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Orlowski sure-footed in win

ECIC team titles to Clarence, EA

By **Mary Jo Monnin** - News Sports Reporter



The 55th annual ECIC Cross Country Championship at East Aurora became a balancing act.

Nick Orlowski of Alden bested a field of 187 runners to win the ECIC boys cross country meet. Mark Mulville / Buffalo News

Recent rains turned parts of the course into soupy mud. Runners adjusted to the conditions using longer spikes, shortening their strides and accepting the reality their times would be slower.

Alden senior Nick Orlowski put his best foot forward and won the overall boys race in 15:53.5, bettering a field of 187 runners from 25 schools. Springville senior Chad Maloy had been drafting off Orlowski for most of the race when disaster struck.

"We were coming out of the last turn and he wiped out," said Orlowski. "I was wondering where he was. I was like, 'Why isn't he right next to me? I need somebody to push me.' I feel bad for him because he was having a good race."

Maloy said the fall probably cost him 3-4 seconds. He finished in second place in 16:05.5. "I couldn't catch up to him after I fell, and then I almost fell again, and he pulled away," said Maloy.

The East Aurora boys placed five runners among the top 10 and ran away with the overall ECIC team title. Sean Phillips, Kevin O'Connor, Brendan Keany and Gene Barritot led a 5-6-7-8 finish.

The division champions were Clarence (ECIC I), Hamburg (ECIC II), East Aurora (ECIC III) and Alden (ECIC IV).

Nick Konotopskyj of North won the ECIC I race, Ben Brucker of Hamburg was the ECIC II champ, freshman Tom Hornberger of Lake Shore claimed the ECIC III crown and Orlowski was the medalist in ECIC IV.

Freshman Marta McLaughlin of EA won the overall title of the girls race for the second year in a row. She led from start to finish competing against 169 other runners and won by a 23.3-second margin in 18:05.7.

In second place was her teammate, senior Megan Hulton in 18:29.0.

"When I'm running on a muddy course, I run with a heel strike, so I focused more on running on my toes," said McLaughlin, pointing to the mud-covered sneakers on her feet. "The spikes dig in the mud more, but we like running in the mud. I just wanted to get out and run strong and then in the last 800 just go."

The girls champions were: Clarence (ECIC I), West Seneca East (ECIC II), East Aurora (ECIC III) and Springville (ECIC IV).

Chelsea Needham of West Seneca West won the ECIC I race, Jenny Delsignore of Sweet Home was the ECIC II champion, McLaughlin took the ECIC III race and Kalie Rustay of JFK was ECIC IV medalist.

Niagara Frontier League: The Grand Island boys swept the team and medalist honors at the league meet held at Beaver Island State Park. Senior Nick Masiello won the race in 17:06.4 among a field of 53 runners. As a team the Vikings took places 1-3-6-8-11 to score 29 points and beat runnerup Lockport.

The Lockport girls scored 36 points to edge Grand Island at 41 for the team title. Rebecca Reider of Niagara-Wheatfield won the race in 20:37.

Niagara-Orleans League: Roy-Hart finished 1-2, but it was Barker that won the boys league title at Lakeside Beach State Park. Eddy Pfeil of R-H capped a huge sophomore season winning the race in 17:09. Pfeil's brother, Frank, was second in 17:31. Barker was led by Tyler Scheving, the third-place finisher in 17:48.

Newfane placed four runners among the top five on its way to winning the girls team title. Sarah Ziemba won the race in 20:59 followed by Kiki Dy and Kelly Bochnewetch. Barker was runner-up led by Katie Pryzbyl, Deanna Platt and Marguerite Zaepfel, who were among the top 10.

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