

# SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

## Neenah runners solidify No. 2 ranking

### Coach pleased with cross country team

THE NEWS-RECORD

NEENAH — The Neenah High School boys' cross country team backed up its No. 2 state ranking with a strong performance Friday at the Neenah Invitational.

The Rockets outpaced No. 3-ranked Marquette University High School and finished second only Stevens Point, the No. 1-ranked team in the state, according to wisconsinXC.com.

Neenah coach John Morgen said he was pleased with how his runners performed in the tough 11-team invitational.

"We had our top eight finish in the top 23 places, which is remarkable in any meet, much less the Neenah Invitation with all of those good teams," he said.

Morgen said the boys, however, were not satisfied to finish behind Stevens Point.

"They were disappointed, but that's one of the things that make them so good," Morgen said. "Hopefully this will inspire them more than anything else. We are not that far behind (Stevens Point). There are a lot of really good things we can build on."

Neenah senior Matt Houston said the performance was bittersweet. Houston was Neenah's second runner and finished 10th overall.

"I thought we did pretty



Submitted photo

**THE NEENAH HIGH SCHOOL** boys' cross country team finds its stride early in the Neenah Invitational. The Rocket runners (from left) Chris Parker, Robbie McDonald, Matt Houston, Josh Dederling, Kaiser Behnke, Erik Hofferber and Derek Fahrenkrug.

well for this early in the season, but I was kind of disappointed with losing to Stevens Point," he said.

Houston said the defeat would make Neenah stronger when they face the Panthers again.

"We know what needs to be done," he said. "We should be able to handle the pressure better. Most of the time the race doesn't go as planned and you have to react."

Houston said his strategy was to stay with Stevens Point's top runners for the first two miles and then try to take them in the last 1.1 miles.

Stevens Point's lead pack went out faster than anticipated, however. Ac-

ording to wisconsinXC.com, the Panthers' top four runners each posted personal bests by at least eight seconds.

"It got a little overwhelming being surrounded by Stevens Point," Houston said.

Houston, like Morgen, thinks Neenah is within striking distance of the Panthers.

"I think we can catch them," Houston said. "It's still early. We have a long way to go."

The Neenah Invitational featured four of the top runners in the state.

Jon Wylie of Oshkosh North won the race in 16:01. Jordan King of Stevens Point finished sec-

ond in 16:13, Kaiser Behnke of Neenah finished third in 16:20, and Nate Hatton of Stevens Point finished fourth in 16:25.

In addition to Behnke and Houston, Neenah's top runners were Chris Parker, 13th; Erik Hofferber, 14th; Derek Fahrenkrug, 17th; Robbie McDonald, 19th; Josh Dederling, 22nd; and Tom Fine, 23rd.

Neenah started the 2008 season by winning the 15-team Jamie Block Cross Country Challenge in West Bend.

The meet was scored by adding together the times of each team's top five runners, and Neenah's quintet of Behnke, Houston, Park-

er, McDonald and Dederling was nearly three minutes faster than runner-up West Bend West.

Behnke was the meet champion, finishing in 16:43.

"We have never won the West Bend invitational in three minutes," Morgen said. "That's a pretty good sign of things to come."

Morgen credited the early season success to the hundreds of miles that the returning lettermen ran during the summer to prepare for the season.

"I am proud of the leadership that the seniors have shown," he said. "That has a lot to do with the depth that we have now."



## CROSS COUNTRY SECTIONAL NOTEBOOK

### Twin Rocket power

Neenah kept its position as the area's top cross country power by qualifying both its boys' and girls' teams for the state meet.

The Rockets boys won the meet with 54 points, 19 fewer than Appleton East. According to Neenah coach John Morgen, it marks the 11th straight year the team has qualified for the state meet, which is the longest active streak in the state. It is also the 12th time in the last 13 years the Rockets boys will run at state.

"I don't think in the history of this event here that any team has put seven guys under 16:41," Morgen said. "That is very, very impressive."

