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SECTION VI CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Will North goes on history-making run

Southwestern ends 33-year drought

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Mike Dobmeier of Williamsville North may have placed first in Friday's Class AA race at the Section VI Cross Country Championships, but that wasn't his biggest win of the day.

That came with the news that the Spartans had also won the team title - the first in their history. North's win came on a downright balmy day at Elma Meadows Golf Course.

"I'm really happy that I won the individual title, but I knew I was going to states for myself," said Dobmeier. "But it is really awesome to have the whole team there. We went to camp together, we trained over the summer. It's really good to see it all come together at sectionals."



The Section VI meet was also a qualifier for next weekend's New York State Championships at Queensbury High School. The winning team in each of the day's 10 races, along with the top five finishers not on the winning team, advanced.

North topped last year's champions, Lockport, by 11 points. The Spartans had five runners place in the top 16. Lockport countered with four runners in the top nine, but its fifth-place runner was 35th.

Dobmeier's 16:21.2 was the fastest time of the day among the boys races. He came in eight seconds ahead of Josh Zubler of Frontier. John Haenle was Lockport's top runner, finishing third in 16:31.6.

Photos by James P. McCoy/Buffalo News
Williamsville North's Mike Dobmeier, right, was the overall boys winner, while Jamestown's Kailey Harvey won the girls race.

"I just hung in there until the 2-mile mark, and I started moving, and they didn't come with me," said Dobmeier.

The Class A race featured two surprises with freshman Joe Whelan of Hamburg winning in 16:46.5 and Starpoint upsetting state-ranked and defending champion Kenmore East by three points.

Whelan didn't take the lead for good until the final hill. "I didn't think I was going to win. I was going to lay back, and in the last mile, I was going to kick it," he said.

Starpoint finished 3-7-9-12-14, led by Mike Gillis' third place.

East Aurora finished 1-2 to help win the Class B title and earn a return trip to the states. Junior Ryan O'Connor won the title for the second year in a row finishing in 16:57.6. It will be his fourth trip to states. Teammate Eric Hill was close behind in 17:03.4.

Fredonia finished second, grabbing the 8-10-11-12-13 places. East Aurora (10th) and Fredonia (12th) are both ranked in the state.

Southwestern, runner-up a year ago, won the Class C title. The Trojans' only other title came in 1972.

"We were here last year and got second (place)," said Tom Priester, Southwestern's coach for the past 40 years. "Their goal was, 'We're going to go to states.' We've had our ups and downs. We lost two meets during the year, one we shouldn't have. We rededicated ourselves and it paid off today."

Southwestern won by a 12-point margin over defending champion Wilson. Junior Tom Reubens of Wilson led from the start and won in 16:40.6. A pair of Southwestern juniors, Ben Nelson and Spenser Cushing, placed fourth and fifth.

Senior Chris Lantinen of Barker won the Class D race in 18:07.8, but it was Franklinville, with Tom Good and Jon Spear placing 2-3, that won the team title.

The Clarence girls won the closest race of the day, edging West Seneca West, 63-64, in Class AA.

Clarence coach John Hunt said the 21st place finish by his fifth runner, Keri Pretorius, "made the day." The other keys were mainstays Gina Adoretto (third) and Becca Nungesser (eighth) having solid races.

Senior Kailey Harvey, third last year, won the race in 19:02. "I wanted to have this so bad," said Harvey. "Last year I thought I could have pulled off a first, but Shannon Crane went out and I didn't follow."

Junior Sarah Veith of Lake Shore won her second Section VI Class A title, duplicating what she has done as an eighth grader. Her sister, Mary, won the race last year.

Amherst, with Arielle Januskiewicz, Mia Symoniak, Brenna Symoniak and Claire Wietig among the top eight, won its first team title since 1986.

East Aurora, ranked No. 2 in the state, placed six runners among the top 13 in Class B to win its fifth sectional title in a row. Marla Kelley, Kirsten Weberg and Jenna Hulton were 3-4-5.

Eighth-grader Jaime Wallace of Alden added another chapter to an impressive year, winning in 19:26.

With four runners among the top eight, defending champion Akron ran away with the Class C title. Senior Macki Snyder of Wilson won the race in 20:16.3. Akron sophomore Casey Neill was second.

Randolph won its third Class D title in a row led by sophomore Christina DiLallo in third. Sherman finished 1-2 with Michelle Damcott winning her second straight title and Lindsey Alday taking second.

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