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McEachern s Hubers finally wins state title

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CARROLLTON - After coming close last year, Ben Hubers finally has his state cross country championship.

Hubers, who finished second to Walton's Sam Bryfczynski in 2004, crossed the finish line with a time of 15:28.50 to win the boys individual title at the Class AAAAA state cross country championships at Carrollton High School on Saturday.

With Walton's Jay Heller finishing second (15:51.73) and McEachern's Brian Potts placing third (16:06.20), Cobb runners completed a sweep of the top three positions in the boys individual standings.

Six of the top 10 positions went to Cobb runners, with Walton's Corey Hunter finishing sixth (16:23.15), Lassiter's Zack Flickinger seventh (16:33.71) and South Cobb's D.J. Johnson eighth (16:35.63).

The reality of his state championship still hadn't quite sunk in for Hubers after his victory, but he agreed his state meet experience this year was an improvement over last year, when he lost out to Bryfczynski by only 2 seconds.

"It's hard to describe, it hasn't sunk in yet, but it's a whole lot better than last year," Hubers said.

Heller stayed within striking distance of Huber through most of the race, until Hubers started to pull away at the halfway point.

"Starting in the second lap, I started to pull away," Hubers said. "I felt like I was pretty much in control after that."

Heller said the fast pace set by Hubers took its toll on him after a while.

"Ben set a fast pace in the first mile and that took a little out of me," Heller said. "Hubers ran an awesome race."

Potts was pleased with his third-place finish, as he beat out fourth-place finisher Nathan Frasier of Collins Hill (16:11.75) and fifth-place finisher Michael Winston of Parkview as well as Hunter.

"I was feeling pretty good as I got to the second mile," Potts said. "I was running for third with Nathan Frasier, Corey Hunter from Walton and Michael Winston after that."

Walton finished second to Parkview in the AAAAA team standings for the second year in a row, with the Raiders (104) placing behind the Panthers (84).

Walton coach Tom Williams said the fast early pace of the race and forced his team out of the slower pace it wanted to set.

"It was a very fast pace we went out with and that's not our typical strategy," Williams said. "It happens, but finishing second in the state is still a pretty good showing."

Spurred by Huber's victory and Potts' third-place finish, McEachern finished fifth in the team standings for the second consecutive year.

"We had a top-five finish in the state for the second year in a row," McEachern coach Travis Gower said. "We're making good progress and I look forward to next year."

Lassiter and Kennesaw Mountain were the other two Cobb teams in the top 10, with Lassiter finishing sixth (169) and KMHS 10th (224).

Pope finished 12th (386), while Harrison was 13th (399), Wheeler 16th (416) and Marietta 18th (522).

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