

## Reyda takes first at CCAA championships

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By Scott Kindberg - Special to the OBSERVER



Photo by Scott Kindberg

Fredonia's Lauren Reyda runs to a first-place finish at the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Athletic Association cross country championships Friday.

ELLERY - As the top runners in the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Athletic Association cross country championships reached the finish line and entered the chute where their places were recorded, Jamestown assistant coach Tony Dolce handed out medals.

As expected, Corey Wefing of Maple Grove and Lauren Reyda of Fredonia were as good as gold.

Wefing, a sophomore, and Reyda, a freshman, were the top finishers in the boys' and girls' races on a surprisingly fast 5-kilometer Long Point State course.

"Every day, twice a day I was looking at the weather (forecast) on my phone," Wefing said. "On Thursday, the forecast said it was supposed to be nice and 45 degrees. Then the snow came, but the course is beautiful."

Wefing, who finished second in last year's CCAA meet, looked good immediately, taking the lead almost from the starting gun and finishing in a personal-best 16:21.84, avenging a 10-second loss to Fredonia's Josh Szukala at the Red Dragon Invitational last month.

"The game plan wasn't to take the lead at first," Wefing said, "but I was feeling really good, so I figured I might as well try it."

Nobody, not even the seasoned Szukala, who finished in 16:57.40, could catch him.

"He's a special runner," Maple Grove coach Robert Rappole said of Wefing. "He's a kid who is going to be able to run at a top (college) and be competitive at a top (college)."

In addition to Wefing and Szukala, other top-10 finishers were Taylor Nielson, Gowanda, 17:11.81; Chaz Mancino, Fredonia, 17:15.65; Ryan Carpenter, Sherman, 17:25.11; John Panus, Olean, 17:28.37; Shawn Thompson, Maple Grove, 17:32.84; Hunter Linehart, Randolph, 17:37.58; Ryan Hetrick, Southwestern, 17:43.34; and Jacob Brown, Fredonia; 17:43.81.

Fredonia ended up winning the team title with 45 points, followed by Maple Grove (60), Jamestown (97), Southwestern (120), Gowanda (138), Olean (187), Falconer (191), Frewsburg (195), Sherman (209), Allegany-Limestone (286), Randolph (304), Franklinville (334) and Dunkirk (341). Silver Creek and Ripley had no score.

Reyda, who was the CCAA's top-ranked runner and 47th overall in the state, finished in 18:50.74, nine seconds ahead of Maple Grove eighth-grader Hope Pietrocarlo. The remainder of the top 10 were Holly Eliason, Sherman, 19:11.96; Megan Marsh, Maple Grove, 19:19.43; Shannon Murphy, Falconer, 19:40.40; Kirsten Holmberg, Falconer, 19:44.84;



Caroline Benson, 19:49.90; Michaela Tramuta, Fredonia, 19:56.43; Olivia Zabrodsky, Jamestown, 20:07.46; and Hannah Seiders, Silver Creek, 20:15.93.

"The first mile, I backed off a little and then tried to lose the Maple Grove girls in the second, but they stuck with me the whole time," Reyda said. "It was a race to the finish."

The Lady Red Dragons, the top-ranked Class D team in the state, finished with 38 points. They were followed by Fredonia (61), Falconer (83), Sherman (98), Jamestown (146), Gowanda (167), Allegany-Limestone (168), Silver Creek (178), Southwestern (210) and Frewsburg (231). Dunkirk, Olean, Franklinville and Randolph had no score.

"This is honestly the toughest meet we have," Rappole said. "With Fredonia and Falconer in there, we won't see anyone as good through the state (meet)."

Next on tap for many of the CCAA athletes is the Section 6 meet next Friday at Elma Meadows.

"I'm excited," Wefing said. "I'll have a good week to prepare myself and I'll just pray for nice weather. It's time to buckle down and get it done."

Reyda, who has been dominant in the weeks leading up to the CCAA meet, has her eyes set on winning the sectionals, but is taking nothing for granted,

"I was never fully comfortable," she said after pulling her on warmups after her win at Long Point, "because my coach said (Pietrocarlo) was coming in hard. I knew I had to go hard the entire way."

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