

Prep Sports | updated: 10/24/2015 6:29 PM

Geneva's Altmayer claims regional championship



Batavia's Daphne Kolody takes fourth place (and second for her team) in the girls varsity race with a time of 18:50.5 at the St. Charles North cross country regional on Saturday.

Laura Stoecker | Staff Photographer



John Lemon

The cross country season often starts with runners collapsing at the finish line because of extreme heat and can end with snow flakes falling in Peoria at the state meet.

Runners see every type of weather in-between, and that certainly was the case on a wet and muddy Leroy Oakes course Saturday morning at the Class 3A St. Charles North sectional.

"It was like running through a river the whole time," Batavia sophomore Emma Stephens said. "It was kind of fun but it made it a lot more difficult. I was kind of excited to run in the rain. It was interesting. I was worried about going downhill and slipping but I handled that well."

Nothing has slowed the Batavia girls this fall and the rain didn't either. Batavia won the regional with 26 points ahead of runner-up Geneva's 38.

Stephens led the way, finishing second in 18:18. Fellow sophomores Daphne Kolody and Marygrace Golden were right behind in fourth and fifth with senior Dakota Roman sixth.

Anna Malay and Maia Haworth weren't far back either in ninth and 11th, respectively, as Batavia continues to work on closing its splits.

"The team did really good today," Stephens said. "I finished and I saw our 2-3-4 runners come right in a row and it was really exciting to see that and see how close we've got as a team."

Stephens finished 14 seconds back of winner McKenzie Altmayer from Geneva who was in the lead from the start to the finish for her fourth victory in a row.

Stephens attempted to catch Altmayer between the first and second mile.

"I was trying to make a move, I got close but once we got to one mile left she just took off," Stephens said.

Altmayer has been on fire recently including wins at the Upstate Eight meet and the St. Charles North Invitational.

She's putting her name alongside some of the best runners in Geneva's long run of success.

"She's running well," Geneva coach Bob Thomson said. "She's right up there. We're fortunate to have a lot of good kids. Right now she's still chasing Kelly Whitley who has the best 3-mile time in our program. But she's No. 2."

Geneva came within 5 points of Batavia last week at conference before finishing further back Saturday. The Bulldogs put four runners ahead of Geneva's No. 2.

Emma Ehrhardt (seventh), Sophia McDonnell (eighth), Emily Belanger (10th) and Taryn Christy (12th) made up the Vikings' top five.

"The issue wasn't being in the top six, the issue was can we compete with Batavia like we did last week," Thomson said. "I thought we'd be closer a little bit. Nobody is going to be happy with their times today. At this point in the game it's all place. You can be an all-stater and have the worst time in the world and still be an all-stater."

St. Charles North (81), St. Charles East (108), Bartlett (151) and East Aurora (169) also qualified for next week's Class 3A West Aurora sectional at Stuart Sports Complex.

The No. 1 team in the state, Naperville North, will be in that sectional field as Batavia and Geneva get to see how it stacks up. Other potential state qualifiers include Neuqua Valley, Oswego and Metea Valley.

Audrey Ernst ran an 18:33 to take third and lead St. Charles North. Anastasia Honea was the first Saint to finish in 14th, and Coral McFarland paced Bartlett running a 20:09 to take 17th.