

SPORTS



Who is...
Jakob Ettestad, Broncos senior running back/linebacker, is featured

B2

CROSS COUNTRY

Bronco girls returning to state

Lexi Erickson 3rd in Section 7A

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

For the third year in a row, the International Falls girls cross country team has qualified for the State Class A Meet.

The Broncos ran in a wintry weather mix when they placed second at Thursday's Section 7A Championships at the Cloquet Country Club, four points behind this year's Section champion, South Ridge.

The top-two teams and top-eight individuals who are not on the top-two teams all qualify for the state meet, which will be held Nov. 2 at St. Olaf College.

South Ridge topped the team standings with 97 points, followed by the Falls at 101.

Last year's Section 7A and State Class A champion, Esko, won't be going back to state as a team after finishing third with 121.

Moose Lake/Willow River/Barnum came in fourth at 127, while Mesabi East rounded out the top five with 133 out of 15 teams with at least five finishers to count in the standings.

Broncos head coach Paul Hjelle called Falls' third consecutive runner-up finish with a trip to state both exciting and bittersweet.

"It's kind of bittersweet because I knew it was going to be a battle between Esko, South Ridge, us and Mesabi East," Hjelle said. "Little did I know that Esko would be so far back, and we've beaten South Ridge every time we've competed against them this year."

"You look at it that way it's kind of disappointing, but we're going to state and now we have something to shoot for at state, at that's to get South Ridge."

Esko junior Kailee Kiminski was the Section's top individual finisher after completing the 4,000-meter course in 15 minutes, 20 seconds.

Falls' top finisher, freshman Lexi Erickson, placed third, 7.3 seconds behind Kiminski.

"I knew it was going to be hard, but I just knew I had to run my race and I did," Erickson said.

The start of the Section 7A girls race featured a burst of sleet coming down as the running conditions varied from start to finish.

"The sleet hurt my face, but it was alright," Erickson said. "It got nicer, so I got a little hot, but that's OK."

Broncos senior Sydney Raboin also finished in the top 10 after placing ninth in 15:56.4.

"(Thursday's) race was a tough one, but we all



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

The Bronco girls cross country team poses for pictures Thursday after placing runner-up in the Section 7A Meet at the Cloquet Country Club. The Falls has qualified for the State Class A Meet for the third year in a row.

gave it everything we had," Raboin said. "I'm proud of our team pushing through and not giving up. The weather wasn't the best (Thursday)."

"State will be a blast – so happy I get to go with the whole team."

Falls senior Amy Auran, who was also an individual state qualifier her freshman season and will be making her fourth consecutive trip to state, finished 16th in 16:28.7.

The Broncos' two other runners whose finishes counted toward the team total included: senior Lexi Owen, 23rd in 16:47.7; and seventh-grader Faith Black, 50th in 17:30.6.

"(Thursday) was a close call to qualify for state," Auran said. "Every single runner on the team pushed themselves to the mat."

"I am so proud of our team for their hard work and battling through the weather. I can't wait for

state."

BRONCO BOYS 11TH

In the boys competition, the Falls placed 11th with 286 points.

Crosby-Ironton (40) and Proctor (53) qualified for state as entire teams by finishing 1-2, respectively. Esko (101) came in third, followed by Eveleth-Gilbert (128) and Mesabi East (132) as the top-five teams out of 16 with at least five finishers.

Mesabi East senior Samuel Johnson won the individual boys title after finishing the 5,000-meter course in 16:42.4.

None of the Bronco boys qualified for state with the team's best individual finish coming from junior Cole Tatsak, who placed 39th in 18:57.1.

"(Thursday) was very cold – my hands got frozen," Tatsak said. "I'm pretty sure everyone else is really cold, too, but we all did good."

"We had a couple people move up and beat a couple people, so we all did good as a team."

Falls senior Wyatt Ulrich ran in the last cross country race of his high school career by placing 43rd in 19:12.1.

"The boys improved a lot since the start (of the season)...," Ulrich said. "I'm very proud of our team this year."

The three other Bronco boys runners whose finishes counted toward the team total included: eighth-grader John Cowman, 65th in 20:01.4; seventh-grader Joe Glowack, 78th in 20:27.1; and freshman Chase Howdahl, 80th in 20:30.1.

Section 7A Championships GIRLS

Team scores: South Ridge 97, International Falls 101, Esko 121, Moose Lake/Willow River/Barnum 127, Mesabi East 133, Crosby-Ironton 140, Cook County-Two Harbors 200, Ely 235, Proctor 245, Greenway/Nashwauk-Keewatin

256, Marshall 266, Eveleth-Gilbert 282, Carlton 299, Deer River/Northland 315, Virginia 354.

Top individual: Kailee Kiminski, Esko, 15:20.

