

Round and rock we go: Lovejoy boys qualify for 5A state meet; Tedder sisters advance, too

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Both the Lovejoy boys and girls cross country teams took to Lynn Creek Park in Grand Prairie for the Class 5A Region II meet over the weekend.

Only one (the boys) advanced out of the field and on to the state meet in Round Rock, but it was a successful weekend for the program nonetheless, said head coach Greg Christensen.

“I feel like [the boys] ran really well,” he said. “By no means did we have our best days, but that’s all we really wanted to do is just qualify out. We want to save our best race for the last race and I think our guys managed their efforts and workouts [accordingly] for Saturday.”



Lovejoy logo

Though it was a stacked field with Carter Blunt of Frisco Independence (14:53.37) leading the way on the final individual scoreboard, it was the consistency of the Leopards that equaled a second-place finish in the team standings.

Juniors Noah Landguth (17th) and William Wise (19th) paced Lovejoy at the meet, but were closely flanked by three teammates – sophomore Grant Tiff (26th), senior Grant Ballard (30th) and freshman Ryan Brands (40th).

Consistency – the Leopards had the lowest split at the tournament at 31 seconds between its top five runners – on the scoreboard helped Lovejoy (106) earn second place among the 24 programs in attendance, just 12 points behind The Colony (94).

“That’s kind of been our strength for the past couple of years,” Christensen said. “We’re not fortunate enough to be like The Colony or Wakeland or others and have the big guns up front, so we really have to be cognizant of keeping our pack together and basically hammering everybody else’s three-through-five runners.

“I think that was one thing that afforded us second at the state meet last year – we really packed it in. We’re going to have to do that again this year.”

Frisco Wakeland (115) and District 10-5A mate Wylie (132) were the other two schools to earn top-four billing and a guaranteed spot at state. McKinney North, the other 10-5A school participating,

finished eighth.

On the girls side, the Lady Leopards snuck into the Region II meet after a third-place finish at the district race. In a similarly tough field, Lovejoy finished sixth (162) to miss a state berth.

In order, The Colony (53), Frisco Liberty (65), Prosper (75) and Forney (143) rounded out the top four. North (157) finished just shy of advancing.

Individually, though, senior sisters Chloe (ninth, 19:19.12) and Rachel Tedder (24th, 19:44.50) will be on the bus with the boys after qualifying in the solo category. Rachel was the 10th and final individual to advance.

“The girls ran well,” Christensen said. “Chloe, by her own admission, didn’t have a great race day. I think she could have been up in the top two or three, if not won it. Fortunately, we have another chance Saturday to see if we can push them higher.”

Lovejoy’s next three lowest times came from juniors Katherine Powell (46th, 20:32.30), Carol Xia (53rd, 20:58.97) and Lauren Helsley (60th, 21:12.10), though only the Tedders will be making the trip to Round Rock.

Old Settlers Park will be the setting for the next race, and with all four regions crashing down on Round Rock for the event, Christensen knows the stakes will be high for all of his runners.

“Each region has a pretty strong team this year, which hasn’t always been the case,” he said. “There’s probably five or six teams that feel they have a pretty good shot at it, along with us.”

After a treacherous run at the district meet (Myers Park in McKinney) and more level surface at Lynn Creek, the Leopards will see more of a flat course with winding paths.

“It’s not as difficult a course as Myers Park,” Christensen said. “There’s several twists and turns on it in the first mile. It’s going to be important for us to be aggressive during that first mile, but run with our overall race goals in mind.

“The thing about the state meet is a lot of people come out way too fast and then can’t hang on for that last mile. We just want to go out and run the type of race we’ve run all year.”

The state meet will take place on Saturday. The 5A girls race is scheduled to begin at 11:30 a.m. and the boys will immediately follow at noon.