

VanDraska leads Prairie to MVC crown

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 09 October 2014 20:29 - Last Updated Friday, 10 October 2014 05:45



Cedar Rapids Prairie junior Tylen VanDraska is built to run.

A compact 5-foot-6 and 125 pounds, he has the endurance to run long distances at a fast clip and the speed to finish a 5-kilometer race with a punishing kick that leaves others behind.

VanDraska put his talents to good use Thursday and captured the Mississippi Valley Conference Super Meet on his home course at Prairie in 15 minutes, 59 seconds for a seven-second victory.

The Prairie Hawks edged Linn-Mar and Cedar Falls for the team championship in a tight three-school battle with VanDraska in first place, Matt Lorenz in fifth place and Jake Moore seventh for Prairie.

VanDraska and Linn-Mar senior Daniel Murphy ran stride-for-stride for much of the race and Murphy nudged in front at the 10-minute mark, but VanDraska was too fast for everyone else when they finished on the Prairie track.

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Sam Schillinger of Cedar Falls and Akash Borde of Iowa City West tried to catch VanDraska while Murphy fell back to fourth place, but the home crowd helped cheer VanDraska to victory.

"I could hear people yelling and I knew the Cedar Falls kid was right on me," he said.

For most of the race, it looked like VanDraska and Murphy - or Murphy and VanDraska - would battle to the very end. "It was tough," said VanDraska. "Murphy is a great runner and he kept moving on me."

VanDraska is ranked third in the state and Murphy is ranked fourth, but Murphy beat him earlier this season at the Prairie Invitational and finished ahead of him again at the Cedar Rapids Invitational.

VanDraska turned the table and finished ahead of Murphy at the Heartland Classic and got him again Thursday.

VanDraska credits Prairie Coach Bill Schwarz for getting the Hawks to peak at the right time, just like they did last year when they won the Class 4A state title.

"We're right where we want to be in our training," said VanDraska. "Earlier in the season I lost to Daniel. The way the coach trains us, right now is the time when we're our strongest."

"We've been getting a lot better as our season goes on. I think we're ready."

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Ryan Murphy of Linn-Mar placed sixth Thursday. Michael Mather finished 13th for the Lions. Sam Eck placed 16th for Washington.

BOYS RESULTS

TEAM STANDINGS

1. Prairie 58, 2. Linn-Mar 66, 3. Cedar Falls 68, 4. Hempstead 91, 5. Iowa City West 115, 6. Dubuque Senior 167, 7. Iowa City High 171, 8. Washington 171, 9. Wahlert 274, 10. Kennedy 293, 11. Waterloo West 328, 12. Jefferson 357, 13. Xavier 362, 14. Waterloo East 463.

TOP 5 INDIVIDUALS

1. Tysen VanDraska, Prairie 15:59
2. Sam Schillinger, Cedar Falls 16:06
3. Akash Borde, IC West 16:06
4. Daniel Murphy, Linn-Mar 16:15
5. Matt Lorenz, Prairie 16:19

PRAIRIE - 1. Tysen VanDraska 15:59, 5. Matt Lorenz 16:19, 7. Jake Moore 16:22, 18. Zack Fiser 16:47, 27. Chris Oehlert 16:57.

LINN-MAR - 4. Daniel Murphy 16:15, 6. Ryan Murphy 16:20, 13. Michael Mather 16:34, 19. Bryan Fogerty 16:48, 24. Jay Halverson 16:55.

WASHINGTON - 16. Sam Eck 16:43, 22. Finbar Berry 16:54, 34. Sam Werner 17:11, 46. Wyatt Forster 17:27, 53. Ryan Miller 17:37.

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KENNEDY - 37. Addison Furry 17:13, 52. Andrew Solsrud 17:35, 61. Derek Girling 17:49, 71. Reece Linder 18:15, 72. Tim Zange 18:16.

JEFFERSON - 66. Nate Homan 18:04, 67. Joseph Sibomana 18:10, 69. Jason Chung 18:13, 77. Nathan Prochnow 18:36, 78. Christopher Haring 18:38.

XAVIER - 48. Steven Culpepper 17:29, 70. Evan Gradoville 18:15, 79. Nolan Pithan 18:39, 80. John Pape 18:41, 85. Jonah Scallon 18:58.