

Mohawks, Falcons run at Pickerington

SPORTS

Staff report

PICKERINGTON — The Northwest High School boys cross country team is off and running in 2020, and while trying to social distance during this time of the coronavirus, the Mohawks have hopes of putting some distance between themselves and other programs throughout southeastern Ohio.

On Saturday, the Mohawk men — along with Minford's boys and girls squads — competed at the Central Ohio-centric Pickerington North Classic, as Pickerington North is always the home to the annual regional meet.

Northwest was one of nine teams which competed in the Group 3 boys race, which was won by defending Division II state runner-up Unioto —as the Mohawks and Unioto are the two defending Southeast District Division II champions.

The Mohawks, which qualified for the state meet for the first time since the mid-1980s last season, finished third at Pickerington with a team score of 109.

Northwest's top four runners all crossed among the top-25, including three among the top-15, two in the top-11, and all-Ohio returnee Landen Smith securing a fifth-place performance out of 125 runners.

Smith, the senior standout who was 11th in 16 minutes and four seconds in last season's (Division II) state race, started his final campaign with a 16:52 on Saturday.

But, he was only 16 seconds from finishing as the race runner-up, as senior Owen Karas of Columbus St. Charles was the race champion —in 16:14.

Smith trailed only Karas, Chris Tooms (16:37) of John Glenn, Victor Orsinelli (16:42) of New Albany and Gabe Lynch (16:51) of Unioto for the championship.

Lynch led the way for the Shermans, as all five of their counting scorers placed among the top 13 — with their two non-scorers crossing in 16th and 18th.

Unioto's team score was a low 40, followed by New Albany at 55 —as the Mohawks edged a crowded field of third thru seventh-place units.

Marysville (113) trailed the Mohawks by just four points, as Bloom-Carroll (133), John Glenn (138) and St. Charles (140) rounded out the top seven.

For the Mohawks, fellow senior Josh Shope placed 11th in 17:48 — as junior Kailin Marshall muscled a 15th-place effort in 18:01 and senior Gabe Morrell made it a 25th-place showing in 18:40.

Morrell, if you recall, was a critical counting score for Northwest in its rainy regional run last October —as he missed the state meet due to suffering a broken pelvis during that race.

Northwest's fifth counting score on Saturday was that of freshman Eragorn Elkins, who was 84th overall in 21:32.

The other two competing Mohawks were sophomore Michael Wamsley (102nd in 22:47) and freshman Boston Wolfe (105th in 22:49).

Byrd flies to 4th for Falcons

Not to be outdone, despite running the Group 4 boys race, was Minford senior Dutch Byrd — who finished fourth out of 131 runners in a time of 17:28.

The overall times were slightly slower than the Group 3 race, as Dublin Jerome freshman Sam Ricchiuti set the pace and won the race in 16:48.

He, along with Dublin Jerome sophomore Joshua Razor (17:13) and Chillicothe senior Oscar Mikus (17:20), were the only three runners to finish faster than Byrd.

Dublin Jerome, with all five of its scorers placing in the top-10 and all seven of its runners crossing in the top-20, easily captured the team championship — with a tally of 28.

Minford finished seventh out of nine clubs with a 190, as Worthington Kilbourne was the runner-up at 55 and Chillicothe took third at 86.

Rounding out the final half-dozen were Grove City (131), Garaway (135), Logan Elm (152), Minford (190), Logan (213) and Zane Trace (232).

Besides the Division II Falcons, Chillicothe, Logan, Logan Elm and Zane Trace are all members of the Southeast District.

Minford fielded four runners on Saturday besides Byrd —Zeb Allen (66th in 20:54), Samuel Tieman (69th in 21:02), Mason Blackburn (92nd in 22:33) and Lucas Heardman (123rd in 27:37).

The Lady Falcons sported three girls in their race out of 131 runners, as Abby Cochenour of Eastern ended up 16th in 22 minutes and 37 seconds.

Minford's trio included sophomore Juniper Allen (36th in 24:20), senior Kara Dillon (42nd in 24:34) and freshman Chelsea Dietrich (109th in 31:12).

A complete list of results from the Pickerington North Classic can be found at www.baumspage.com. Northwest and Minford will be among the several Scioto County and Southern Ohio Conference schools competing at the Northwest Invitational on Saturday (Sept. 5).