Neenah used pack running Friday as top runner Kaiser Behnke was slowed by injury and illness, while No. 2 runner Matt Houston was also injured and missed the meet. Behnke still placed eighth, while the Rockets covered 10th through 13th places with Josh Dederling, Derek Fahrenkrug, Erik Hofferber and Chris Parker, respectively.

The Rockets girls qualified by placing second with 66 points, seven more than champion Fond



**RUNNERS TAKE OFF** from the starting line of the boys' race in Winneconne on Friday.

du Lac. The top two teams and top five individuals from all other teams qualify for the Nov. 1 state meet at Wisconsin Rapids.

"We knew it would be close, but we'll take second here," Neenah girls' coach Mike Heidke said. "We just told the girls to run their race. A lot of times athletes will get psyched out when they try to do more than they're capable of."

Behind Lydia Fahrenkrug's second-place finish, Vienna Behnke was eighth, Lindsay Tur-

chan 10th, Whitney Heemstra 21st and Claire Tipton 25th. Neenah's qualifying as a team allows Heemstra to participate at the state meet for four years.

### Running Terror

Appleton West sophomore Carrie Glauser qualified for state by finishing sixth, coming in as the No. 4 individual qualifier.

"I just really wanted it today," said Glauser, who ran a personal-best of 15:20 over the 4,000-

meter Lake Breeze Golf Club course. "It was a better time than I thought."

### He said it

"It starts way back in summer. After track season was done, we didn't take any breaks. We just started training for cross country." — **Sam Leschisin**, Appleton East junior, on preparing for this season.

By Post-Crescent staff writer Dick Knapinski: 920-993-1000, ext. 230, or rknapinski@postcrescent.com



# Illness, injuries hurt top boys

By Dick Knapinski  
Post-Crescent staff writer

**WISCONSIN RAPIDS**  
— There was something bugging many of the top area boys' runners at Saturday's WIAA state cross country meet.

It wasn't anything that made them mad. It was instead the illness and injury bugs that took many of the top prospects out of contention.

Xavier senior Michael Stumpf, for instance, decided Saturday morning that he would run after battling bronchitis for much of the past 10 days. Stumpf came into the meet with one of the state's best Division 2 times, but struggled to make it through sectionals and could barely practice last week.

"I was awful today," Stumpf said after coming in 73rd on the 5,000-meter Ridges Golf Course layout in 17:31. "This whole week was rough. There were times I had to stop running when we were training to catch my breath and cough."

The Neenah boys' team was also hampered by the illness of its No. 1 runner, Kaiser Behnke, and the leg injury to No. 2 runner Matt Houston. Behnke came in 68th among Division 1 runners, while Houston struggled throughout and placed

## BOYS' STATE CROSS COUNTRY

137th.

It was a disappointing end for the Rockets, who had been ranked in the top five among the state's Division 1 teams all season and had hoped for a high finish among the 20 Division 1 teams at the state meet.

Instead, Neenah placed ninth with 224 points.

"When you look at the top teams here, it's tough when you know that when you were healthy, you were competing with and beating many of those teams," Rockets coach John Morgen said. "But injuries and illness are part of it, but it's tough when your top two runners are suffering."

Even Kaukauna senior Michael Brice, who came into the meet as one of the Division 1 favorites, battled the beginnings of a cold early in the week. Whether that influenced his run, he'll never know, but he admitted that he never was able to make a surge as he placed 12th.

"I wasn't tight for the race, but I'm not exactly sure what it was, but it certainly wasn't my day," Brice said.