International Falls runners: 3. Lexi Erickson, 15:27.3; 9. Sydney Raboin, 15:56.4; 16. Amy Auran, 16:28.7; 23. Lexi Owen, 16:47.7; 50. Faith Black, 17:30.6; 60. Jenna Anderson, 18:02.7; 65. Lexi Edwards, 18:19.2.

BOYS

Team scores: Crosby-Ironton 40, Proctor 53, Esko 101, Eveleth-Gilbert 128, Mesabi East 132, Cook County-Two Harbors 151, Moose Lake/Willow River/Barnum 164, Virginia 204, Marshall 235, Ely 247, International Falls 286, South Ridge 301, Cromwell-Floodwood 339, Greeway/Nashwauk-Keewatin 447, Wrenshall 448, Mountain Iron-Buhl 486.

Top individual: Samuel Johnson, Mesabi East, 16:42.4.

International Falls runners: 39. Cole Tatsak, 18:57.1; 43. Wyatt Ulrich, 19:12.1; 65. John Cowman, 20:01.4; 78. Joe Glowack, 20:27.1; 80. Chase Howdahl, 20:30.1; 81. Billy Brokaw, 20:32.2; 92. Ben Erickson, 21:03.3.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Broncos fall in Section 7AAA quarterfinals

FHS season ends at 4-5 overall

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

The season came to an end Tuesday night along the north shore of Lake Superior for the International Falls football team.

The Broncos lost their Section 7AAA quarterfinal game at Two Harbors, 20-12.

"It was a great battle," said Falls head coach Jay Boyle. "Two Harbors is a good team. It was back and forth. We got some stops here. They were still able to crank out a big play or two on us. We were able to get a few on them."

"Towards the end of the game, we let them take control of the line of scrimmage a little too much. Not having guys in the spots they've been in all season due to injury had ended up hurting us in the end."

The Falls, which received the Section's No. 5 seed after having also lost 30-28 at home to the Agates during the regular season, ended the 100th year of Bronco football 4-5 overall. Two Harbors, seeded No. 4, improved to 6-3 and advanced to today's semifinal game at top-seeded Proctor.

After giving up a first-quarter touchdown to trail



STAFF PHOTOS BY KEVIN BONESKE

The Broncos' Cody Hallin runs with the football in Tuesday night's Section 7AAA quarterfinal game at Two Harbors.

6-0, the Broncos tied the game with 5:18 left before halftime on a 12-yard touchdown pass from Jakob Eide to Luke Spilde.

Falls' 2-point conversion attempt failed and the half ended tied at 6-6.

After the Broncos stopped the Agates on downs and took over on offense 43 yards away from



In front, Broncos quarterback Jakob Eide (15) looks for an open receiver while being rushed by Two Harbors' John Peer (55) in Tuesday night's Section 7AAA quarterfinal game.

to back off the line, run the ball a little bit, so the guys just played tough in the middle (of the game)," Boyle said.

Two Harbors regained the lead after capping off a 65-yard scoring drive early in the fourth quarter on a 1-yard run by Kyle Omtvedt. The extra point

by Eli Hebl put the Agates in front, 13-12.

After receiving the ensuing kickoff, the Falls ended up punting the ball back to Two Harbors, which then capped off a 68-yard scoring drive with a 40-yard touchdown run by Lucas Kempffer with 8:56 to play. Hebl's extra point extended the Agates' lead to 20-12.

The Broncos' final series on offense in an effort to tie the game late in the fourth quarter ended after Eide fumbled the ball on their 27-yard line, where the Agates took over and ran out the clock.

Following Tuesday's season-ending playoff loss, the Falls will be losing 10 seniors to graduation.

"This has been a fantastic season," Boyle said. "Our seniors (and) the whole team represented Bronco football very well during this 100th season."

"It was our first .500 (regular) season that we've had in a few years, and the team got better as the year went on and the program's heading in a good direction. The biggest thing is I'm so proud of our players that stuck it out the whole year and represented our school and our community well."

Two Harbors 20, I. Falls 12
I. Falls 0 6 6 0 - 12
Two Harbors 6 0 0 14 - 20

SPORTS SCHEDULE

Today's games
Women's hockey
RRCC Tournament at Bronco Arena, 9 a.m./4 p.m.
Women's volleyball
Central Lakes at RRCC, Noon

Sunday's games
Women's hockey
RRCC Tournament at Bronco Arena, 11 a.m.

Monday's games
Women's volleyball
RRCC at Vermilion, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday's games
Girls swimming/diving
I. Falls at Mesabi East, 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday's games
Girls volleyball
Section 7A semifinals at Deer River, TBA
Section 7AA semifinals at Duluth Denfeld, 7:30 p.m.

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