

Balanced Team Running Key for Mackinaw City's Repeat Title

By David Latva

Balanced team effort is a key to every athletic team, but in cross country individual scoring could mean the difference between a championship or runner-up finish.

Mackinaw City, defending Lower Peninsula Division 4 Region 28 champions, posted a three-point win, 59-62, over Fairview and realized that every runner (seven) makes the difference, as all the Comets finished in the top 30 during the event at Gaylord Golf and Country Club, hosted by Gaylord High School, Saturday, October 29.

The Comets freshman, David Mercer, finished second with a time of 17:59, two seconds behind Ryan Kauffman of Fairview at 17:57.

Logan Paquet placed seventh in 18:36, Dane Curth 10th in 18:47, Blaine Paquet 21st in 19:48, Matt Alexander 23rd in 19:55, Brandyn Clemens 27th in 20:15, and Chris Laninga 30th in 20:29.

The Fairview Eagles runners finished first, fifth, ninth, 14th, 42nd, 52nd, and 70th.

"I was very pleased with all the boys and girls effort and times," said Comets Coach Scott Mills. "In the boys meet, it came down to all the times."

Ellsworth placed third with 86 points, followed by Wolverine with 89, Rogers City 100, Hale 176, Boyne Falls 189, Gaylord St. Mary 190, and Central Lake 203. Top three teams qualify for the state finals.

Mackinaw City had only three girls (five needed for team scoring) competing at the regionals and Ciara McVey led the Comets with a 26th place in 25:36, Callan



Above photograph: The Mackinaw City boys cross country team won the Lower Peninsula Division 4 Regional championship and members include (from left) Brandyn Clemens, David Mercer, Logan Paquet, Dane Curth, Chris Laninga, Matt Alexander, Blaine Paquet, and Coach Scott Mills.

Lower photograph: Mackinaw City girls cross country team at the regionals includes (from left) Katie Smydra, Callan Martin, Ciarra McVey, and Coach Scott Mills.



David Mercer (left) and Ciara McVey (right).



Strong Invite Showings Prepare Comets for Post-Season

Martin 30th 26:34, and Katie Smydra 50th in 30:35. Rogers City won the regionals as sisters Kaylee Krefth won in 20:15 and Lacey Krefth took second in 20:30 for the Hurons.

"During the Lower Peninsula State Finals at the MIS in Brooklyn, Michigan, I hope the boys could finish in the top 10 after placing 19th last season. The entire team has worked hard all season and the effort has paid off," the coach said.

Mackinaw City cross country team continues its successful season with strong showings at Beal City and Gaylord Invitationals.

The Comets finished third during the prestigious Beal City Cross Country Championships, which is a small preview of the Lower Peninsula state finals Saturday, October 22.

Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart won the meet with 108 points, followed by Fairview at 120, Mackinaw City 122, Mason County Eastern 133, Fowler 148, Wyoming Tri-Unity Christian 155, Ellsworth 197, Buckley 198, Wolverine 214, Beal City 233, Central Lake 310, Boyne Falls 324, Jackson Christian 329, Oakland Christian 330, Fulton 362, Gaylord St. Mary 363, Marion 371, and Hudsonville Freedom Baptist 435.

David Mercer led the Comets with a fifth place finish in 17:05, Dane Curth 15th in 17:38, Logan Paquet 21st in 17:48, Blaine Paquet 42nd in 18:57, Matt Alexander 49th in 19:05, Brandyn

Clemens 19:32, and Chris Laninga 19:40.

Comets Sixth at Gaylord Invitational

Mackinaw City finished sixth during the Gaylord Invitational that included five Class A teams, four Class B, and seven Class C and D schools.

Kalkaska won the 23-team meet with 39 points, followed by Benzie Central with 42, TC West 125, TC Central 176, Bay City John Glenn

181, Mackinaw City 205, Ludington 243, Wolverine 245, Lake City 245, and Charlevoix 254 in the top 10.

The Comets' David Mercer finished eighth with a time of 17:51, Dane Curth 18th in 18:17, Logan Paquet 20th in 18:18, Matt Alexander 19:52, Chris Laninga 20:29, and Brandyn Clemens 20:43. The winning time was Paul Grieve of Kalkaska in 16:46.

