

Gutsy 800

Lair earns state championships in track, swimming

The start was horrible.

But it was the ending that counted.

"A horrible start is usually a death sentence to an 800 runner, but Grant (Lair) is so tough mentally and (gutsy), and he ran so smart," coach Matt Jaschen said. "He got himself from the back, got himself near the front at the right point of the race, and he just hung on and used those guys as targets."

Before the race Lair and junior Joe Schaefer thought they could go one, two. However, talking about doing it and actually doing it were different. "Running the race, I honestly didn't expect to win at all and even at the finish line I wasn't sure if I had won or if I was in second place because it was such a close call," Lair said. "After finding out I had won I was just in shock I didn't really grasp it till later, but during the race I wasn't really thinking on getting a state title I was just running my race the way I always do and it worked out."

After earning two swimming state championships last year in the 200 and 400 freestyle relays, the senior won the 800 meters at state track. He ran a 1:53:54 beating Tyler Olson of Muscatine by :02 in a photo finish. Schaefer earned fourth. Both ran under 1:55 to break the school record.

Lair and Schaefer along with senior Carsten Thompson and sophomore Samuel Schmitz earned second place in the 4x800 relay. Even though they broke the school record, not winning the relay at state motivated Lair. "Runner up was great in 4x800 but I wanted to win and fifth was, eh, in the d-med, but I wanted to win," Lair said. "I was just hungry for a title and that kinda helped the last 100."

After running his freshman and sophomore year, Lair did not go out for track his junior year to concentrate on swimming although his swim coach Shari Walling advised against it. "Even though he didn't go out junior year we still maintained that relationship with him and respected his decision to focus on swimming and when I heard he was coming back out I was pretty excited and that turned out well," Jaschen said.

After the announcement that Lair won, Schaefer ran up to give him a hug. "He was nervous that if he got disqualified it would be my fault," Schaefer said. "He was like, GET OFF THE TRACK, GET OFF THE TRACK!"

Schaefer hugged him after they got off the track and a camera crew interviewed Grant. "I was trying to stay humble, congratulate everybody and give my interview," Lair said. "Once we got off the track all the coaches came up to hug me and my teammates, so it was just a good feeling."

Lair credited his coaches. "I would have to give it all to the coaches, especially Jaschen and the way he set us up throughout the season with Monday workouts and right amounts of mileage and good amounts of speed work and the balance between anaerobic and aerobic training was just perfect," he said.

Jaschen gave credit to Lair. "It was one of the guttiest 800s I've ever seen."



Individual Records

100 M Dash- Quincy Hale, 11.67
 100 M Hurdles- Max Roquet, 16.85
 200 M Dash- Jackson Blair, 24.16
 400 M Dash- Joe Schaefer, 53.81
 400 M Hurdles- Kyle Schneider, 1:00.06
 800 M Run- Joe Schaefer, 1:57.52
 1600 M Run- Tom Altier, 4:19.36
 3200 M Run- Tom Altier, 9:30.74
 Long Jump- Lopez Scott, 20-02.00
 High Jump- Max Roquet, 5-08.00
 Shot Put- Tyler Bacon, 51.05.00
 Discus- Jake Dieleman, 159.02.00

Johnston Records

4x100 M Relay- 43.55
 4x100 M Shuttle Hurdle Relay- 1:01.51
 4x200 M Relay- 1:31.08
 4x400 M Relay- 3:28.29
 4x800 M Relay- 7:59.71
 800 Medley Relay- 1:38.30
 1600 Medley Relay- 3:37.40

Senior Grant Lair turns the corner in the 4x800. Lair was the first state champion from Johnston since Jared Seay won in the high jump, winning the 800 by .02 seconds with a time of 1:53.54 which is the new school record. (photo by Hanna Tanner)

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Boys' Track

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2. Senior Grant Lair runs in the 4x800. Lair - who had not ran track since his freshman year- rejoined the track team instantly becoming one of the best 400 and 800 runners on the team. He qualified for the Drake Relays in the 4x800 and the distance medley relay. (photo by Hanna Tanner)

3. Sophomore Samuel Schmitz runs at the Johnston Early Bird Meet. Schmitz had one of the brightest futures of any sophomore long distance runner, as he qualified for the 1600 in the Drake Relays. (photo by Hanna Tanner)



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4. Senior Tom Altier runs in the 1600 at the Drake Relays. Altier finished fourth, setting a school record in the process and beating his former teammate and current ISU Cross Country runner Patrick Bose with a time of 4:19.36. (photo by Hanna Tanner)

5. At the Drake Relays sophomore Zach Abbey runs in the 4x100. The 4x100 team was not completely healthy the full year until the last day for Drake qualifying in which they easily qualified. The team of Dre Henderson, Blake Murray, Zach Abbey and Anthony Coleman finished eighth at the Drake Relays. (photo by Hanna Tanner)



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6. Senior Waleed Yual completes the handoff and takes off in the 4x800 during the Johnston Invite. It was the first meet held at the new track. (photo by Hanna Tanner)

7. Trying to hold off teammate junior Michael Schmitz in the 3200 is junior Owen Ness. Ness ended up winning the race with a time of 10:41.60, narrowly beating Schmitz who finished second with a time of 10:42.40. (photo by Hanna Tanner)