

Saturday, November 19, 2005

Print Page

## Williams keeps titles coming

By Greg Oshust

Marietta Daily Journal Sports Writer

Walton's boys cross country team won the Cobb County and Region 6AAAAA championships and finished second in the state in Class AAAAA in 2005.

In other words, a typical year for coach Tom Williams and his Raiders.

Despite losing a strong group of seniors that included 2004 state individual boys champion Sam Bryfczynski, Williams managed to keep his Walton boys at the top of Cobb County cross country and among the elite teams in the state.

For that, Williams is the Marietta Daily Journal/Cobb County Boys Cross country Coach of the Year.

It was a dominant season for Walton's boys as the Raiders won five meets, including the county and Region 6AAAAA meets.

The only disappointment for Williams was coming up short once again at state, finishing second to Parkview for the second year in a row.

For the most part, though, it was another great season for Williams.

"We were disappointed not to win state," Williams said. "Our goal was to put our best foot forward at the state meet and we fell short again, but it was still a great season for us. I was very pleased with how the season turned out."

While Williams expected another strong state finish from his boys team, he said the Raiders' second-place finish was better than he expected.

"I knew we had a good group of runners coming back and we had a good summer of training, so I thought we could be in position to be on the podium (top-four finish)," Williams said. "Did we think we could be second? Not necessarily, but I thought we could be a good team again."

The early part of the season was an adjustment for Williams and his team as he tried to find replacements for four of his top seven runners - Bryfczynski, Jason Perkowski, Josh Kerzie and Steven Pearl - who led Walton to the county and Region 6AAAAA title and a second-place finish at the Class AAAAA state meet.

"We did lose four of our top seven athletes from last year's state team," Williams said. "We spent the early part of the season seeing who we had and trying to fill those spots."

After starting the season with a ninth-place finish at the Walton Stage Races, Walton proceeded to finish third at the Eye Opener Invitational in Spartanburg, S.C., fourth at the UTC Invitational in Chattanooga, Tenn. and third again at the Clemson Invitational.

For Williams, racing out of state against some of the toughest competition in the southeast early in the season was an important component in preparing his team for the county, region and state meets later in the season.

"We wanted to expose our kids to some tough competition," Williams said. "We wanted to get our athletes in situations against other athletes who they weren't familiar with and expose them to different levels of competition."

Meanwhile, Williams' lineup began to take form, with junior Justin Kerzie, Mark Vigliotti, Thomas Pilliod and Will Bryfczynski stepping up to join junior Jay Heller and senior Corey Hunter and Adam Bradley.

For Williams, it was the FSU Invitational, where Walton finished third behind three teams ranked in the top 10 in the southeast, that his team began to establish its identity and hit its stride.

"After the trip to FSU, we had better idea of who we were as a team," Williams said. "All the pieces fell into place."

After that, Walton proceeded to win its next five meets in a row, including the county and region meets, before finishing second to Parkview at the Class AAAAA state meet.

[goshust@mdjonline.com](mailto:goshust@mdjonline.com)

Copyright © 2005 Marietta Daily Journal. All rights reserved.  
All other trademarks and Registered trademarks are property of their respective owners.