

# Big – and muddy – day for boys, girls at 3A North XC Regional

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ST. CHARLES – On a day when every step was an adventure, Geneva cross country runners McKenzie Altmayer and Tyler Dau reigned supreme.

The two Geneva athletes took home top individual honors in the girls and boys races, respectively, at Saturday's soggy IHSA Class 3A St. Charles North Regional Leroy Oaks Forest Preserve.

Batavia captured the girls team title in impressive fashion, with all five of its point scorers finishing in the top 10, boosting the Bulldogs into next weekend's West Aurora Sectional. St. Charles East captured the boys title with four of its point scorers in the top 10.

Geneva, North and East will join the Bulldogs girls at sectionals. Marmion, Geneva, North and Batavia also are sectional-bound on the boys side.

Finishing with mud splatters up the backs of their legs and mud caking their shoes, runners appreciated finishing on their feet, even if their times were slower than expected due to the sloppy course.

“It was my slowest time all year,” said Dau, who completed the three-mile layout in 16:14, three seconds ahead of his nearest competition. “But it was slow for everyone. There were a lot of runners who fell during the race.”

Altmayer was pleased to make it through the course on top despite being disappointed with her time of 18:04. She said having run the same reconfigured course for the St. Charles North Invitational three weeks ago, she was gunning for a better time, but the rain at the start of the race put an end to those thoughts.

Altmayer was still able to finish more than 13 seconds ahead of the field.

“The footing was bad,” Altmayer said of the rain-soaked course. “It wasn’t the best course for someone like me who is naturally clumsy.”

The already difficult course was made that much tougher by the weather, Altmayer said.

“It was fun. I liked it” Altmayer said. “I was excited to be able to manage the course, to just get through it.”

Altmayer had been working with her Geneva teammates to try to ensure they outran Batavia, but she finished with a host of Bulldogs in closest pursuit. The Bulldogs ran strong as a team, scoring a 12-point victory over Altmayer and her Geneva teammates.

Batavia got points from Emma Stephens (second), Daphne Kolody (fourth), Marygrace Golden (fifth), Dakota Roman (sixth) and Anna Malay (ninth).

“On runs, we have been working on pace,” Stephens said. “We have been trying to stay around each other and support each other.”

Golden said the muddy course made the race interesting,

“It was a lot of fun out there,” Golden said,

Beside Altmayer, point-scorers for Geneva were: Emma Ehrhardt (seventh), Sophia McDonnell (eighth), Emily Belanger (10th) and Taryn Christy (12th).

North finished third in the girls varsity competition, with points from Audrey Ernst (third), Madison Kaufmann (13th), Ally Suyak (15th), Allie Chen (23rd) and Natalie Galvan (27th).

East finished fourth in the girls competition, led by Anastasia Honea (14th).

The Saints' male counterparts, however, captured the team regional crown, with points from Michael Gerkin (fourth), Jack Rzepecki (fifth), Mark Sciurba (seventh), Anthony Zilla (eighth) and Bret Izzo (24th).

Marmion's Michael Ronzone and Andrew Burroughs finished second and third, respectively, to lead the Cadets to a second-place team finish. Charlie Zimmer (sixth), Andrew Lifka (17th) and Christian Surtz (26th) also scored for the Cadets.

Geneva took third in the boys competition. Joining Dau in the top 10 was Boon Andrews (ninth). Other point scorers for the Vikings were: Brian Caskey (11th), Josh Rodgers (14th) and Brian Kuehl (21st).

North finished fifth, led by Joey Rangel (19th).

Batavia was sixth, with Shea Bastian (15th) its top finisher.