

# SPORTS & OUTDOORS

STATE CROSS COUNTRY

## Hailey Juarez wraps up successful career at State

By Rachel Miller  
Editor

It was a beautiful sunny, fall day on Saturday for the close to 1,000 Minnesota athletes competing in the State Cross Country meet on the St. Olaf university campus in Northfield.

Le Sueur-Henderson junior Hailey Juarez toed the line in the Class A girls meet, the first female runner in the school's history to do so. Juarez broke out of the starting block with 155

other runners from across the state, and found a pace around the middle of the pack.

Juarez hit the first mile mark in 6:35, but then began to cramp up, which impacted the final two miles of the race. Juarez dropped to a 7:44 second mile, followed by a 7:45 third mile, to finish the race in 104th place in 22:04.23.

Murray County Central's Amanda Overgaauw left her competition in the dust to become the Class A State Champion. Overgaauw had a 5:50

mile average to win the event in 18:09.13. Second place's Tenley Nelson of Luverne was 38 seconds behind, in 18:47.

"The state course is a challenging course that features a lot more hills than the average course, which can make it tougher for runners to hit their best time," Coach Casey Fails said. "Hailey progressed really well this year, as it was her best season as a Giant."

Hailey will be deeply missed next year, and served as a great role model for the rest of the team this year. Although she is the only female runner graduating this year, Fails said it will be challenging to replace her.

From seventh through 10th grade, Juarez was coached by Jeff Christ, who actually started the cross country program at LS-H when he was first hired. Christ said that Juarez had a natural talent as a runner, and was further impacted by other talented senior runners.

"She was able to run under some great role models like Vicky Flores and Arlett Rios throughout her younger years, and the way those girls trained and raced had a positive influence on her," Christ said. "It has been a joy to watch Hailey grow over the years and to reach her goal of getting to the State Cross Country meet!"

Hailey is the daughter of Ida Juarez, and has amassed a number of accolades over her cross country career, both overall and this season. Juarez won the team's home meet at the Ney Nature Center on Oct. 5, placed 2nd in the Minnesota River Conference and 7th in the Section 2A Championship. She is also a two-time Minnesota River Conference All-Conference honoree (2020 and 2021), and received MRC Honorable Mention in 2019.



Hailey Juarez speeds down a hill in the final part of the state meet, hot on the tail of Math and Science Academy's Jada Schultz. Juarez wound up passing Schultz and beat her to the finish by 6 seconds.



Hailey Juarez pushes up a hill next to South Ridge's Tatum Barto in the first half of the Class A State Cross Country meet on Saturday. Juarez was able to keep Barto at bay, and beat her by 13 seconds. Juarez finished in 104th place, while Barto was 110th.

PHOTOS BY RACHEL MILLER

## Emmett Gerres makes Belle Plaine history with 8th place finish

By Rachel Miller  
Editor

It is no secret that Belle Plaine High School turns out some amazing runners, but junior Emmett Gerres left them all in his dust on Saturday, when he placed 8th in the Class AA State Cross Country meet — the highest finish of any male runner in Belle Plaine's history.

Gerres started off strong, and never faltered, as he averaged a 5:16 mile time throughout the race, finishing in 16:25.12, which was 43 seconds faster than his 2019 state time.

"It was a fitting end to an incredible season by Gerres," said coach Steve Schroeder. "Coming off an exceptional spring track season where he placed 4th in the mile and 3rd in the 800 at the state track meet, he set a new Belle Plaine cross country school record of 15:39 earlier in the season which was a personal best by over 40 seconds."

To run among the best, you have to train hard, and not just during the regular season. Schroeder said Gerres and his teammates work incredibly hard in the off-season, and this past summer, Gerres racked up an impressive 300 miles.

Although Gerres has been dominating the competition this season, he did have a setback right before the Minnesota River Conference Championship, and his appendix was removed one week before he won the Section 2AA Cross Country Championship with a

time of 16:20.6, three seconds ahead of the competition.

Schroeder called Gerres' state finish "exceptional" as he was just two-and-a-half weeks

post-operation.

"Emmett always runs as hard as he can in every race," Schroeder said.

Breck School's Alden Keller

won the Class AA Championship in 15:53.27, and as both he and Gerres are juniors, they will have one more chance to race for the state title.



Belle Plaine junior Emmett Gerres take off with the pack in the Class AA State Championship race. Despite having his appendix removed 2.5 weeks prior, he ran 16:25 to finish in 8th place — the highest finish in the history of the school's boys program.



PHOTOS BY RACHEL MILLER

Emmett Gerres finishes strong at the state meet.

### Le Sueur - Henderson Athlete of the Week

#### Hailey Juarez

Senior Hailey Juarez made LS-H school history as she became the first female to compete at the state cross country meet. Juarez finished in 104th place with a time of 22:04.

Athlete of the Week Sponsored By:

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***Congrats on a great state performance!***

**CROSS COUNTRY**

**HAILEY JUAREZ: CLASS A STATE QUALIFIER**



PHOTOS BY RACHEL MILLER

**SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:**

- 104th place in the State Class A Cross Country meet, 22:04.23
- 7th place at the Section 2A Cross Country meet, 20:39
- 2nd in the Minnesota River Conference, 20:18
- Received MRC All-Conference honors for the 2nd year in a row



**TENNIS**

**CHLOE BRANDT: CLASS A STATE COMPETITOR  
SECTION 5A CHAMPION**

**SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Went 1-2 in the Class A State Tennis Tournament; defeated Osakis' Leah Maddock 6-0, 6-0
- Won the Section 5A Singles Championship
- 9-1 Conference record; 14-2 two-season record
- Received MRC All-Conference honors for the 3rd year in a row



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