



Seiders places 13th, Reyda takes 19th at state meet

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OBSERVER Staff Report

PAWLING - Silver Creek's Hannah Seiders took 13 place, Fredonia's Lauren Reyda took 19th while the Fredonia Hillbillies boys' cross country team placed fourth and the girls' team placed sixth to highlight the local runners who competed at Saturday's New York State Public High School Athletic Association state finals at Lakeside Park.

Seiders ran a 20:52.5 to take 13th place. Her time was just 53 seconds off the first-place finisher. It was the best finish by a Black Knight since 1996 when Brian Metzger placed third.

Not bad for an seventh grader.

"It was a tremendous surprise," Silver Creek coach Mike Janisch said. "She ran an excellent race. She was very aggressive in the first mile and passed many people in the last mile. For a seventh grader to run this well is truly outstanding. She has worked very, very hard to get to where she is. Being very young, the sky is the limit for her."

Janisch noted now that Seiders has made herself known, she may have a bullseye on her in the future if she can make it to states again.

"Sometimes not knowing is an advantage in that you don't know what the situation could be," Janisch said. "She will have a better idea of what the competition is like. It will be tougher because people will know who she is there. It will give her a lot of confidence going into next season. She has to work hard to get to where she wants to be."

Meanwhile, Reyda, an eighth grader, took 19th place with a time of 20:14.3 to lead the Lady Hillbillies.

"That was exciting," Fredonia coach Carol Zirkle said. "She received an All-State medal for that. It was a good finish for her. For an eighth grader to come in and finish in the top 20 is quite an accomplishment. Lauren has set the bar high for the next four years. For an eighth grader who has been to states two years in a row is quite an accomplishment. She has four years to keep working and keep improving."

Teammate Michaela Tramuta took 58th place with a 21:33.2 time.

"Michaela also had a great race," Zirkle continued. "She came in second for us. It's the first time all season she moved up to second." Fredonia's Jessica Swoyer was not far behind her as she took 66th place with a time of 21:51.4. Fredonia's Brittany Campaign took 89th place as she crossed the finish line in 22:52.6. Alyssa Goot (23:07.3) and Maitland Langworthy (23:08.9) placed 92nd and 93rd, respectively. Jillian Kowalski took 97th place with a time of 23:22. The team effort helped Fredonia to a sixth-place team finish with 175 points.

"That's the range we thought they would be," Zirkle said. "They were predicted to be fifth so we were close to that. It was a competitive race. It was a great competition and it was a fun weekend."

In the same race, Gowanda's Emily Steves charted a 20:58.5 time to take 43rd place.

"I think she was about where we might have expected," Gowanda girls' coach Pete Palmer said. "It's a hard course, so I think that's a reasonable time. But a good time at the state meet doesn't necessarily put you at the top."

One thing that may have attributed to the slower than usual times was the hill in the middle of the course.

"I think it slows everyone down 30-40 seconds than they would normally run," Palmer noted. "Emily was a minute off her normal time, so she wasn't that far off from what she's capable of."

For the Hillbillies, Josh Szukala (18:04.5) and Matt Meredith (18:04.6) finished 51st and 52nd, respectively. Teammate Alex Crise took 63rd with a time of 18:24.8. Meanwhile, Chaz Mancino, placed 81st at 19:06.1 while Vince Ippolito (19:07.9) and Mark Dudek (19:14.6) took 83rd and 84th place, respectively. Also for Fredonia, Jacob Brown finished 100th with a time of 20:14.

"Matt ran a very good race," Zirkle said. "The standouts were Matt and Vince. They both ran times better than I expected. They are two seniors. I think they stepped up for the competition for the fact it was a state meet. They have worked really hard for three years to get to this point. They went out and performed to the best of their abilities."

The Hillbillies earned 157 points to take fourth place in the Class C race.

"We guessed around that fifth or sixth range so we were fortunate to get fourth on a tiebreak," Zirkle said. "We are pleased with those results."

In that same race, Gowanda's Kevin Brown took 37th place with a time of 17:40.8.

"It was exactly what he was predicted to do in the rankings," Gowanda boys' coach Tim O'Donnell said. "He went out pretty strong with Fredonia's Josh Szukala. This is his third time to states. Last year he did a little better, but the course last year was a little easier than the course this year. Emily (Steves) said when they got near the hill you could see everyone slowing down."

In the Class B race, Dunkirk's Alex Gonzalez finished his outstanding cross country career with a 24th place finish as he crossed the finish line in 17:08.8.

"He ran a good strong beginning race," Dunkirk coach Kurt Warmbrodt said. "He was around the 20th position from the get go and he held it til the end of the race. We were hoping for a top 20 finish, but we are not disappointed at all - not one bit. He went out strong and held his position the entire race. There was no let down. It was a strong effort all the way around."

His time was the fifth best time among Section 6 runners.

"He beat three other boys who beat him last week and that's what we were trying to do," Warmbrodt said. "He was able to get ahead of them and go."

Gonzalez improved on his time and place from two years ago when he finished 46th at the state meet as a sophomore. Warmbrodt attributed the better results to Gonzalez's comfort level with running at such a big event.

"It's also that other level of maturity," he continued. "He got to know other kids from the bus and the section. That helps. Two years ago he was all by himself and didn't know anyone. It makes a big difference.

"He is just such a great kid," Warmbrodt continued. "He is actually looking forward to breaking some records in indoor and outdoor track season. He has his work cut out for him and he is looking forward to it."

In Class D, Silver Creek's Jarrid Ringer took 52nd place with a time of 18:50.8.

"Jared ran a real fine race for himself," Janisch said. "He passed several people in the last 100 yards. He and Hannah ran with each other all week and that was important. They fed off of each other."

Notes: Both Brown and Steves were awarded the Sportsmanship Award for Section 6 - something that pleased both of their coaches.

"I think we were a little surprised that both Kevin and Emily won the Section 6 Sportsmanship Awards," Palmer said. "And that can be anybody from Section 6. Gowanda won it two years ago and the League Sportsmanship Award the last three years. We're proud and that's kind of our team's notoriety."