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CROSS COUNTRY TEAMS ARE FIRST AND SECOND IN NEW YORK STATE CLASS B CHAMPIONSHIPS

The East Aurora cross country teams overcame adversity this past weekend to capture the Girls New York State Class B Cross Country Championship and the Boys Class B Runner-Up spot at the state championships, held at Norwood-Norfolk High School in Section X.

The trip began with the Section VI athletes being forced to use school bus transportation to make the six-hour journey to the North Country. The section athletes usually travel using the preferred coach bus transportation.

"It's never easy traveling with our section. Teams are forced to make do with what is best for 125 athletes, which is not always best for individual or team performances," Coach McLaughlin said. "We survived what was thrown at us and performed well to place first and second which was an awesome accomplishment."

Placing first and second as in team finishes was the best performance by any school in New York State, demonstrating East Aurora's outstanding strength and balance in its cross country program, not to mention an individual title and two individual third place finishes--the best ever for East Aurora.

The girls team captured its third consecutive team title, led by Catherine Lusardi, who won East Aurora's first individual championship. Jenna Hulton raced to a third-place finish just .3 seconds from second place. Catherine Phillips ran extremely well to place seventh and was followed by freshman sensation Megan Hulton, who finished 21st. Erin Crawford turned in another solid performance to finish 23rd. Rounding out the East Aurora runners were Kirsten Weberg in 33rd and Alice Coughlin in 35th.

"This team has been so focused and have worked very hard to be where they are today," said McLaughlin. "I think the only thing harder than winning one state championships is trying to do it again and these ladies did great. The road to this title began last March and it takes a special group to do what they have done."

The East Aurora boys cross country team continued to race well as they surpassed predictions to place second, knocking off last year's team champions by ten points. Junior Scott Anderson, who placed third, led the team. Junior Lyle O'Brien raced to a 15th-place finish, followed by freshman Alex Weberg, who ran a solid race to finish 41st. Sophomore Tom Neu also raced well, finishing 50th and was followed



The New York State Girls Class B Cross Country Champions.



closely by Brad Whitney, who placed 64th. Rounding out the East Aurora runners were freshman Kevin O'Connor in 101st and junior Matt Malican in 111th.

All places included individual athletes who did not represent teams or count in team scoring.

"Our boys team have come so far this year--it's amazing when you think where we were in August," Coach McLaughlin said. "It's a credit to these young men in how hard they have worked and improved all season. I could not be more proud of a group of athletes"

Scott Anderson will join the girls team and compete at the New York State Federation Championship to be held this weekend at Bowdoin Park near Poughkeepsie. The Federation Championship is a meet that includes the best team and athletes from the different associations in New York State, with teams not divided by school size.



The State Boys Class B Cross Country Championship runners-up.

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