Four Mackinaw City girls com-

peted in the meet. Ciara McVey placed eighth in 24:43, Callan Martin 17th in 26:16, Katie Smydra 35th in 29:30, and Julie Alexander 45th in 34:00. Teams need five girls for team scoring.

During the junior varsity meet, the Comets took sixth place, led by Cullen Lawson in 21:17, Spencer McFarland 21:33, Kevin Darrow 21:46, Barry Paquet 21:51, Klaus Jaggi 21:53, and Adam Alexander 22:58.

Area Coaches, Players Receive All-U.P. Honors

By David Latva

Two area coaches and 21 players were honored during the 56th Annual Fall Meeting of the Upper Peninsula Sportswriters and Sportscasters Association Thursday, October 27, in Escanaba.

Randy Schaedig of Cedarville (9-0) in Class D and Pat Maloney of Rudyard (7-2) in Class A-B-C received special mention as Coach of the Year in the Upper Peninsula.

Class A-B-C

Fourth Pierson Earns All-U.P. Honors

Zach Pierson on defense for St. Ignace earned First Team Class A-B-C honors. The LaSalle High School senior became the fourth member of the Pierson family to earn All-Upper Peninsula honors. Forty years ago (1965) the Saints' Barry Pierson was awarded Dream Team quarterback in the Upper Peninsula and his three sons, Charlie, Chase, and Zach, have followed with Upper Peninsula defensive honors.

Senior Trent Salo of Rudyard was named Class A-B-C first team offense. Receiving special mention were juniors Derrick Clark and

Jake Smith of St. Ignace, seniors Travis Clegg and Jordan Gaskin of Rudyard, and juniors Owen McGrath and Dan Bartley of Rudyard.

Class D

Seniors Gary Kott and Aaron Bright of Cedarville, juniors Caleb Rader and Jason King of Pickford, and seniors Jeff Graham and Derek Parish of Brimley were named to the Class D First Team.

Special mention honors went to senior Cory Wellnitz, and juniors Justin Baker and Peter Treleven of Cedarville, and seniors Scott Butkovich and Jacob Swider, junior Grayson Hood, and sophomore J.J. Troyer of Engadine.

Class A-B-C Offensive Player of the Year was awarded to Phil Milbrath of Norway and Defensive Player of the Year to Matt Payment of Newberry, while Class D Offensive Player of the Year was presented to Casey DeMars of Lake Linden-Hubbell and Defensive Player of the Year to Brian Fabbri of Crystal Falls-Forest Park.

Coaches, Teams of the Year

Menominee were named Class

A-B Team of the Year, while the Maroons coach Ken Hofer received Class A-B-C Coach of the Year. Iron Mountain was Class C Team of the Year and Crystal Falls-Forest Park was Class D Team of the Year, and the Trojans coach Bill Santilli was named Coach of the Year.

All-Class Dream Team

The All-Class Dream Team on offense included center Sean Myers of Menominee, guards Jeremy Gilbert of Gladstone and Tom Basto of Calumet, tackles Alex Sedlacek of Negaunee and Jeff Busick of Menominee, ends Justin Groeneveld of Kingsford and Dustin Brancheau of Ispeming, running backs Phil Milbrath of Norway, Casey DeMars of Lake Linden-Hubbell, and Jake Pann of Newberry, quarterback Mike Olson of Kingsford, kicker John Ellis of Iron Mountain, and return specialist Kyle Schinella of Ispeming.

The All-Class Defensive Dream Team were tackles Matt Payment of Newberry, Steve Rigoni of Iron Mountain, and Brian Fabbri of Crystal Falls Forest Park, ends Brand Bland of Menominee and Brett Young of Gladstone, linebackers Jordan Barley of Menominee, Jake Klingelutz of Kingsford, and Mike Lyman of Ispeming, backs James Cappert of Gladstone, Kyle Schinella of Ispeming, and Eric Boye of Menominee, and punter Joe Pontbriand of Norway.

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