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Fowler's Eric Bierstetel and teammate Ted Feldpausch finished 1-2 in the state Class D cross country race. Bierstetel finished seventh last year and Feldpausch second.

Fowler runners finish 1st and 2nd in Class D

BY MELISSA LEVY
Lansing State Journal

It was almost too cold to go cross-country racing on Saturday.

Despite being outside and running 3.1 miles wearing little more than shorts and a tank top, Fowler sophomore Eric Bierstetel did just that to become the MHSAA state Class D cross country champion in 16 minutes, 31.3 seconds. Teammate Ted Feldpausch finished second with 89 points.

Bierstetel won the Class D boys' trophy with 40 points, a new state record at any level. Suffers Bay was the closest up with 76.

Potterville placed fourth in the Class D girls' competition with 123 points, behind state champion Alton Thompson's 88. Fowler was sixth with 130. Feldpausch captured second with 111, and Colton earned third with 129. Other state points separated third through sixth places.

"Fowler (boys' team) has placed in the top five at all three," Eagle coach Kim Spaulbury said of his three-time defending state champions. "No other Class D team in the state has performed at that level of excellence."

In addition to the all-state finishes of Bierstetel and Feldpausch, Alan Smith (17:21.2) earned 16th for the Eagles. Jason Braun (17:54.6) took 20th and Mike Pignon (18:47) placed 34th.

Bierstetel and Feldpausch also finished 1-2 at last year's regional meet, but in that race Feldpausch won the double.

"Ted finished third (at state) his sophomore year and second last year, so in the back of my mind, I knew he wanted first this year," Spaulbury said of his team captain. "Ted is a consummate team player."

"I guess it (first place) was in the back of my mind, but I'm happy with my performance," Feldpausch said.

"I was happy with my run," Bierstetel agreed. "For a day like today, Ted said I ran well."

Bierstetel, who was seventh at state last season, said that the weather conditions Saturday were the worst he's ever competed in.

"We thought that even the cold could work as an advantage for the team," Bierstetel said. "Everyone else had to run in this weather too, you just needed the right attitude."

Spaulbury said, "The course was in pretty good condition... if you're mentally prepared, you don't notice the cold."

In the girls' race, Brandy Nelson trawled the frigid temperatures and finished 12th in 21:43.2 to lead Potterville, the defending state champion. The girls' medalist was Colton's two-time champion, Erin Doran in 23:03.8.


Tanya Healey (22:01.8) placed 19th for the fourth-grade class. Janet Pugh (22:14.6) finished 21st, Maggie Friske was 27th in 23:12.4 and Yvonne Vincent earned 32nd in 23:22.

"We performed consistently," Potterville coach Joe Wood said. "We ran just about the way we've been running all year. It had to be."

Spaulbury blamed a season of illness and injury for why Fowler girls' dropping to sixth from their second-place state finish last year. The Eagles girls' team hasn't finished lower than seventh in 1987-1991.

"We did this year like we could and I'm pretty pleased with the team," Spaulbury said. "I'll be for the top area girls' finish. Teammate Emily LaLuzak was 22nd in 23:13.1, Jenny Becker placed 36th in 24:42.6, Lisa Thorne (22:03.9) was 36th and Laura Erzer 38th in 23:13.8.

In the state Class D individual boys' race, Potterville's Rich Nimmo placed 19th, Morrill's David



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Fowler sophomore Eric Bierstetel won the Class D race in 16 minutes, 31.3 seconds. Healey was 21st and Aaron Utry of Webberville finished 24th.

Webberville teammates Erin Schultz and Stephanie Wilkey were 21st and 23rd in the girls' individual final.

Class A At Nunzio Okemos, which was the home state with a 30-point margin, made 20th. In the girls' race, Mandy Moore led the effort with a 30th-place finish in 21:25. Mandy finished six years ago. Mandy's mother, Cheryl, is the coach of Sterling Heights, Michigan.

East Lansing's Steve Puck and Cheryl Kniff finished 24th and 25th.

Scott Lacy of Okemos was the area boys' top finisher in the individual race. Lacy finished 10th with a 17:44 in the boys' race, just behind finisher Matt Lantz of Warren.

Class B at Linden Matt Abate of Perry was the area boys' top finisher in the boys' race, with a third place in a time of 17 minutes, eight seconds.

Michael Henry of DeWitt took sixth in 17:14. Matt Jones of East Lansing took 20th in 18:17.3. Teammate Aaron Lantz took 40th and 52nd.

Marquette's Matt Johnson was 21st, Portland's Dave Settle took 24th, and Warren's James Smith took 19th and 20th.

Girls' race was this.

The boys' team took 24th with 540 points.

In the girls' race, Southfield's Nicole Smith and her teammate Natalie Albertson was 21st. Kristin Portier of Sterling Heights took 22nd. Nicole of Freeland and 26th, Karen Lerner of Alma was 34th and Lisa Wilmsbach was 27th.

Class C at Frankensmuth Lacey Aulten finished fourth with a 17:02 to lead the Caron City-Crest boys to a second-place finish.

In the girls' race, Caron City-Crest's Justine Curry finished in seventh place for the Eagles.

Caron City-Crest took 11th place in the boys' team race with 113 points.

Caron City-Crest ended in sixth place with a time of 17:12.

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