

Prep Sports | updated: 10/24/2015 7:39 PM

# Another close call, another Prospect victory

**By Michael Eaken**  
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Prospect's girls cross country team sure has been living on edge.

Just last week, the Knights edged Barrington by 2 points for the Mid-Suburban League title.

On Saturday, Prospect once again survived a close call, this time edging Schaumburg 42-45 to secure the Hoffman Estates Class 3A regional title at Busse Woods.

Glenbrook South (99), Hersey (114), Rolling Meadows (120) and Hoffman Estates (134) rounded out the top six team qualifiers that will advance to the Schaumburg Class 3A Sectional at Busse Woods at 10 a.m. Saturday.

A heavy rain greeted the runners at the opening gun, but Prospect junior Brooke Wilson (18:10) and junior Aileen White (18:54) didn't flinch in securing first and fourth place.

Wilson made separation from Schaumburg sophomore Maddie Marasco (18:28) and Conant junior Sydney Davis (18:37) in the second mile in securing the victory with an 18 second cushion.

"I'm feeling good," said Wilson, who secured the MSL individual title last weekend. "It was a relaxed start, and I worked on pushing it the last half."

Prospect received a big lift from a trio of freshman. Julia O'Grady (19:11) placed sixth and was followed by Jenna Baltas (19:39) and Cori Drew (20:08) in 11th and 20th place.

But the Knights' emergence has been powered by the energy that White has provided. She has found an extra gear in October, including finishing eight in the MSL meet. And White took another step forward on Saturday.

"Pretty much every big meet we've had, she has been the one leading the charge," said Prospect coach Pete Wintermute. "Without her, we don't do these types of things."

White found her top gear in the second half of the race in helping Prospect hold off a stubborn Schaumburg attack.

"It's been really fun," said White of the Knights' recent run of success. "Once we got into the conference meet we gained a lot of confidence, and now we're just rolling."

Schaumburg was also rolling on Saturday, with Marasco leading the charge in second place.

"We did amazing this week," said Marasco, whose team rebounded from a distant fourth-place finish in MSL. "We had a different mindset this week and we just wanted to push ourselves."

Junior Valerie Schackelton (19:32), junior Ellie O'Connell (19:35), and sophomore Lauren Kubinski (19:35) then packed together an 8-9-10 finish.

The big difference for the Saxons on Saturday was the performance of junior Andrea Palacios (19:57), who finished 16th.

"Everybody knew their role and where they needed to place," said Schaumburg coach Courtney Smith. "It gives us a lot of confidence going forward."

Junior Hailey Bowes (19:23) finished in seventh place in helping Hersey to a fourth-place finish. She was aided by junior Sarah Harden (19:41) in 12th.

"End of the season I have been feeling really strong, and it has been getting easier every week," said Bowes who finished 10th in the MSL.

Senior Gabby Sanchez (19:47) and sophomore Megan Martin (20:03) gave Rolling Meadows a lift by taking 14th and 18th place. Senior Natalie Brady (20:20) added a 24th-place finish for the Mustangs.

Senior Megan Biddle (19:01) placed fifth and helped Hoffman Estates secure the final sectional qualifying spot. Senior Carly Dagen (20:14) aided the Hawks' effort in 21st place.

Conant junior Sydney Davis secured the top individual sectional qualifying spot with her third-place finish.

"I'm definitely more focused than I was before," said Davis, who connected with lead pack early and grinded out the last mile. "Definitely feeling confident, and I'm ready to roll."

Wheeling senior Melissa Rodriguez (17th place), Fremd junior Linda Varela (25th place), Conant junior Michelle Meister (26th place), and Fremd senior Nora Finegan (28th place) completed the list of individual sectional qualifiers.

Palatine regional: A week after finishing second by a mere 2 points to Prospect at the Mid-Suburban League conference meet, Barrington was back on top.

Barrington placed five runners in the top 17 to secure the Palatine Class 3A regional title with 54 points at Deer Grove East.

Sophomore Jocelyn Long (17:37) took charge by finishing in third place, followed by senior Lauren Conroy (18:35) in eighth.

Junior Samantha Samaryczew (18:45) and freshmen Sophie Hoeltgen (18:54) Eve Hoeltgen (19:00) completed the Fillies' scoring by going 12-14-17.

Palatine finished second with 65 points, followed by Grant (73 points), Lake Zurich (81 points), Buffalo Grove (151 points), and Crystal Lake South (175 points).

All six teams will advance to next Saturday Schaumburg Class 3A sectional at Busse Woods.

Lake Zurich senior Caitlin Shepard won the individual title, crossing the line in 17:29. The Bears got an 11th-place finish from Kelly Ledinsky and a 15th-place effort from Kristie Houghton in finishing fourth as a team with 81 points.

Palatine senior Kelly O'Brien (17:37) took second in helping the Pirates to second place.

Senior Sam Lechowicz (fifth, 17:56) and junior Anna Buckstaff (ninth, 18:38) added key finishes for the Pirates, with Rebecca Duran (19:18) taking 23rd place.

Grant, paced by a fourth-place effort from Madison Roming and a sixth-place effort from freshman Danielle Osmon, placed third in the team race with 73 points.

Kaitlyn Ko (18:49) and senior Natalie Lezama (19:03) finished in 13th and 19th place, combining to help lead Buffalo Grove to a fifth-place finish.

Crystal Lake South grabbed the final qualifying spot with 175 points.

Niles West regional: Elk Grove junior Emily Stegmeier excelled, turning in a runner-up individual finish and helping the Grenadiers advance to the sectional in the team picture.

Stegmeier finished in 17:56, just two seconds behind winner Carolyn Fix of New Trier.

The Trevians won with 27 points, followed by sectional qualifiers Maine South (75), Loyola (84), Evanston (97), Elk Grove (134) and Niles West (137).

Contributing to Elk Grove's score were Cassie Slattery (24th, 19:35), Amy Haderspeck (34th, 20:45), Jackey Cruz (35th, 20:47) and Hannah Olson (39th, 21:07).

Fenton regional: Freshman Payton McDonnell delivered a third-place finish in 20:05 to help St. Viator advance in the Class 2A postseason.

Brianna Mastrodomenico (10th, 21:15) and Maura Hogaboom had the next placements for the Lions, who finished with 62 points, behind team co-

champions Deerfield and Mather.

Claire Bottcher (17th, 21:47) and Megan Lifka (19th, 21:58) also counted toward St. Viator's total.


Kelly Osborn of Deerfield had the top performance, winning in 19:01.

Luther North regional: Junior Isabella Wolke and freshman Emma Wolke both advanced through the regional round.

Isabella placed second in 18:41, and Emma was fifth in 20:19 to earn individual spots in next week's Class 1A sectional.

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