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SPORTS

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PREPS

TRACK AND FIELD STATE MEET

GOING THE DISTANCE FOR GLORY

Forest Lake's Emma Berner earned her breakthrough win in the 3,200 meters.

By DAVID LA VACHE
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Competitors, confidence and closing speed — none proved problematic for Forest Lake senior Emma Berner at Friday's state track and field championships.

Berner won the Class 2A 3,200-meter race in a time of 10 minutes, 29.69 seconds, about seven seconds ahead of Alexandria seniors Megan Haas (second) and sister Bethany Haas (third). The twins have rejoined as distance running royalty, combining to win the past three cross-country state championships. Bethany was the defending 3,200 champion.

On Friday, they were the first to offer Berner congratulatory hugs on the Hamline University track.

"I knew all this time they were going to be the two that I was fighting," said Berner, who gained confidence with a solid performance against the twins in November at the Nike Heartland Regional.

Fourth in the past two cross-country state meets and last year's 3,200 Berner noticed a disappointing trend.

"I didn't feel like I gave it everything I had, and I regretted it," said Berner, who has committed to Purdue.

This spring proved otherwise. Berner took a big step in April at the Hamline Elite Meet. Running the outer track used for the state meet, Berner crushed the school record set by Kim Kanki in 1986 by more than 15 seconds.

"She dug down a little bit and found it," Forest Lake coach Devin Sorenberg said. "This was the year she realized that she could make that every day."

Well ahead of the pack on Friday with a little more than one lap left in the race, Berner said she reminded herself, "I didn't want to lose the lead of Emma Berner was leading and they got overtake. I knew I had to close hard."

Berner's male counterpart, Wayzata senior Jacob Carpenter, won the 3,200 in



Forest Lake's Emma Berner began the celebration after crossing the finish line to win the Class 2A 3,200-meter run on Friday at Hamline University. Photo by EMILY OFFENBACH/STRI

a time of 9:30.46. Carpenter, victorious in cross-country last fall, took a step toward the distance-running triple crown. He's seeded first for Saturday's 1,600 race.

"I've been going extremely tired. I'm ecstatic right now," Carpenter said. "It's really cool to get the 5K and the 2-mile because they are my favorite races."

It's on now

Defending hurdles state champion Tasha Ribner of East Ridge (100 meters) and Melissa Blewett of Thief River Falls (200) are locked in for a pair of big showdowns on Saturday's finals.

Ribner started her day posting a state-record time of 1:30.82 in the 100 hurdles. Blewett placed second at 14.27.

5 feet, 7 inches, Ramacher won on breaker criteria. "It's a very humbling experience," said Ramacher, who received medical attention after the meet. "To go out and defend my title is something I'll always hold on to."

"I felt good to come out strong," Jones said. "It's what I've been looking for all season."

Conceding top honors to Jones in the 100 didn't faze Berner. Taking second to her in the 300 preliminaries was another matter.

"Second seed is not OK," said Berner, who set the state record of 42.11 seconds at state last spring. "Oh, yeah, I've got some fire in me. I'm ready."

Remaining in separate 300 heats, Jones posted a 42.87, a hiccup faster than Berner's 42.01.

"She looked really strong," Berner said. "It'll be a battle. I can just feel it."

Class 2A noteworthy

Chanhassen senior Isiah Caldwell, owner of state records in the 300 and 200, earned the top seed in both events for Saturday's finals.

Robbinsdale Armstrong senior Evan McClellan, who holds the state 100 record, paced the field in prelims.

Blaine senior Clay Lockwood won the shot put title (39.30).

Montevue View sophomore Caleb Caputo scored the pole vault title (15-0). St. Paul Cristo Rey senior Trevor Gay takes the top seed into Saturday's 100 hurdles state defense.

Wrightsen senior Patsy Staber, state record-holder in the 800, is the top seed in Saturday's final.

Fast company

A weather delay forced the Class 1A meet to start more than one hour late Friday afternoon. Minneapolis North sophomore T'ria Riley showed no ill effects, winning the 100 in a meet-record time of 15.95 seconds.

Riley ran alongside defending 100 state champion Ha Lewis of Minneapolis Edison and later cheered for her sister, Jada Lewis.

The trio will compete for the state title Saturday, but Riley isn't worried about head feelings.

"We grew up running Park Board together so we have a good relationship," Riley said.

BOYS' TENNIS STATE TOURNAMENT CLASS 2A INDIVIDUAL FINALS

Two convincing wins put away title

Shakopee's Jackson Allen beat Wayzata's Nicholas Beatty to finish unbeaten.

