

Priddy XC: Boys rebuilding, girls have depth

By Mike Lee
Eagle Contributor

The Priddy boys' cross country team lost six seniors who helped the Pirates finish fifth and fourth, respectively, the last two years at the UIL state meet. Even so, veteran Priddy coach Curtis Hurst thinks this year's team can duplicate last year's success that included being district champions, regional runners-up and fourth place at state.

"We were a lot deeper team last year. We had some sickness (to two seniors) around the regional and state meet and weren't able to perform the way we should have," said Hurst, who coached the Pirates to three state championships between 1994 and 2015.

"This year's team probably won't be as good as last year's, but they have a chance to finish just as high at regional and state as we did last year. Last year we had a veteran team. This year's team will hopefully improve a lot as the season goes along."

Isaac Goehmann is the lone senior this year. He ran at state as a freshman and sophomore, but because of last year's depth, Goehmann couldn't make Priddy's top seven and be on the varsity last year. Still, his state meet experience and improved times last year figure to make Goehmann a solid contributor and leader on this year's team.

The Pirates' top runners from last year include junior Joey Hall, who was the team's top finisher at regional and the No. 3 runner at state last year; sophomore Jarrek Stout, Priddy's No. 2 finisher at region-

al and top runner at state last year; and sophomore Chance Hodges, the Pirates' No. 5 runner at state last year.

Other veterans include junior Keagan Wood, along with sophomores Hunter Gutierrez, Gabriel Del Bosque and Marcos Gutierrez. Help will come from freshmen Javier Del Bosque, Zach Ward, Luke Bream and Britt Major.

"Hunter looked good in the early practices, and two of the freshmen – Javier and Zach – were the top runners in our junior high district last year. They may be in our top five this year," Hurst said.

Teams from the current Region III have combined to win the last five state championships – Cumby Miller Grove in 2014, 2017 and 2018; Saltillo in 2016; and Priddy in 2015. Hurst expects more of the same this year.

"Miller Grove is so good, I don't know if anybody can touch them. Saltillo will be good again," Hurst said.

"We've only got one senior (Goehmann), and he wasn't on the varsity last year. Our freshmen haven't run a three-mile race before (junior high runs two miles). We think they can do it, but there will be an adjustment period. I think we'll improve as the season goes along," Hurst said.

Priddy will host two meets this year – its invitational meet Sept. 25 and the District 17-1A meet on Oct. 16. Both will be contested at Melody Oaks.

In addition to Priddy, District 17-1A includes Cherokee, Cranfills Gap, Evant, Gustine, Jonesboro and Lometa.

Priddy Girls

The Priddy girls' cross country team finished second at its district meet last year despite low numbers. This year, everyone returns from the 2018 team, plus the Lady Pirates are adding three impressive freshmen, giving them quality and depth.

"Last year everybody on the team made the varsity because we only had seven girls," veteran coach Jimmy Cain said. "This year we have 10 girls, and there will be competition to make the varsity team. Competition will be good. It showed up the first week of practice. Our practices have been a lot more intense."

The Lady Pirates finished second at the District 17-1A meet and competed at regional last year. Linda Evans, one of four seniors on the Lady Pirates' current roster, was their top finisher from last year's regional meet. She was followed, in order, by teammates Danielle Goehmann, Rianne Hurst, Alyssa Hurst and Trixie Hodg-

es.

Savannah Schrank, another of the current seniors, is back and running well after missing last year's regional meet with an injury.

"Our times weren't awesome last year, but from where they started, they improved a lot during the season," Cain said of last year's team. "We hope the same thing happens this year."

"Our preseason workouts were a lot harder this year, and I think that's telling of the work we've done in all the sports over the last year. The hard work is starting to show."

In addition to last year's returnees, the Lady Pirates have three impressive freshmen who should make an immediate impact. Sydney Partin won the junior high district championship last year with a time of 12 minutes, 46 seconds -- which would have won district in the varsity

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The 2019 Priddy boys' cross country team.

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