

Evans wins district title, no strings attached

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 20 October 2011 22:57 -

MARSHALLTOWN - Linn-Mar sophomore Josh Evans is an extraordinary runner, but he needs practice tying his shoes.

Evans won the Class 4A district cross country title Thursday afternoon at Marshalltown Community College even though both of his shoelaces came undone during the race.

Evans won the race by 20 seconds and could have stopped to tie them, but kept running with the loose strings.

"I even double-tied them," he said, not sure how they got loose on the rolling grounds in Marshalltown.

"This one was untied for the last mile-and-a-half," he said, pointing to one shoe. "The other one came untied during that last straightaway."

It didn't matter.

As usual, Evans bided his time during the early part of the race before blowing by the competition for a comfortable victory in 15 minutes, 54 seconds.

"Josh is an amazing runner," said Prairie senior Jacob Aune, who finished second in 16:14.

Aune was amazing, too. He broke the big toe on his left foot Sunday while playing basketball, yet was determined to run Thursday and qualify for the state meet in Fort Dodge on Oct. 29.

On top of that, Aune felt a "pop" in his rib-cage area during the latter stages of the race, had

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trouble breathing and was in significant discomfort after the event.

He layed on the cold ground for 15 minutes, trying to recover and ease the pain while his father and others tried to comfort him. He finally sat up, pulled on warmer clothes and got to his feet.

"I'm all right," he said later. "It was my lungs. My ribs just kind of popped because of the cold.

"We'll probably go to the doctor when we get back to Cedar Rapids. I still can't get my full breath."

The temperature was in the mid-50s, but a chill wind from the northwest made it feel much colder. Aune said he had to breathe through his nose during the final stretch because he was unable to get oxygen through his mouth.

"It was painful," he said of the experience.

Aune had the lead early, with Evans nipping at his heels. Aune kept looking over his left shoulder, looking for Evans and wondering when the Linn-Mar wonder kid would take the lead.

Evans noticed Aune looking for him, then raced by with a rush and gradually pulled away.

Evans appeared to glide his 5-foot-5, 112-pound body through the stiff wind, but it wasn't as easy as it looked. He said he's never battled such strong winds, which gusted to 30 mph according to a meet official.

"Not this bad for that long," he said of the ill breeze. "That last half-mile was the longest half-mile I've ever run. That was tough."

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Iowa City West nipped Linn-Mar for the team championship, 56-58. Cedar Rapids Prairie finished third with 67 points and also qualified for the state meet.

The Lions placed five runners in the top-17. Chase Grabau finished 11th, Tanner Rathje 13th, Bryce Poellet 16th and Daniel Murphy 17th.

Aune led Prairie with his courageous performance in second place. Mitch Pritts finished sixth for the Hawks, Isaiah Vlasek 12th, Zach Waite 21st and Christi Counts-Choplick 26th.

Evans has won all of his races against in-state competition this season and is ranked No. 2 in Iowa behind West Des Valley junior Ben Anderson, even though Evans beat Anderson by eight seconds at the Heartland Classic in Ames last month in their only meeting.

That head-to-head victory lifted Evans to No. 1 in the state ahead of Anderson, but Anderson claimed the No. 1 spot this week with a couple of impressive performances. They'll battle it out in Fort Dodge for the state championship.

"I think it will come down to between me and Ben," Evans said. "I think it will be a great race and it will be a lot of fun."

The top-3 teams and top-10 individuals qualified for the state meet.

TEAM STANDINGS

1. Iowa City West 56, 2. Linn-Mar 58, 3. Prairie 67, 4. Johnston 98, 5. Marshalltown 129, 6. Southeast Polk 150, 7. Ottumwa 192, 8. Des Moines Lincoln 253, 9. Newton 256, 10. Des Moines East 286.

TOP 10 INDIVIDUALS

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1. Josh Evans, Linn-Mar 15:54
2. Jacob Aune, Prairie 16:14
3. Daniel Gardarsson, IC West 16:19
4. Isaac Jensen, IC West 16:21
5. Chrstian Kremer, Marshalltown 16:26
6. Mitch Pritts, Prairie 16:26
7. Cody McConnell, Ottumwa 16:27
8. Alex Hershey, Johnston 16:27
9. Ethan Pellegrino, SE Polk 16:28
10. Zach Wells, Marshalltown 16:31

LINN-MAR - 1. Josh Evans 15:54, 11. Chase Grabau 16:35, 13. Tanner Rathje 16:37, 16. Bryce Poellet 16:47, 17. Daniel Murphy 16:51, 23. Keegan Cook 17:03, 28. Matt Simon 17:26.

PRAIRIE - 2. Jacob Aune 16:14, 6. Mitch Pritts 16:26, 12. Isaiah Vlasek 16:35, 21. Zach Waite 16:59, 26. Christi Counts-Choplick 17:13, 32. Ross Adams 17:32, 34. Walker Thompson 17:49.