By HEATHER BULE
Special to the Star Tribune

It was the perfect end to a perfect season.

Shakopee junior Jackson Allen won the Class 2A boys' tennis singles title, putting an exclamation mark on his undefeated season. The top seed beat No. 3 seeded Wayzata senior Nicholas Beatty 6-1, 6-2 Friday in the state tournament at the University of Minnesota Baseline Tennis Center.

Allen's losses for the season: zero. How many victories?

"I haven't really been keeping track of my record, honestly," Allen said. "I just try to focus on the match at hand."

He said he had more confidence going into this year, and last year's state trophy experience helped calm his nerves.

In the championship match, Allen won his first two service games with Aces on game point. Then he promptly broke Beatty on his first opportunity for a 3-1 lead.

The looked rock solid when he started the match today," said tennis analyst who watched the match with her co-coach, Susan Allen, Jackson's mom. "We even looked at each other and smiled and said, 'He's got this.'"

Susan Allen was teary-eyed and poised for a moment when



Shakopee's Jackson Allen, above, swept Wayzata's Nicholas Beatty in two sets in the 2A final.

asked about her son going out on top with a singles title.

"It's amazing," she said. "I'm so proud of him."

Allen and Beatty began the second set with a few service rallies, including one with 18 shots. Allen leaned on his serve, and his passing shots were solid in the tournament, he said.

One of the only hiccups for Allen in the match was early in the second set when he broke for a 2-1 lead, but Beatty responded by breaking right back. Allen held his serve at love for 3-2 lead, he didn't sur-

render: The break gave Allen a lot of confidence, he said.

"Kind of opened it up from there," he said.

The championship match had a delayed start time by about an hour because Beatty's semifinal match that morning lasted about 2½ hours. Beatty upset No. 2 seed Sebastian Villa, a sophomore from Rochester Mayo, 6-2, 6-7 (3), 6-4.

While Beatty yielded, Allen sailed to a 6-1, 6-2 victory in his semifinal over No. 4 seed Ben van der Smiss, a junior from

East Ridge, in about an hour.

"The circumstances were definitely in my favor today," Allen said.

Friday's championship was a rematch of the 2005 third-place match when Allen was also victorious.

In doubles competition, Eden Prairie senior Anthony Ross and Justice Carter Mason successfully defended their title, winning 6-4, 6-3 over sophomore Nicholas Avey and senior Sahil Chhabangra of Rochester Century.

BOYS' TENNIS STATE TOURNAMENT CLASS 1A INDIVIDUAL FINALS

All-Blake final brings out best in top seeds

No. 1-ranked Ben Ingbar took a close, two-set final over No. 2 Jack Barker.

By NATE GOTTLIEB
Special to the Star Tribune

Blake junior Ben Ingbar said it's tougher competing against someone than trying to outpace, and the final is such a high-stakes match.

That didn't stop him from defeating teammate Jack Barker to win the Class 1A singles championship Friday at Reed-Sweatt Family Tennis Center in South Minneapolis.

Ingbar, the top seed, defeated No. 2 seed Barker 7-5, 7-6 (3) to win his first individual state title. Ingbar rallied in the first set after trailing 3-1 and closed out Barker, a sophomore, in a tiebreaker.

"I thought I was just playing really solid," said Ingbar, who lost last year's Class 1A final to teammate Charlie Adams and won the doubles title in 2014.

"I stepped up in bigger moments, and things just fell my way."

Blake coach Ted Warner said he thought the match was the highest-quality tennis he's seen in a final for a long time. Sometimes, one teammate may be a little nervous in these situations, but

not in this case, he said.

"This was just great quality all the way through," he said. "They put their heart into it and at the end they're still great friends. That's the way it should be."

Ingbar and Barker have played together on Blake's varsity team for three years. The two hit with each other at practice, Adams said, and improved dramatically from the start of the season.

Barker won three of the first four games Friday before Ingbar closed the set on a 6-2 run. The two traded games to start the second set before Ingbar won the tiebreaker.

"He brought his best for the biggest moments and didn't lose his cool when the match got close," Barker said. "I know right after this, we'll go back to being pretty close friends."

Blake finishes 2A sweep with doubles championship. Blake junior Owen Richter and eighth-grader Joe Mares won the doubles title over St. Peter senior Zach Hausgen and sophomore Rafat Soltanani, 6-3, 6-1.

Blake has won the singles and doubles titles every year since 2013.



Ingbar