 3A GIRLS STATE BOWLING

Top 3 Individuals

1. Rylee Blood, Prairie $246+224=470$
2. Christian Swank, Muscatine $234+225=459$
3. Morgan Wolfe, Johnston $214+243=457$

Team Standings

1. Johnston 3171, 2. Prairie 2910, 3. Muscatine 2859, 4. Dubuque Hempstead 2696, 5. Des Moines Lincoln 2592, 6. Bettendorf 2513, 7. Des Moines Roosevelt 2260.

PRAIRIE (2,027): 1. Rylee Blood $246+224=470$, 11. Mikalya Hite $194+216=410$; 12. Ashley Grady $104+215=409$, 13. Sabrina Keiper $195+208=403$, 26. Kaitlyn Early $159+176=335$, 28. Ashley Sundstrom $166+164=330$.

2027 Game Total + 883 Baker Total = 2910.