

SPORTS

TRACK AND FIELD

Bronco girls win IRC championship

FHS boys 5th

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

For the first time since the early 1990s, the International Falls girls track and field team has won back-to-back Iron Range Conference championships.

The Broncos won Tuesday's IRC Meet in Hibbing with 189 points, followed by Grand Rapids (176.5), Mesabi East (100), Hibbing (60.5), and Eveleth-Gilbert (55) in the top five out of nine teams.

"This was the second meet in row where we were waiting for the field event results to find out which team was taking home the trophy," said Falls head coach Jen Erickson. "Rapids had depth and talent in the longer track events and relays, but we had some key finishes on the track and some outstanding performances in the field that gave us the extra points to pass up Rapids.

"These girls showed again that you can't count them out until every event is scored. An IRC win is an honor these girls fought hard to earn and it happened because they pulled together as a team."

Six Bronco girls earned All-Conference honors with their 12 top-two individual finishes, including senior Hailey Fentem setting a new IRC Meet record in the 100-meter hurdles (15.81 seconds), based on adjusting previously taken hand-held times to fully automated timing by adding 24-hundredths of a second. The old record was set by JoAnn Menson of Grand Rapids in 1983.

Fentem also won the high jump (5 feet, 1 inch), a height which tied her for 10th among the school's all-time best girls high jumpers, placed runner-up in the 300-meter hurdles (51.23) and added a fourth-place finish in the long jump (14-7).

"I am so proud of our team and the hard-fought victory we earned over



From left, the Broncos' Breanna Shofner, Mesabi East's Hope Howell and the Broncos' Valandre Butler compete in the 100-meter dash in Tuesday's Iron Range Conference Meet at Hibbing. Shofner placed first with Howell coming in second and Butler finishing third.

Rapids for a second year in a row," Fentem said. "This team is definitely one to remember and I'm so grateful for the opportunity to share my senior track season with an amazing group of girls."

Falls senior Breanna Shofner won the both the 100 dash (13.21) and 200 dash (26.61) and placed runner-up in the triple jump (32-3.5).

"The meet was very windy with alternating times of sunshine and rain showers," Shofner said. "Our team did great (Tuesday) with many of us setting new personal bests for the season. I'm glad we were able to defend our IRC title."

Broncos junior Savannah Olson was a double individual winner by placing first in both the shot put (38-1) and discus (107-11), while eighth-grader Emma Gilbert added third-place finishes in the shot put (35-8) and discus (85-1).

Two Falls freshmen, Emily Saari and Claire Herzig, went 1-2, respectively, in the pole vault after both clearing 8-6. Senior teammate Amy Auran added a sixth-place finish at 7-0.

"I am proud of how hard our team fought (Tuesday) even with the crazy weather," Auran said. "Our team proved (Tuesday) that we are capable of big things when challenged."

Broncos freshman Lexi Erickson placed runner-up in both the 1600 run (5:44.55) and 3200 run (12:26.85) with Auran coming in seventh in the 3200 run (13:39.18).

"(Tuesday) was a great confidence booster for our team before heading into a tough True Team State Meet on Saturday," Lexi Erickson said.

The Falls also came in second in two relay races with senior Lexi Owen, Gilbert, sophomore Madeline Dahle and freshman Valandre Butler in the 4X100 (55.04) and Herzig, Dahle, Butler and Shofner in the 4X200 (1:55.33).

Herzig, Lexi Erickson, Gilbert and Owen placed third in the 4X400 (4:38.42), while sophomore Abby Kostiuik, junior Tayler Hebner, seventh-grader Grace Gilbert and freshman Anna Earley finished fourth in the 4X800 (11:11.01).

Other top-four finishes for the Broncos included Butler placing third in the 100 dash (13.74) and Owen



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

In front at left, the Broncos' Hailey Fentem clears a hurdle while competing in the 100-meter hurdles in Tuesday's Iron Range Conference Meet at Hibbing. Fentem placed first and set a new IRC Meet record in 15.81 seconds.

coming in fourth in the 300 hurdles (52.63).

The Falls also picked up top-eight finishes to score points from: Butler, fifth in the triple jump (31-1); Lexi Erickson, fifth in the high jump (4-6); Saari, sixth in the 100 hurdles (17.98); Herzig, sixth in the long jump (13-10); Kostiuik, seventh in both the 400 dash (1:08.71) and 800 run (2:46.14); and Dahle, eighth in the 200 dash (29.51).

