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Grand Island wins boys title at NFL Championships

BY Ryan Nagelhout Greater Niagara Newspapers

— — Grand Island took the boys title at the Niagara Frontier League championships at Lew-Port on Thursday, dominating the distance events while beating out Lockport for the title by 3 1/2 points.

“It’s quite an accomplishment for these kids,” Grand Island coach Don Sauer said.

The Vikings took the top two spots in the 1,600 meter and steeplechase and two of three in the 3,200 to stack up 157 points in the two-day championship.

Sauer said his distance runners were key, but the whole team came through on Thursday.

“We’re really strong with the distance kids but what helped today was a lot of the other ones,” Sauer said. “We got points in the triple jump, the discus, our hurdler did really well. Shot and discus placed.

“I’m really proud of them. They worked real hard, they really wanted to win this one.”

Derek Geiger won the steeplechase with a time of 10:31.41, beating out teammate Brendon Lutnick after the two ran together the entire race.

“The water pit is always fun,” Geiger said. “Even if you do clear it, the jump off and the way you land hurts.

“It was definitely the hardest race.”

Geiger had little trouble with the water pit in the obstacle-filled event, which made its debut at the Lew-Port track as dozens of runners sat by the pit waiting for someone to fall in.

“There’s always someone that goes in and everyone thinks it’s hilarious,” Geiger said. “They always gather there for that race.”

Ken West’s Lexi Panepinto won the girls steeplechase but the Vikings continued to dominate on the boys side with Nick Masiello winning the 3,200 and Brendon Lutnick besting Masiello by .05 in the 1,600.

“I give props to Lutnick,” Masiello said. “He’s been coming on and improving all season and he finally got me. Next year he should be in contention for the number one spot in

Section VI.”

Freshman Kevin Freedman took first for Grand Island in the 110 hurdles, edging out Ken West’s Marcus Lobdell on the final hurdle to win in 15.65 seconds.

“He was pushing me the whole way,” Freedman said. “I started off bad at the blocks I had to push back and get him at the end. I guess I outleaned him.”

Lew-Port’s Dylan Krueger defended his boys pentathlon win and said it was nice to win on his home track.

“It feels great,” Krueger said. “I think I did pretty good overall. I improved a couple of my times from last year.”

Niagara Falls won seven events on the boys side and three from the girls, including Jazlyn Porter’s wins in the long jump and 400 meter dash.

“Jazlyn had a great meet,” Niagara Falls coach Jon Robbins said. “I though she was the athlete of the meet, I thought she was outstanding and Dale (Stewart) was his normal self.”

Stewart won in the 100 and 200 while Cordell Johnson took the 400.

“Just finish strong,” Stewart said. “I’ve been working on my blocks for a while so I came out strong, noticed I was ahead and smoothed it out.”

Stewart said he ripped his cleat running the 200 but had little trouble, taking the finals with a time of 22.64 seconds.

Brandon Joyce won the triple jump and high jump for the Wolverines, while Leivante Dortch took the shot put title and DeVante Starks won the discus. Taylor Sanders also won the girls pentathlon for the Falls but Robbins said a lack of depth gave the Falls boys a third place finish, while the girls settled for sixth.

“I’m very happy with the way my boys and girls ran,” Robbins said. “We just didn’t have the depth to compete with some of these teams and it showed up. We had seven boys winners and three girls winners ... but in the end we need second and third and we didn’t have any of that.”

Stewart was named the MVP of the track events on the boys side, while Joyce took field MVP honors.

Grand Island’s Jessie Dahwall won girls field MVP honors with wins in the discus and shot put, while Jenna Panepinto (800, 1,500, triple jump) took the girls track MVP.