

Jenison star gets second in A race

Rosema just misses bid for repeat title

By Jeff Arnold

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Defending a Class A high school cross country championship is no small feat.

Doing it in the middle of a driving snow makes it all that much more difficult.

But the Troy Athens' girls team overcame the pressure as well as Mother Nature to repeat as state champions while Jenison's Andrea Rosema's bid to do the same came up just short.

Troy Athens placed three runners in the top 11 finishers in Saturday's girls team race to clinch their second straight state title at Saskatoon Golf Club in Caledonia. The Red Hawks got a first-place finish from Alison Klemmer, who finished first with a time of 18:31. Klemmer finished 23 seconds ahead of Rosema, who was looking to finish first for the second straight year.

"There was a lot of pressure all season long. We tried to stay as low-key as possible, but it's tough," said Troy Athens coach Debbie Zonca. "We've had this goal (winning a state title) since last November and we weren't going to let what Mother Nature threw at us ruin a goal we've had for the whole year."

The Red Hawks used strong runs by Klemmer, Traci Owczarek, seventh, and Katie Horner, 11th, to finish the event with 102 points. Livonia Stevenson (113), Sterling Heights Utica Stevenson (126), Clarkston (230) and Farmington (257) rounded out the top five finishers in the girls race.

"We tried to downplay the intensity," Zonca said. "If you talk too much, you're going to make things too nervous and too tense. We talked when we needed to and then I let them alone. I myself get too nervous and if I'm around them too much, I make them too nervous. So they did what they had to do, they knew where they had to be and pretty much after that, it was in their hands."

Greenville was the top area finisher, placing seventh with 264 points. Shauna Pennington led the charge for the Yellow Jackets with an eighth-place finish in 19:17 to go along with a 21st-place finish by Chrystal Moyer in 19:48. Besides Greenville, other area finishers included Rockford, 11th place, West Ottawa, 13th, and Jenison, 15th.

Rosema's second-place finish paced the Wildcats, who also got a ninth-place finish from Andrea Pullen to lead Jenison.

"We wanted to be in the top 10, that may have been pretty lofty, but that's what we wanted," said Greenville coach Larry Taylor. "We wanted to get back to state because we hadn't been here for four years and to get back was our number one goal and to finish where we did is a great accomplishment for our team."

In the boys race, Brighton placed three runners in the top 18 finishers to take the title, finishing 14 points ahead of White Lake. The Bulldogs used an eighth-place finish by Jeff Trembath to go along with strong races by Mark Hansen, 16th, and Andy Ritter, 18th, to finish the event with 133 points.

Rockford was the top area finisher, ending up 16th with 366 points. The Rams' Ryan Mol led the charge with a 22nd-place finish in 16:36 to go along with strong races by Jason Hartmann, 27th, and Charlie Wieser, 34th.



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