

TRACK & FIELD



Esko's Makoi Perich wins the 200-meter dash at Tuesday's True Team meet in Cloquet. Perich also took first in the triple jump Tuesday. The Esko boys team won the 12-team competition and will advance to the True Team state meet. Photos by Amy Arntson / Pine Knot News

Esko, Cloquet dominate True Team

Kerry Rodd
sports@PineKnotNews.com

Cloquet High School hosted the Section 7AA True Team meet on Tuesday afternoon under sunny skies and temperatures that zoomed into the 80s. It was the first real warm day for track athletes, giving them a chance to show their abilities.

"It was kind of a day out of character as far as how this spring has gone," said Cloquet coach Tim Prosen. "It has been a rough start to the track season as far as the weather goes, but today (Tuesday) it was beautiful."

The True Team meet was established in 1987 by the Minnesota State High School Coaches Association in an effort to determine the top team based on its team depth, instead of top finishers as in a normal meet. At a True Team meet, each team is allowed to have two competitors in every event and one relay team. Every athlete scores points, with the top finishers scoring more points, all the way down to a single point for the last-place finisher.

Cloquet and Esko were the lone two local teams out in the 12-team AA meet held here on Tuesday.

In a major upset in the boys' meet, the Eskomos nabbed first place against the much bigger schools, and the Lumberjacks took second. The boys' win was even more impressive, considering that last season the Cloquet boys team finished 3.5 points short of a state True Team title — with 595 points compared to No. 1 Willmar's 598.5.

In the girls' meet, the 'Jacks took second, right behind North Branch while the Eskomos finished in fifth in the 12-team field.

"Esko is a legit team even though they were the smallest school at the meet," said Prosen. "They have a lot of good boys out for their team."

Boys

In the boys' meet, the Eskomos picked up first- and second-place finishes in the 100-meter dash with Mason Perich and Braden Lowe going 1-2 in the 100 and Makoi Perich and Lowe going 1-2 in the 200. Cloquet's Jordan Aultman was third in the 100.



Cloquet sophomore Elijah Aultman competes in the long jump Tuesday in Cloquet.

Mason Perich also notched a second-place finish in the 400-meter dash.

The Lumberjacks picked up second- and third-place finishes in the 1600-meter run from Miles Fischer and Jacob Mertz, respectively. Mertz also finished second in the 3200-meter run.

In the hurdles, Esko's Chad Hart picked up second in the 110-meter high hurdles while Cloquet's Miigwan Tanner-Wostrel was second in the 300-meter hurdles with Hart taking third and Hart's teammate Keone Anderson finishing fourth.

In the 4x100 relay it was Esko first and Cloquet second, while the Lumberjacks also finished second in the 4x200. Esko won the 4x800 relay with Cloquet taking third.

Cloquet's Will Turnbull finished second in the shot put while Esko's Wyatt Stankiewicz was fourth in the discus with Turnbull one place behind.

Esko's Nikolas Martineau won the high jump with teammate Carter Zezulka finishing second.

In the long jump, Esko's Makoi Perich was the winner with his brother Mason Perich finishing

third. Makoi Perich also took first in the triple jump with Cloquet's Joe Bailey taking second.

"In the distance events just about every team had to make some adjustments because it actually got hot as the day wore on," Prosen said. "The distance kids were gassed by the end of the day."

Girls

On the girls' side, Esko's Emily Rengo won the 100-meter dash while teammate Kaitlyn McConnell grabbed top honors in the 200. Cloquet's Alexa Snedrud was third in the 200 with Rengo taking fourth. Snedrud also took fourth in the 400-meter run.

Esko's Grace Shingledecker had a strong run in the 800 and finished third.

Olivia Jameson obliterated the field in the 100-meter hurdles, winning by more than a full second with Esko's Gwendolyn Lilly taking third. Jameson also had a third-place finish in the 300-meter hurdles.

"Olivia is an exceptional athlete and she is just starting to come back into her own after an ankle injury just prior to the state meet last season," Prosen said.

In the relay, Esko was first in the 4x100 and fourth in the 4x200. Cloquet picked up third-place finishes in both the 4x400 and 4x800 relays.

Cloquet went 1-2 in the discus with Bella Harriman and Seija Suominen, respectively.

Jameson and Lumberjacks teammate Taylor Wick went 1-2 in the high jump. McConnell of Esko took top honors in the long jump with Wick of Cloquet taking third. Wick also had a big day, winning the triple jump, with Jameson finishing second.

Cloquet's Ilei Benson finished third in the pole vault.

By virtue of winning the boys' event, the Eskomos automatically qualify for the True Team state meet. The top teams from each of the state's eight sections automatically qualify for the state meet, as well as four teams which finished second in their sectionals. That means both the Lumberjacks boys and girls team still have a chance of competing there too.

"We'll have to see, but we still have a shot," said Prosen.

OUTDOORS

Plan for opener success this year

A couple of weeks ago I predicted the 2022 fishing opener could be fantastic. As the big day approaches and the

OUT
IN IT



Bret
Baker

weather forecast solidifies, I'm sticking to my guns. I believe the May 14th Minnesota opener will be one of the best opening

days in recent memory.

For walleyes, the most predictable opener locations will be in and around spawning grounds. In lakes, focus on any rivers or inlets that dump into the main lake. Walleyes will congregate in the shallow bays and points around these spawning locations. In the absence of moving water, fish the windswept shorelines and points. If the waves and wind are stirring things up, position yourself tightly to structure and work the area with a jig and minnow or a live-bait rig. If the water is calm, make long casts and keep yourself well away from the shallows to keep from spooking fish.

If you are headed to a river for the opener, be prepared for high and fast water. The April rain, sleet, and snow have left rivers ripping along pretty good. The high, fast, and dirty water will force some adjustments to find success. For example, if you plan on using the tried and true jig and a minnow presentation, it might be a good idea to pick up some heavier jigs to help maintain bottom contact.

I plan on fighting the current on the St. Louis River for the opener. On border waters, including the St. Louis River, you can use two lines. This will help me employ the best tool in my toolbox for high and fast water — the Dubuque rig. Purportedly developed by a river rat on the mighty Mississippi, the rig is centered around a simple three-way swivel. The rig can be configured in several ways ... I plan to let the walleyes show me their preference.

The blueprint of a Dubuque rig is pretty constant. You will need a three-way swivel tied to your mainline.

Continued on page 12