

SPORTS

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THROUGH MY LENS

My first, and last, Division 1 sectional

By NATE BEIER
Sports Writer

I tried it and I have made a decision to never do it again unless absolutely necessary.

I covered my first ever Division 1 sectional cross country meet and I was most surely disappointed in what I saw.

No, the athletes were fine, they ran. Some ran fast, like Onalaska's Manny Putz. He's the real deal. Watching the Holmen girls win their sectional was fun, for sure.

However, something was missing from the event. I believe it was atmosphere.

I've covered a number of Division 2 and 3 sectional races over the course of the past 15 years and have reveled in the thrilling victories, rejoiced in surprise stories and also watched heartache.

What made all of those things better was the atmosphere of the day. It was the crowd as it lined the raceway leading to the finish line. It was the throngs of people chasing their athletes around the course, pushing them to new personal record times and possible state dreams.

Yeah, there was that at Saturday's meet which was hosted by Onalaska at Maple Grove Venues, but then again, there wasn't.

I took note of the starting area about 35 minutes prior to the first race starting. I counted about a dozen people ready to watch the girls run.

The night before I was at the Division 3 sectional in Osseo-Fairchild. It was a Friday evening, but there were still no less than triple the amount of people taking their spots at the starting area with a half hour before the first race.

The hordes of people trotting from spot to spot on the course was different for Division 1 compared to Division 3. It just felt like there were less.

The finish line was less crowded. Teams hung around less after completing their races. The emotion was less. It was all just, less.

I know there are a few less teams at a D1 sectional compared with D3 - 12 in D1 compared to 21 in D3, but it demonstrated once again that even though the larger schools may have a higher caliber athlete, there are less people that actually care enough to show up and support them outside of immediate friends and family.

Watching casual cross country fans show up to watch a race just because their school's team is good is something I've taken for granted as I've watched teams like Brookwood and Westby run through the years. Their communities have people that just follow because of the name on the front of the jersey.

I was disappointed in what I saw in a Division 1 sectional, but am glad to have seen what it's like to have a race like that - with fewer teams and, perhaps, a more predicable outcome. Give me D2 or D3 any time, though. Those people (and their fans) are crazy.



SOCCER REGIONAL: TOMAH 1 (5) RIVER FALLS 1 (3) 20T

SALVATION by SHOOTOUT



Tomah's Ty Richer (left) and Trevin Johnson leap into one another after claiming a win in Saturday's regional championship match at River Falls. Tomah and River Falls were tied 1-1 through two overtimes before the Timberwolves won in a shootout 5-3. **Herald photo by Reagan Hoverman.**

Tomah outguns River Falls in shootout for regional title

By NATE BEIER
Sports Writer

As expected, goals - even scoring chances - were at a premium in Saturday's WIAA Division 1 regional final match between Tomah and River Falls.

Despite the fact that Tomah had earned a 1-0 win over the Wildcats just three weeks prior, there was an understanding from both teams that the other was a respectable foe.

The game lived up to its billing, and then some as both teams played to a stalemate through regulation and overtime, eventually dueling in a shootout in which Tomah outshot River Falls 5-3 for a 1-1 (5-3) win on Saturday, October 22.

River Falls came out looking to make a statement by scoring early. Tomah's defense held up and kept the home team from lighting up the scoreboard.

The two teams were deadlocked at 0-0 at halftime and the score remained the same at the end of regulation, forcing overtime.

Neither team scored in the first OT, and the second was started.

River Falls finally broke loose with a goal in the 92nd minute, or the second minute of the second overtime on a shot by Tustin Todd.

Tomah, undeterred, kept working and eventually found its own goal in the 97th minute as Ty Richer took a pass from Dane Vervoren and drove it in to knot the game at 1.

Tomah took the contest to a shootout with the goal and went 5-5 in the period.

Ty Richer led off and drove in the first. Owen Anderson followed. Jonah Nick, Haakon Garvin, and Trey Torkelson each found the back corner of the goal to achieve a perfect 5-5 effort at the line.

Tomah goalkeeper Trevin Johnson propelled the team into the sectional round of the WIAA tournament by stopping two of River Falls' shots. The second shot by the RF offense was the key save, according to head coach Scott Conzemius.

(TOMAH) cont. pg 11

ECHOES OF THE PAST

Tomah's last regional title came in the 2007 season

Tomah bested Reedsburg 7-4 in the opener, then faced off against rival Sparta at Waunakee.

Second-seeded Sparta was a pesky out for third-seeded Tomah and the two teams played through overtime tied at 1 goal each before going to a shootout to determine the regional champion.

Tomah outlasted Sparta 8-7 in the shootout for the 1-1 (8-7) win and ticket to sectionals. Tomah fell to Sauk Prairie 1-0 to end their season.

CROSS COUNTRY SECTIONAL: BANGOR 78 AQUINAS 79

Bangor's UPRWARD Ascension

CARDINAL BOYS RACE TO FIRST SECTIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP, FIRST TRIP TO STATE

narrowly second-place La Crosse-Aquinas with 79 points. Bangor and Aquinas earned the two available team state berths up for grabs at the sectional meet.

"Midseason, the guys started believing in the pack running, and it's been working," said Bangor head coach Deb Craig. "This is the fifth meet where we've held into the pack running. They've bought into it and it's working, so that's what we worked on and that's what they did today."

Senior Gavin Benzning (17:09.5) led the way for the Bangor boys with a sixth-place finish. Sophomore Traevon Delaney (17:31.0) placed eighth overall, junior Nolan

Bangor's Nolan Langrehr shares a congratulatory embrace with Gavin Benzning after seeing the team scores at the Osseo-Fairchild sectional Friday. Bangor won the meet with a score of 78. **Herald photo by Nate Beier/GX3 Media.**

(UPWARD) cont. pg XX

By ZACH RASTALL
Sports Writer

As the 2022 cross country season has gone along, the Bangor boys have started utilizing pack running as a strategy, allowing the team to race together and motivate one another. That move has them peaking at the perfect time and headed to state.

The Bangor boys secured themselves a sectional title and punched their ticket to state as a team with a first-place finish at the 2022 Division 3 Osseo-Fairchild sectional meet Friday, October 21 at the Osseo Golf Club.

The Cardinals accrued 78 team points in Osseo.



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