

# Smith wins regional meet, Reece also qualifies for state



Louisburg senior Tim Smith gets out in front of Galena's Matthew Oglesby during the boys Class 4A regional meet Saturday in Burlington. Smith became the school's first regional champion as he won with a personal best time of 16:42.

BURLINGTON – Tim Smith knew he was going to have to get off to a fast start if he wanted to stay in front of the pack during the Class 4A regional cross country meet Saturday in Burlington.

As it turned out, the Louisburg senior was the fastest of the bunch.

Smith became the first boys cross country runner in Louisburg history to win a regional race and did so in impressive fashion. He ran a personal best time of 16 minutes and 42 seconds to become a regional champion.

“For this being my senior year, it means everything to me,” Smith said. “I really don't know how to put it into words. It feels awesome and I just love it.”

Smith earned a state bid for the second consecutive season and

he won't be going alone. Senior teammate Wyatt Reece qualified for state for the third straight year as he finished seventh in 17:24 and just missed out on sixth by less than a second.

"I am just excited," Reece said. "I am hopeful that a third time will be the charm and that I can get a medal out of it. It was a little bit of a rough race, but we are going to go have fun at state in about a week.

"I tightened up about a mile and a half in, so then I just started counting places to see if I will get in or not and it just ended up working in my favor."

Smith and Galena's Matthew Oglesby found themselves at the front of the race most way and Smith was right on Oglesby's heels. However, due to a strong wind that made running difficult at times, Smith wanted to stay behind Oglesby as long as possible.

"I usually start out a little slower, but I knew I would have to go out with a little more kick this time to get out front," Smith said. "I think Wyatt and I started really well in that first mile and then we both starting picking off people in front of us. That second mile was tough because of the wind, but after that we learned to tuck in behind people and let them take the draft for us."



**Louisburg senior Wyatt Reece stays with a Girard runner while Wildcat coach John Reece urges Wyatt on Saturday in Burlington.**

Then in the final mile, Smith had enough energy left to pull out in front and his time ended up being the second fastest in school history.

“Tim ran an outstanding race,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “It was amazing watching him run and it was kind of similar to what Wyatt did at league the week before. He ran the race he had to run and he caught up to the leader. When Tim put pressure on the leader, the other kid just collapsed. After it was over, Tim was still living on the adrenaline rush and ran a great race.”

As a team, the Wildcats finished 10<sup>th</sup> overall with 200 points. Girard was the regional champion with 74 points, Ottawa second with 87 and Iola was third with 118.

Freshman Luke Faulkner finished third on the Wildcat team and 61<sup>st</sup> overall in 20:01. Fellow freshman Cade Holtzen was 67<sup>th</sup> in 20:24.

Sophomore Evan Murphy (20:42), freshman Carson Houchen (20:48) and sophomore Colin Cook (21:02) finished 74<sup>th</sup>, 77<sup>th</sup> and 85<sup>th</sup>, respectively.

Both Smith and Reece will try to earn a state medal Saturday when they travel to Wamego for the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championship at the Wamego Country Club. The 4A boys race is set to begin at 11:45 a.m.

“I hope we can get both of those guys down there and finish in the top 20 and get them both medals,” coach Reece said. “That is the plan, and that is what it has been since the beginning of the year. We want to get them back to state and up on the podium. That is what we are shooting for.”

After all the great finishes both runners have had this season, they know none of those compares to what Saturday holds.

“We haven’t really been training to run fast at regionals, we have been training to run fast at state,” Wyatt said. “We have a week of training to go and we will see what happens.”

Smith is also excited for what is in store for this weekend.

“To finish in the top 15 or 20 at state and bring home a state medal would be awesome,” Smith said. “Wyatt and I just want to go out there and give it our best and make it one great last race.”