

Cross country

Symoniak wins Class A race; Szymkowiak qualifies for states

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

For the second time in school history, Amherst Central has a Section VI champion in cross country.

Amherst sophomore Brenna Symoniak won the Class A race with a time of 19:03.8 at last Friday's Section VI Championships at Elma Meadows Golf

Course. Arielle Januszkiewicz, an assistant coach with the Lady Tigers, won the race five years ago.

"Amherst is definitely not a big running school, so it was cool to be able to do it," said Symoniak.

"Her goal was to be section champion and she did it, which was great," said Amherst coach Bob O'Donnell.

Symoniak beat second place finisher Amanda Solly of West Seneca East by 15 seconds. Symoniak's time is the 14th-best time ever for the course.

"I was hoping to win by a lot," said Symoniak.

"She's one of those runners that push themselves without anyone close to them," said O'Donnell. "She wants to win decisively."

Solly had been Symoniak's toughest competition throughout the season. Symoniak said to motivate herself for sectionals, she imagined Solly had won the race.

Symoniak was ready for the 3.1 mile course.

"The course had a lot of hills so I had practiced running places that had a lot of hills," she said. "I think it gave me an advantage over the other runners."

It's the third year Symoniak has qualified for the New York State Championships, which are to be held Saturday at Norfolk High School in Norfolk, N.Y. The entire Amherst girls team went two years ago; she qualified as an individual last year.

"I'm really nervous because there are a lot of good runners in my class," said Symoniak, who is ranked 12th in the state in Class A. "I've heard the course has a lot of hills. I think it should be a good race."

Amherst took third out of 11 teams. Sophomore Tori Sosnowski finished tenth in 21:09. Olivia May, another sophomore, placed 20th in 22:16. Senior Diane Herzog (22:32), junior Katie Smith (23:17), senior Violet Pena (23:37) and freshman Caitlin Burke (24:08) also ran well.

Symoniak isn't the only competitor from Amherst to advance to states.

Senior David Szymkowiak from the boys team qualified as the fifth individual in 17:04. He placed eighth in the race.



Amherst Central's Brenna Symoniak won her first Section VI cross country title last Friday at Elma Meadows Golf Course. Symoniak won the race in 19:03. It's the 14th-fastest time for the course.

File photo

The winning team and the next five individuals not on the winning team qualify for states.

"This is everything for my season right now and I know my team is going to be excited too," said Szymkowiak.

Szymkowiak caught Starpoint's Ryan Wentz and William Barclay in the last 600 meters of the race to qualify.

Senior Jeremy Jones was

Amherst's next best finisher with a time of 19:04.

Juniors Kory Roche (19:16) and Elliot Bible (19:49), junior Tyler Brown (20:08) and freshman Kyle Cotter (20:16) also ran for the Tigers, which placed seventh as a team.

(Intern David Bennett contributed to this article)

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Amherst's David Szymkowiak took fifth in the Class A race at Friday's Section VI Championships at Elma Meadows Golf Course to qualify for Saturday's New York State Championships.

Photo by Amy Krakowiak
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Morse

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finished fifth on rings (4.8) and vault (7.8) and sixth on floor (6.8). North's Matt McFarland was seventh on pommel horse and parallel bars with scores of 3.9.

"They did great," said Buscaglia. "Like I always say, consistency is the most important thing. They came out, competed well and were consistent. When you do that, good things will happen. I couldn't ask any more from them."

Mike Huber led Amherst with an all-around score of 25.25, good for eighth best in the section. He was fourth on rings (4.85) and tied for eighth on vault (6.6).

Taylor Bentzoni (high bars, seventh, 2.0) and Eoghan Connors (rings, eighth, 3.4) also placed. Jordan Simone was scheduled to compete in all-around but separated a shoulder a couple days before sectionals.

"Not bad for their first year of competing without having competed in club gymnastics before," said Amherst coach Renee Kowalski.

Qualifying for the regional meet to be held at 11 a.m. Saturday at Brockport State College are Morse and Zirna (all-around), Cole (high bars), Lysen (vault, rings, floor), Story (pommel horse), Stumpf (high bars, vault, floor), Roberson (parallel bars, floor, pommel horse), Kieffer (pommel horse, rings), Chearmonte (high bar), O'Brien (rings, vault, parallel bars) and Hamburg's Madison Rich (parallel bars). Section VI has won regionals the past four years.

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Breymeier finishes a place away from states

The Williamsville South girls and boys cross country teams completed their seasons last Friday at the Section VI Championships at Elma Meadows Golf Course.

Members of both teams finished off their season-long improvement as individuals by running the races well, said coach Chuck Godfrey.

The girls team, which had lost three of its top six runners to injuries, finished ninth out of 12 teams.

Amanda Breymeier led South with a seventh place finish, coming in with a time of 20:57. She missed a trip to Saturday's New York State Championships by one runner.

Sophomore Jenny Mooney was 27th in 22:28 and senior captain Colleen Hurtubise was 57th in 24:52. Junior Laura Johnston continued her great improvement from last year by finishing 54th in 24:31. Sophomores Rachel Zucker and Santana Coon were 59th in 25:01 and 61st in 25:57, respectively, while junior Lauren Mosier was 67th in 27:20.

Injuries to sophomores M.C. Aungst, who generally was finishing second or third for the team earlier in the season and Maxine Meyerhofer, last year's MVP, hurt the team's finish, but rest of the team never gave up and worked harder to produce results, said Godfrey.

The boys team was led by senior Alex Podvezko, who finished 29th in 18:51. He was followed by freshman Mike Herr (46th, 19:50), junior John Stark (47th, 19:51) and sophomore Bruce Hibler (56th, 20:12), Chris Bowers (71st, 21:28) and Will Freeman (79th, 22:38) and freshman Robert Freeman (81st, 23:29.)

As with the girls team, the boys team was weakened by the loss of three of its top six runners during the season, but dedicated itself to hard work and all members were able to improve significantly during the season, said Godfrey.

"With the teams losing only two seniors to graduation next spring, and the anticipated return of the rest of the athletes, the outlook for South's cross country team looks good for next year," said Godfrey.

Sports briefs

Steve Berus, a Williamsville North graduate and East Amherst resident, won the 100-yard breaststroke (1:05.61) and 200-yard breaststroke (2:22.36) in the Rochester Institute of Technology men's swimming and diving team's 189-98 win over Fredonia State College on Oct. 27.

The Western New York Softball Hall of Fame will induct the Class of 2007 at a formal ceremony Friday, Nov. 9 at Woodlawn Fire Hall, 3281 Lake Shore Road, Blasdell.

The Class of 2007 is comprised of Fred Cooper (Fredonia), Joe Gombos (Lackawanna), William Gould (Kenmore), Jim Horlacher (Brockton), John Irving (Lackawanna), Carl Kochersberger (Lancaster), Ken Kovach (West Seneca), Kim Lauber (Lancaster), Murdoch Mitchell (North Tonawanda), Dan O'Callahan (Niagara Falls), Kevin Przybyl (Lake View), Mike Rappl (Tonawanda), Wayne Sobkowiak (Depew) and Dick Wrazen (North Tonawanda).

Tickets cost \$30 and are available by calling 361-453 or 675-3237.

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