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Draheim Dominates Regional Race; One of Four Trojan State Qualifiers ^[1]

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By:

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East Lansing junior Abbie Draheim crosses the finish line to win the Division 1 regional race Friday at DeWitt High School. Draheim and freshman teammate Anna Delgado both qualified for the Nov. 2 state finals at Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn.

Rarely do you hear the sport of cross country referred to a game of inches, though it literally was a week ago at the Capital Area Activities Conference Blue division girls race.

DeWitt's Kaitlyn Hynes and East Lansing's Abbie Draheim matched stride for stride Oct. 17 at Ledge Meadows Golf Course until the finish line when Hynes defeated Draheim by a step to win the 5,000-meter race by a tenth of a second.

Tough defeat? Obviously. Learning opportunity? Evidently.

Draheim turned the table on Hynes, and the remainder of the Division 1 regional field, when she cruised to a seven-second victory Friday afternoon at a newly plotted DeWitt High School course. The 5,000-meter trek was much drier and the footing much cleaner than the previous layout, according to both Draheim and East Lansing girls coach Tim Akers.

"We came out here (Thursday) and walked first quarter, then jogged the rest of the way," Akers said. "Our fear was that it would be wet and sloppy, and smaller runners have a harder time trudging through the mud. But it was nice and firm, and we got lucky in that regard."

Draheim said she felt comfortable all the way around, and especially so at the two-mile mark when she was in a closely bunched quartet of leaders along with Hynes, DeWitt's Elsa Rusthoven and Katie Carothers of Brighton.

"I knew at that point I had a lot left in me," Draheim said, "I was waiting for the right moment to push ahead and see how long I could hold them back."

The East Lansing junior not only pushed ahead but she drew away over the last half-mile and was all by herself heading down the homestretch.

"I felt like I had a good kick," Draheim said, "but I was definitely a little nervous, because [Hynes] beat me from behind [at the CAAC Blue meet]. I heard more people cheering for my name than hers, so I knew I had a little bit of a gap and wanted to give it all I had."

Draheim crossed the finish line in 18:17.2, a full seven seconds ahead of Hynes and 16 seconds ahead of Rusthoven.

"I knew she [Draheim] did not like losing by a step last time out," Akers said. "She did not like that at all. She said she was confident last time and wasn't going to change that race or her strategy."



Freshman Anna Delgado (above) ran perhaps her best race of the year to finish eighth in 19:08, and also qualified for the state finals.

?I sent Anna out after Okemos? number one runner just to run with her as long as she could,? Akers said. ?She didn?t just run with her, she beat her by about twenty [20] seconds.?

Akers was not surprised by his first-year runner?s performance.

?She?s a competitor, she just stepped up,? Akers said. ?Plus, she was seeded fourteenth [14th] coming in. She saw [the seeding sheet] and that?s all she needed. It set her off.?

The top three teams and 15 individuals qualified for next week?s state meet.

Girls team results (* indicates state qualifier)?1. Brighton 53*; 2. Howell 118*; 3. Okemos 125*; 4. Holt 131; 5. DeWitt 138; 6. South Lyon 152; 7. East Lansing 160; 8. Ann Arbor Skyline 195; 9. South Lyon East 207; 10. Grand Ledge 241; 11. Battle Creek Lakeview 246; 12. Dexter 307; 13. Jackson 326 14. Pinckney 328; 15. Lansing Everett 500.

East Lansing (* indicates state qualifier)?1. Abbie Draheim 18:17.2*; 8. Anna Delgado 19:08.1*; 32. Molly Conlin 20:24.1; 57. Barbara Stout 21:04.9; 62. Esther Waller 21:23.7; 80. Grace Rose 21:56.7; 93. Payton Baker 22:50.4



Two Trojan boys qualify for state meet

East Lansing senior Andrew Lane (201) qualified for the state finals for the second straight year but with a hint of disappointment in his voice.

"It's great to make the state meet [again] and I have a chance to redeem myself after last year [finishing 48th] but I know our team is going to be very strong next year, and unfortunately I won't be a part of it," Lane said.

Lane crossed the line fourth in 15:29.3 and teammate Nathan Faust (a junior) was ninth in 15:47.2, giving the Trojans their fourth overall state qualifier. As a team, the Trojans finished fifth of 16 in what coach Pat Murray called "clearly the toughest regional in the state."



East Lansing junior Nathan Faust gets ready to collect his regional medal Friday at DeWitt High School.

?The boys ran really, really well,? Murray said. ?The top three [including Matthew Zeleke, 18th, 16:30.7] ran ? in my mind ? their fastest times of the year. We have two kids going to the state meet, and just missed a third. He ran about ten places higher than he was seeded.

?I can?t be unhappy with any of their efforts. If we had run like this at any other regional, we?d be going to the state meet.?

Boys team results?1. Brighton 50*; 2. Dexter 56*; 3. Ann Arbor Skyline 85*; 4. Pinckney 98; 5. East Lansing 137; 6. Okemos 203; 7. Grand Ledge 234; 8. Battle Creek Lakeview 238; 9. Holt 249; 10. DeWitt 262; 11. Howell 304; 12. Jackson 312; 13. South Lyon East 324; 14. South Lyon 354; 15. Waverly 405; 16. Everett 474 (Top three teams qualify for state finals, Nov. 2 at Michigan International Speedway)

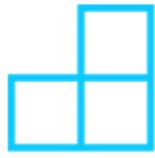
East Lansing?4. Andrew Lane 15:29.3*; 9. Nathan Faust 15:47.2*; 18. Matthew Zeleke 16:30.7; 49. Jayden Page 17:21.1; 57. Eric Kolar 17:34.3; 84. Ian Williams 18:02.5; 94. Aaron Nevins 18:32.2

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