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## SECTION VI CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

### East Aurora win plays like broken record

#### Blue Devils girls shatter 23-year mark

By Mary Jo Monnin NEWS SPORTS REPORTER



Evan Tsembelis of Grand Island won the boys Class A title Friday at Elma Meadows – Photo by James P McCoy/Buffalo News

The East Aurora girls cross country team left Elma Meadows with more than the Section VI Class B title Friday. They departed with a little piece of history.

The Blue Devils broke the Section VI team record for the fastest 1-5 finishers. EA ran a collective race in 96 minutes, 26.7 seconds to break the record of 100:00.3 that has been held since 1984 by Clarence.

A nice day, a dry course and no wind was the perfect combination for Catherine Lusardi, Jenna Hulton, Catherine Phillips, Kirsten Weberg and Erin Crawford.

“It’s a really big accomplishment because we worked for a common goal,” said Lusardi, who won the race in 18:36.1. “We worked really hard together and it brings the team closer together.”

East Aurora easily lived up to its national ranking of No. 22 in the latest Harrier’s Super 25 listing on DyeStat. com. The Blue Devils are also No. 1 in the state in Class B. EA took seven of the top eight places with only thirdplace finisher Jamie Wallace of Alden able to keep pace. Wallace won the title in 2005.

The winning team in each of the day’s 10 races, along with the top five finishers not on the winning team, advanced to the New York State Championship next Saturday at Section X’s Norwood-Norfolk High School. **Girls**

**Class AA:** West Seneca West, with four runners in the top 10, successfully defended its title. The Indians also finished with the 23rd fastest time in Section VI history as its top five runners posted a 103:41.4.

Lockport senior Kelsey Fraser, fourth last year, won the race in 19:16.6.

“I wanted to take it easy in the first mile because it’s the hardest part of the course,” she said. “Once I passed the 1z-mile mark, that’s when my coach told me it was time to make a move.”

**Class A:** Sophomore Brenna Symoniak of Amherst said she broke away from Amanda Solly of West Seneca East around the first turn and then distanced herself from the field once she reached the hills.

“I wanted this so bad,” said Symoniak, who weighs 87 pounds.

Starpoint showed its balance by winning the team title without having any runners in the top five.

**Class C:** Eighth-graders took two of the top three spots in this race. Katie Saff of Falconer won the race in 20:00.1 while Sam Stady of Allegany- Limestone was third. Ellen Goldhawk was runner-up, helping Akron to its third team title in four years.



East Aurora's Catherine Lusardi (452) and Jenna Hulton finished 1-2 in the Girls Class B race – Photo by James P McCoy/Buffalo News



Lockport's Drew Pirelli won the Section VI Boys Class AA cross country championship – Photo by James P McCoy/Buffalo News

**Class D:** Maple Grove knocked off Randolph, winner of four sectional titles in a row. Senior Christina DiLallo of Randolph, runner-up last year, won the race in 20:29.4.

"I started slow so that kind of helped," she said. "The hills are my most favorite thing to run. We have a really hilly home course."

### Boys

**Class AA:** Clarence made it two sectional titles in a row led by John Inzina's second-place finish. Lockport sophomore Drew Perilli made up for the disappointment of coming in second in his league meet. Not known for his kick, he held off all challengers to win in 16:27.7.

**Class A:** Evan Tsembelis of Grand Island won a close race in 16:24.7, the fastest time of the day. He went into his kick when he heard the crowd.

"I heard the people screaming so I knew they were coming right up so I tried to finish strong," he said.

Defending champion Joe Whelan of Hamburg, running with an injury to the top of his foot, finished third. Hamburg won the team title, its first since 1962. Five-time All High champion Hutch-Tech was second overall.

**Class B:** Junior Scott Anderson of East Aurora used the first hill of the race to make his move. He led from that point on and finished in 16:30.7. East Aurora won the team title for the third time in four years. Defending champion Fredonia, the CCAA champion, was second.

**Class C:** Senior Jason Zayac of Royalton-Hartland finally knows what it feels like to win. After finishing second as a sophomore and third as a junior, he pulled away in the final 100 yards Friday.

"I just kept saying, 'I'm not tired, keep digging.'" he said.

Wilson won the team title for the second year in a row.

**Class D:** Junior Jeff Rozier of Maple Grove won for the second straight year crossing in 17:41.5. He said he was careful not to start out too fast, a common mistake for runners who don't allow for the hilly course. He was greeted at the end of the chute by his older brother, Steve, who had never seen him race before. "That one was for you," Jeff said.

Maple Grove finished 1-2 in the race, but still finished behind Barker by one point. Two-time defending champion Franklinville qualified three runners.

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