

Watts Finishes Third In Race, Edwardsville Finishes Fourth As Team In Class 3A Boys Cross Country Sectional To Advance To State Meet

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QUINCY - Edwardsville senior runner Ryan Watts finished third in the race as the Tigers had a good all-around performance as a team to advance to next week's state meet by finishing fourth in the IHSA Class 3A Quincy Sectional cross country meet on Saturday morning at Bob Mayes Park in Quincy.

Plainfield South won the meet with a total of 54 points, with Plainfield North coming in second with 78 points, Minooka was third with 120 points, the Tigers came in fourth with 123 points, Plainfield Central was fifth with 160 points, O'Fallon came in sixth with 172 points and Frankfort Lincoln-Way East was seventh and gained the last team spot for state with 187 points. Yorkville was eighth with 224 points, New Lenox Lincoln-Way Central was ninth with 225 points and the host Blue Devils were 10th with 310 points.

The Tigers met their main goal of qualifying for next week's state meet as a team, and also finished in the top four, something that Edwardsville head coach George Patrylak felt was possible.

"Going into the race, we said that we were a top-four team," Patrylak said.

"Realistically, with the way Plainfield North and Plainfield South ran today, we don't have the firepower to match up. I really felt that the boys could have been one place higher, but at the end of the day, we achieved our goal of earning a trip to Peoria."

Watts ran well, ending up third in the field, but he also thought that he could have done better.

"I know he's disappointed at the third-place finish," Patrylak said. "It felt like the race went pretty well for the first half-mile, but then, it stalled for a mile-and-a-half. Ryan tried to put some moves in with a half-mile to go, and actually opened up an eight to 10-meter lead with about a quarter to go."

Watts then made a tactical mistake, easing up a bit too soon, and it allowed the two runners chasing him to pass him up on the final turn of the race, taking the top two spots, leaving Watts unable to respond to the challenges.

"I guarantee that Ryan won't make the same mistake next week," Patrylak said, "and will be hungrier than ever at state."

The course was soft, due to 10 inches of rain the Quincy area received during the week, and also had an abundance of turns, making conditions somewhat difficult.

"Next week will be an entirely different story," Patrylak said.

Geo Patrylak and Ryan Luitjohan were also in the hunt for a top-ten finish, with both missing out, and freshman Hugh Davis also running a solid race after being held out of the Normal regional last week for precautionary reasons.

