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At the state competition

Photos by Nathaniel Judson

Andy Napier and Jim Beatty qualified for the state competition in Peoria. Out of 251 runners, Napier placed fourth and Beatty placed 38. Napier also qualified last year, however this year he achieved the all-state award.

Napier takes fourth

Achieves all-state award after taking first at sectionals

By Kyle Moncelle and Tim Racette

With their feet pounding, hearts racing, and the crowd cheering, Andy Napier and Jim Beatty, Antioch Community High Schools seniors, crossed the finish line at the boys state cross country meet in Peoria. Napier finished fourth and Beatty placed 38 out of more than 230 runners.

"I'm extremely happy with both boys. [Beatty and Napier] ran two of the strongest races that they have all season," said Dave Judson, head coach of the ACHS boys cross country team, "To finish that strong against that caliber of runners is just amazing."

According to Judson, tying for first place in sectionals wasn't even a goal for the team this season.

Napier, with a time of 14:35 finished only twenty-one seconds after the first place runner, Matt Withrow.

Napier was very pleased with his results. "I remember at the beginning of the season, during

double sessions, a former ACHS cross country runner, Dan Croeker, who ran back in the 80's, told me that I should shoot for top five in state. I responded by saying no way. I didn't think I had a shot, but I guess I did, and I did it. I have been blessed," he said.

Napier's fourth place earns him the distinction of All-State, a title he only missed by one place when he went to the state meet last year. All-State runners are the top twenty-five runners at the state meet.

"My goal was to be in the top 25, but I came up 14 seconds short of that. I'm still content with 38th place, though. My time, 15:12, is my fastest three-mile time ever," said Beatty.

Beatty, who broke top forty with a time of 15:12, finished ahead three runners who had beat him the week before, in the sectional meet, according to Judson.

"He ran a really, really good race. The competition [at the state meet] was just incredibly tough this year. He placed really well," said Judson.



Jim Beatty turns the corner and begins the up hill to his 38 place finish.

Antioch students, faculty, and community members were at Peoria, strong in number and eager to support the two runners.

"The team and school did a great job supporting [Napier] and me. I was pleasantly surprised at how many people from Antioch came all the way to Peoria to watch us run," said Beatty.

Napier's All-State distinction qualified him to run in the Midwest Footlocker Regionals meet against the top twenty-five runners from Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky, and Wisconsin, representing Illinois.

However, Napier needed surgery to remove a bone from his foot and was unable to attend the meet on Nov. 15.

Cheerleaders nab third at first competition

By Amber Campbell

Third is not enough for the Girls Varsity cheerleading squad. They plan on making adjustments to their routine to qualify for state at regionals.

The Antioch Community High School Varsity Cheerleaders attended their first competition in Champaign, placing 3rd. They ended with a sense of regret and mindset to fix their mistakes in preparation for regionals.

When heading to a competition there is an array of emotions felt by all involved. There is always a air of fear, impatience, dread, and hope. Competing at an invitational and competing at a regional competition are two different things.

After all the practice and preparation the goal is to make it to state. An invitational does not give the squad the opportunity to make state, but it gives them practice and a head start on competition.

"From today until the next competition we need to work on the little and big mistakes made at the invitational to clean up our routine before we can qualify for state," said varsity cheerleader Heidi Gwinn.

As of July 2, IHSA is considering cheerleading as a sport, meaning they are permitted to compete five times, including state competition.

Starting competitions early gives the squad a chance to fine tune

their routine, which is needed for a chance at state. While the cheerleaders took third place, their routine was the most difficult and got huge reactions out of the crowd and the judges of the competition.

While sitting in the bleachers, watching all the squads take their turn warming up on the mats, the reactions from the crowd were nothing short of amazed.

"I can't do that stuff standing on the ground, let alone in the air. I'd lose my balance," said a varsity cheerleader sitting in the crowd from Springfield Lanphier High School after the stunt groups had done a liberty touchdown to a front tail stretch to a whip back arabesque into an upscale.

During the routine, the girls dropped a 360 lib, a pike sit flip, and stepped out of bounds twice. The loss of these stunts took twenty points away from their overall score, including more points away from the quality of the stunts.

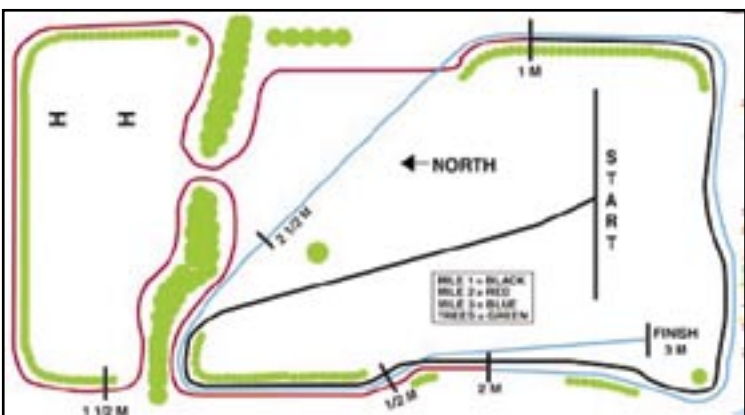
"If we would have stuck the stunts, we would have been first by a margin of points," said coach Robin Gwinn. "As it is, the girls know if you drop a stunt you have no business winning first."

So the goals for the squad include rearranging the stunt groups to compensate for their weaknesses and practicing the routine until they don't need to think about, to when it come natural.



Photo by Amber Campbell

Antioch Sequoit cheerleading squad performs at St. Thomas Moore school to begin the competition portion of their season last weekend taking third place in the invitational.



Graphic courtesy of IHSA.org

Peoria-Woodruff the site of the state cross country meet, the course is extremely flat and fast compared to most of the courses Beatty and Napier have run in the past.