FHS BOYS FIFTH

In the boys competition, the Broncos placed fifth out of nine teams.

Grand Rapids won the team title with 173 points, followed by Hibbing (108.5), Mesabi East (108), Eveleth-Gilbert (102.3) and the Falls (63.5) in the top five.

Broncos sophomore Ethan Phung had the team's only first-place and All-Conference finish by winning the triple jump (40-7.25), while junior teammate Cole Tatsak came in eighth at 36-2.5.

Phung added a third-place finish in the high jump (5-6) with sophomore teammate Wyatt Helgeson

placing fifth at the same height.

"Even though we came up short of where we wanted to be, I thought everyone gave it their all," Phung said. "The weather sure wasn't the best, but we still fought through it, and I'm happy how everyone did."

Falls senior Jakob Ettestad tied for third in the pole vault (10-0), while junior teammate Nehemiah Olson came in seventh at 9-0.

Olson also placed fourth in the 100 dash (12.01).

Broncos senior Paul Skoglund placed fifth in the 110 hurdles (18.87) with Tatsak coming in eighth in 19.81. Tatsak added a fifth-place finish in the 300 hurdles (47.25).

"I'm very proud of our guys for pushing through when I know the weather was bad," Skoglund said. "I know some guys were a little disappointed with their times, but considering the weather, I think they did very well."

The Falls also picked up two top-eight finishes in the 400 dash with sophomore Peter Griffith placing seventh in 58.26 and senior

Jake Piekarski coming in eighth in 58.96.

Broncos junior Gary Harala finished sixth in the shot put (39-4), eighth-grader John Cowman placed eighth in the 1600 run (5:19.73) and Helgeson added an eighth-place finish in the long jump (16-6).

The Falls also finished fourth in two relays with Ettestad, Phung, Helgeson and Olson in the 4X100 (49.7) and Helgeson, Griffith, Phung and Ettestad in the 4X200 (1:41.96). Tatsak, Piekarski, Griffith and freshman Nick Hedtke added a sixth-place finish in the 4X400 (4:06.4).

IRC Championship GIRLS

Team scores: International Falls 189, Grand Rapids 176.5, Mesabi East 100, Hibbing 60.5, Eveleth-Gilbert 55, Virginia 47, Greenway/Nashwauk-Keewatin 28, Deer River/Northland 26, Chisholm 20.

BOYS

Team scores: Grand Rapids 173, Hibbing 108.5, Mesabi East 108, Eveleth-Gilbert 102.3, International Falls 63.5, Virginia 59.3, Deer River/Northland 35, Chisholm 29.3, Greenway/Nashwauk-Keewatin 19.

BASEBALL

continued from B2

cos split a road doubleheader against Hermantown in a rematch of last year's top-two teams in Section 7AA.

In game one, the Broncos could muster only four hits when they lost to the defending Section-champion Hawks, 2-1. Tyler Coffield batted in the Falls' only run in the top of the sixth.

The Broncos' Wyatt Ulrich pitched all sixth innings in the loss, allowing both runs on a hit while striking out five.

Jason Mozol recorded the complete-game pitching victory for Hermantown, striking out four over seven innings.

BRONCOS 6, HAWKS 0

In game two, the Falls' Ben Humbert struck out 10 batters over seven innings when the Broncos shut out the Hawks, 6-0.

Of the Falls' seven hits, Kevin Kilbride had three of them. Casey Ehnes accounted for two of Hermantown's three hits.

Jackson Vollom drove in two runs for the Broncos.

All of the Falls' runs came in the third and fourth innings. The Hawks split pitching duties between Brandon Mahnke, who

threw four innings with five strikeouts, and Parker Hawk, who worked three innings and struck out three.

L-BF 8, NW 5  
NW 3-1-0 0-1-0 0-5  
L-BF 1-0-3 0-0-4 X-8

Herm. 2, I. Falls 1 (Game 1)  
I. Falls 0-0-0 0-0-1 0-1  
Herm. 0-1-0 0-1-0 X-2

I. Falls 6, Herm. 0 (Game 2)  
I. Falls 0-0-3 3-0-0 0-6  
Herm. 0-0-0 0-0-0 0-0

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