**FINAL RESULTS (5,000 meters)**  
DIVISION 1  
STEVENS POINT 76, MADISON WEST 87, MILWAU-

KEE MARQUETTE 164, MILWAUKEE KING 171, MADISON LA FOLLETTE 182, ARROWHEAD 215, WAUKESHA WEST 219, GERMANTOWN 222, NEENAH 224, LA CROSSE LOGAN 256, BAY PORT 261, APPLETON EAST 280, JANESVILLE CRAIG 304, PULASKI 343, EAU CLAIRE MEMORIAL 363, MUKWONAGO 380, MUSKEGO 381, WATERFORD 396, D.C. EVEREST 422, MILTON 697

1, Derek Storkel, Tomah 15:26; 2, Brett Kelly, Madison West 15:30; 3, Jerry Kerska, Sauk Prairie 15:43; 4, Spencer Agnew, Fort Atkinson 15:46; 5, Marcus Paulson, Hamilton 15:53.

### Area finishers

Neenah: 68, Kaiser Behnke 16:54; 75, Derek Fahrenkrug 16:56; 76, Josh Dederling 16:57; 78, Erik Hofferber 16:58; 85, Chris Parker 17:01; 113, Robby McDonald 17:13; 137, Matt Houston 17:28.

Appleton East: 16, Taylor Wardall 16:11; 27, Dan Schubert 16:21; 44, Sam Leschisin 16:41; 158, Brent Burton 17:47; 172, David Fischer 18:06; 186, Ian McOutstian 18:30; 190, Luke Nygaard 19:29.

Kaukauna: 12, Michael Brice 16:06.

### DIVISION 2

TOMAHAWK 70, WAUKESHA CATHOLIC MEMORIAL 88, PORT WASHINGTON 89, MONROE 146, SHOREWOOD 168, PESHTIGO 192, LITTLE CHUTE 216, ST. CROIX CENTRAL 216, XAVIER 232, RIPON 233, NEKOOSA/PORT EDWARDS 237, PLATTEVILLE 250, LAKESIDE LUTHERAN 275, RICE LAKE 355, WEST SALEM 258, PORTAGE 393

1, Mark Allen, Port Washington 15:55; 2, Evan Ross, Port Washington 15:55; 3, John Luterbach, Catholic Memorial 16:04; 4, Brian Kinnard, Luxemburg-Casco 16:04; 5, Ben Tyler, Shorewood 16:10.

### Area finishers

Little Chute: 44, Mason Grundy 17:05; 64, Chris Pynenberg 17:23; 80, Anthony Van Keulen 17:41; 85, Paul Van Grinsven 17:45; 114, Rudy Boltz 18:13; 126, Spencer Grundy 18:24; 141, Jordan Lamers 19:04.

Xavier: 21, Tyler Willenbrink 16:47; 73, Michael Stumpf 17:31; 79, Andrew Heinritz 17:39; 101, Connor Chelsky 17:58; 122, Ryan Powley 18:20; 127, Sam Pawlak 18:27; 148, Tom Holschuh 19:14.

Chilton: 6, Alex Steiner 16:14; 41, Cody Kurschel 17:03.

Freedom: 30, Lucas Jadin 16:56.

New London: 56, Michael Helse 17:21.

Waupaca: 31, Dan Thompson 16:57.

### DIVISION 3

WEBSTER 83, CEDAR GROVE-WEBSTER 110, SEVASTOPOL 129, MARSHALL 158, LA CROSSE AQUINAS 158, BROOKFIELD ACADEMY 168, EAU CLAIRE REGIS 202, OSHKOSH LOURDES 211, LACONIA 229, STRATFORD 254, DARLINGTON 272, MARATHON 289, PARK FALLS 292, DRUMMOND 295, ALBANY 316, ARCADIA 329

1, Josh Mulloy, Cedar Grove-Belgium 16:07; 2, Jajuan Tyler, Racine St. Catherine's 16:11; 3, Jake Lincicum, Albany 16:18; 4, James Horoux, Sevastopol 16:22; 5, Sam Simones, Aquinas 16:27.

### Area finishers

Brilliant: 10, Tyler Behnke 16:53.

Hilbert: 38, Mitch Lacy 17:27.

St. Mary Central: 55, Alex Reini 17:45.

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