

Cozy Chrisman packs bags for

By DAVID CAMPBELL
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PAXTON — Using what looked like cross-country's version of the "buddy system," the Chrisman boys coasted to the team title at the Paxton Class A Sectional on Friday afternoon.

Chrisman, ranked fourth in the state, beat out Normal University High, Mahomet-Seymour, Kankakee Bishop McNamara and Herscher, which finished second through fifth, respectively.

Those five teams qualified for the Illinois High School Association Class A Championships on Nov. 5 at Detweiller Park outside Peoria.

The top seven individuals not on state-qualifying teams also advanced, including Bob Love of Watseka who finished fourth overall in 15 minutes, 38 seconds for the 3-mile course; Jeff Trask of Oakwood, seventh in 15:43; Paul Talbot of Urbana University High, 15th in 16:10; and Travis Winkler of Bismarck-Henning, 17th at 16:18.

John Erickson of Eureka was the overall winner, crossing the line in 15:18. Other individuals advancing to state were Marty Wondaal of Illiana Christian (sixth, 15:41) and Randy Ritsema of Illiana (ninth, 15:55).

Chrisman left no doubt that it would be the meet winner. Senior Andy Mills led the way, finishing in 15:59 for 11th overall and was followed by junior Brent Jenness (16:07, 12th), freshman Chad Beals (16:09, 13th), junior Brian Spicer (16:10, 14th) and junior Bill Harvey (16:14, 16th).

After accounting for individuals not on a team, Chrisman compiled a team score of 55. Senior Lee Waltz finished 41st in 16:45 and freshman Dusty Michaels was 49th in 16:55, but neither figured in the team scoring.

The team total made it easy for the Cardinals to outdistance Normal U-High, which ended up with 62.

"There weren't any surprises as far as our team was concerned," said Chrisman coach Roger Beals. "I expect them to run pretty good and they responded."

Beals' athletes said they didn't plan it, but they ran in pairs, sticking with each other to make sure there was no way one of the other teams could sneak away and pull an upset.

"We realized we're not going to do anything as individuals so we might as well do it as a team,"

said Jenness. "If you stay in a pack it's easier. There's no pressure on you."

"They all run their own type of race and they just end up there (together)," Coach Beals said. "Some of them start off fast and some start off slow and they just end up in the same place."

Mahomet-Seymour's advance was also expected. Sophomore Dan Nielsen ran a strong race, finishing third overall in 15:34. Juniors Brian Easter and Hans Waters placed 27th in 16:34 and 39th in

16:44. Sophomore Burt Huddleston was 42nd in 16:46 and Jeff Jankowski was 58th in 17:03 for a team score of 132.

But the day belonged to Chrisman, which now is setting its sights on taking state. Tremont and Princeton, ranked Nos. 1 and 2 in the state, beat Chrisman earlier this season at the Amboy Invitational. But Beals said he thinks his team can win it all next week.

"We're going to beat them," he said. "I just feel it."

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