

# SPORTS & OUTDOORS

## Schwarz ends cross country career at state

### MRC coaches name Schwarz 2018 Most Valuable Runner

By Rachel Wittrock  
Editor

**E**ighteen minutes. Years of practice runs, trainings and dozens of meets all came to an end for Le Sueur-Henderson cross country runner Lane Schwarz.

Schwarz, a senior, capped off a great career by returning for a second year to the Class A state cross country meet on the St. Olaf campus in Northfield on Saturday, Nov. 3.

As he toed the line to prepare for the start of his final high school cross country race, Schwarz was feeling nervous but excited, and dreamed of finishing in the top 10. The race started with a bang, and Schwarz took off from Gate 3 next to Belle Plaine's Drew Hastings, who has been stiff competition for Schwarz all season.

Schwarz was battling in the middle of the pack mid-way through the race.

As he passed by the soccer practice fields about halfway through the 5-kilometer race, Schwarz was hanging with Samson Hagen of Plainview-Elgin-Millville and Matt Bourne of Mounds Park Academy.

But as the race wore on, Schwarz fell behind the competition and ended up crossing the finish line in 146th place with a time of 18:03.4.

Although Schwarz was not where he wanted to be when he crossed the finish line, he did knock seven seconds off of his

time from last year's state meet.

"We thought we were ready and he felt good, and he had a good start," said head coach Jeff Christ. "I was not disappointed in Lane at all. He has done everything he could possibly accomplish in his career. I was heartbroken for him because he has worked so hard."

Geno Uhrbom of Greenway Nashwauk Keewatin wound up claiming the top spot with a time of 15:38.

Christ said Schwarz was one of those "rare boys that came in and started running varsity as a middle schooler." Christ said Schwarz has a natural ability for distance running, but it was his passion that really set him apart.

Hockey was his first love, but after a year or two of distance running, Schwarz found that running was his true passion.

"He lived the lifestyle — he rested, he ate right, he stayed away from chemicals...he embraced that lifestyle of a distance runner and he has talent on top of that," Christ added.

Although Schwarz was hoping for a different end to his senior cross country season at state, his final year with the Giants was still an impressive one.

Among his accomplishments are the following:

- A fourth-place finish at the Section meet to qualify for state and earn All-Section Team honors;
- Being named the 2018 Most Valuable Runner by Minnesota River Conference coaches;

- Winning the MRC Championship title ahead of Hastings and earning All-Conference honors;

- Winning the Jordan cross country meet;

- Winning the home meet at the Ney Center and leading the Giants to a first place team title;

- Winning the meet at the Glencoe Country Club; and

- Winning the Waconia meet.

Schwarz also served as a leader to his teammates. Early in the season, when seventh-grade runner Ben Sullivan was struggling during the Mankato Loyola Invitational, Schwarz told the young Sullivan he would run with him and helped Sullivan to finish the race.

"Lane is one of those kids that has an innate leadership quality about him without having to say anything," Christ said. "The way he lives his life and his character, he just gains immediate respect from everybody."

Christ offered another bit of high praise for Schwarz: "Lane is the kid I want my son to be and the man I want my daughters to marry. If any of my kids turned out like him, I would be more than happy."

With cross country over, Schwarz will be transitioning to hockey, and then track and field in the spring.

"I am certainly going to miss him and Vicky (Flores). Those two were phenomenal leaders on our team," Christ said.



Schwarz hangs with Samson Hagen (hidden behind Schwarz) of Plainview-Elgin-Millville and Matt Bourne (right) of Mounds Park Academy halfway through the race.



Lane Schwarz (center) starts strong as he takes off next to Belle Plaine's Drew Hastings (right) and Staples-Motley's Ben Bartczak (left). Hastings went on to finish 18th while Bartczak finished behind Schwarz in 147th.



Lane Schwarz crossed the state cross country meet finish line in 18:03.4, which was an improvement of seven seconds from last year's state performance.

PHOTOS BY RACHEL WITTRICK

#### Le Sueur - Henderson Athlete of the Week

#### Lane Schwarz

Senior Lane Schwarz returned to the Class A state cross country meet on Saturday, where he knocked seven seconds off last year's time to finish in 146th place with a time of 18:03.4.

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