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Will North's Seitz outkicks teammate to take Class AA title

East Aurora, Fredonia win in team sweeps.

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

Williamsville North's Don Seitz (photo below) raced to the Class AA title
James P. McCoy / Buffalo News



Run with no regrets. It's a strategy that has served Don Seitz well, especially Friday when he won the Section VI Class AA title at Elma Meadows.

The Williamsville North senior outkicked teammate Nicholas Konotopskyj, finishing in 17:16.6 for a 4-second victory.

"We were working together, but it came down to the last 400 and it was who wanted to win more," said Seitz. "You just gotta really believe in yourself and go for it and gun it. No regrets. It's the last race, hold nothing back."

The Spartans also won the team title for a second year in a row. The winning team in each of the day's 10 races, along with the top five runners not on the winning team, advance to next Saturday's New York State Championship in Pawling.

The 63rd annual championships were held over a muddy course in conditions that saw the temperatures drop as the day went on. Nothing slowed the East Aurora and Fredonia boys and girls as they won both races in their respective classes.

CLASS A: Freshman TJ Hornberger, a first-year varsity runner for Lake Shore, won the race in 17:22.1. "It was really close. Everyone behind me keeps pushing and pushing me to go faster. I kept telling myself to keep going and don't let them catch me. The last hill was really hard," he said.

Grand Island beat Starpoint by nine points to earn the team bid to states. Nick Masiello and Derek Stacy were second and fourth for the Vikings.

CLASS B: Chad Maloy of Springville said he pulled away during the flat part of the course and led the rest of the way, winning in the fastest time of the day (17:01.0). He said the win felt especially good after settling for second place last year. "I came out here today, and I really wanted this one," he said. East Aurora won the team title for the seventh time this decade. All seven runners finished in the top 20, led by runner-up Kevin O'Connor.

CLASS C: Sophomore Eddy Pfeil, who ran the course as a warmup, won with 2 seconds to spare over his brother Frankie. Eddy also won the Officials meet and the Niagara-Orleans league meet. Josh Szukala placed fourth as Fredonia won its first team title as a Class C school.

CLASS D: Freshman Cory Wefing of Maple Grove distanced himself from the pack after the first two miles winning the race in 17:50.

"It's really cold. You finish your race and you're just exhausted," said Wefing. "Your hands are freezing, but it's great once you finish and get all warmed up."

Barker took four of the top five places to run away with the team title. Michael Lantinen set the pace in 18:17.9.

Girls

Class AA: Senior Chelsea Needham of West Seneca West turned back all challengers to win by an 8-second margin in 20:08.2. It was the first race of the day before the course got chewed up.

"It was actually not too bad. I feel like I run better in cold weather," said Needham, who was fifth in last year's race. "I just wanted to win. I knew the Orchard Park girls would push me." The team title went to defending champion Clarence by six points over West Seneca West. All seven Clarence runners finished within 1 minute and 20 seconds. Freshman Marissa Saenger, last year's race winner, was the Red Devils' top finisher in seventh.

Class A: Sophomore Jenny DelSignore of Sweet Home won her race in 19:44.9. "I spread it out over the second mile. I knew I was going to have to work hard to win it," she said.

The team title went to Starpoint with 44 points led by Amy Cooper's second place finish in 20:15.5. It was the Spartans' fourth title in the past five years.

Class B: Freshman Martha McLaughlin of East Aurora won her second straight Section VI title by a comfortable margin over teammate Megan Hulton. Her time of 19:12.6 was the fastest of the day for girls. The pair also finished 1-2 at last week's ECIC Championships.

"She makes me so much better and she's so encouraging," said Hulton. "So when I'm maintaining in front of her, I know I'm running a good race. I usually go out with her and try to stay with her as long as I can."

East Aurora won the team title for the seventh year in a row as a B school. The Blue Devils had all seven runners finish in the top 10, its slowest runner finishing in 20:55.7.

Class C: Eighth-grader Lauren Reyda of Fredonia took the lead for good at the halfway point of the race and won in 19:53.4. She was being chased by Shannon Murphy and Kirsten Holberg, both of Falconer. "I saw Kirsten was struggling a little and I saw that and took advantage of that," said Reyda.

In the closest race of the day team-wise, Fredonia edged Falconer, 36-40.

Class D: Maple Grove dominated by taking the first three places, led by freshman and defending champion Caroline Benson (20:33.6), seventh-grader Megan Marsh (20:36.0) and seventh-grader Hope Pietrocarlo (20:37.9). The Red Dragons won the team title for the third time in four years.

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