



Panthers track down elusive title

Boys break Bruins' streak; Northrop girls roll to win

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By Stacy Clardie

Snider's Kendal Frederick trips after winning the 100-meter dash Tuesday at SAC track meet at Northrop. Frederick won in 10.7 seconds.

Photos by Samuel Hoffman | The Journal Gazette

Darrell Jackson didn't figure he'd get much sleep Tuesday night.

He was too amped after watching his Snider boys track team win its first SAC meet since 1991. When the official score was announced at Northrop, Jackson yelled and hugged members of his staff.

When he spoke with his athletes minutes later, he praised them. "We didn't creep through the door. We won this for us," he said.

The Panthers scored 154 points, well ahead of runner-up Northrop (112.5).

"Runner-up" and Northrop rarely go together. The boys had won the SAC title every year since 1997.

Snider junior Kendal Frederick, who won the 100 (10.7) and 200 (21.76), called the streak "something ridiculous."

That made Snider's victory even more special.

"If there's anybody that respects Northrop more than me, I'd like to find them," Jackson said. "What they've done in the city of Fort Wayne in track is unparalleled. I give them all the credit. It's kind of bittersweet because I have friends on the coaching staff.

"But you know what? We will celebrate this. I am so proud of these guys."

Frederick and many of his teammates weren't even born the last time Snider won the SAC title.

"It feels really great that we can take a piece of Snider with us and always say to our kids when we come back to Snider, 'We're the team that won the SAC championship and ended that drought,'" said Frederick, who was born in 1992. "SAC is a huge deal for us, and we're proud, but we still have big goals like sectional, regional and state. We're not just going to win SAC and turn over and give up. We're going to continue to get better and progress. This is just a milestone for us. But we're going to enjoy it (Tuesday).

"We all came together and just put together a great show and did what we had to do."

Northrop's girls won eight events and racked up 167 points for another SAC title. They've won eight of the last nine. Concordia was second with 114 points.

But the girls meet never was in any doubt.

Whitney McDonald (100 in 12.31), (200 in 24.95) and Demetra Taylor (100 hurdles in 14.73; 300 hurdles in 44.46) won their individuals events and participated in the winning 400 and 1,600 relay teams. Sidra Sherrill was a double-winner by taking the shot (41-8) and discus (122-9).

“It doesn’t get old. I don’t think anybody gets tired of winning,” Taylor, a sophomore, said of the team title. “It may get harder some years, but we just knew we had to come in strong because we have injured runners and just make sure that we try to win another SAC. We have to work for our wins.”

Snider’s boys certainly understand that.

Jackson said several athletes sacrificed and didn’t run their best events in order for the team to get the most points. And then he just got great efforts out of others.

Sophomore Mitch Dutton won the 800 in a meet record time (1:53.79) and also edged teammate Ethan Wappes by three-tenths to win the 1,600.

Dutton said he debated on whether to go hard on the mile, the meet’s fifth event. But his coaches told him they wanted team points. So he got first, and Wappes raced to second.

In the 800, Dutton’s best time had been 1:56 at the indoor state meet, he said. His new record bested the old meet record of 1:54.50 set in 1983 by Northrop’s Mark Keller. Dwenger’s Phillip Schroder was runner-up at 1:55.66.

“I knew me and Ethan (Wappes) would go 1-2 in the mile, and I knew I had to go top 3 in the 8 and I just went for the win and got it,” Dutton said.