

## Girls, boys seventh amid stiff competition

Written by Deb Egenberger  
Thursday, 04 October 2012 14:48 -

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Swede runners competed among some of the best opponents in the state during the Gothenburg Invite on Thursday.

“I told several coaches that I believed getting in the top 10 at Gothenburg would be even more difficult than at the UNK meet last week,” said Gothenburg coach Steve Reeves.

Runners from all four classes competed against each other on a difficult Wild Horse Golf Club course.

For the girls, Gabby Gracia of Holdrege smoked the course in 14:54 for the gold medal. She placed fourth at state in Class B last year and will compete in Gothenburg’s C-4 district at Ogallala next week.

The second-place runner, Molly Sughroue of McCook, was fifth in the state in Class B in 2011 while third-place finisher Vanessa Ambriz of Lexington was third in that class and teammate Odaliz Santoyo took the state champion medal last fall.

“It was a tough field,” Reeves said. “I knew it would be difficult to medal.”

Lexington earned the Gothenburg Invite girls championship with four medalists. Cozad came in second with the Swedes in seventh place.

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Reeves said the girls didn't have a bad meet, it was just stiff competition.

Destiny McVay was the first Swede girl to cross the finish in 22nd place followed by Abbie Mazour and Alayna Collins.



"I really don't look at times much," Reeves said, "because every course has a different degree of difficulty. I just want the girls to push themselves and keep the top people grouped together."

The Gothenburg boys faced the same sort of tough opponents, also finishing seventh in the team standings.

Chris Shelton of Minden won the boys race. He medaled in the state meet in Class C last fall.

Jalen Grant of Lexington, who placed second, was also a medalist in Class B at the 2011 state meet while third-place finisher Garrett Perlinger of Paxton medaled in Class D.

"Again, there were just a lot of good runners from all classes," Reeves said.

Alex Spencer was the first Swede across the finish in 18:11, five places outside a medal. Aaron Collins was the second Swede, followed by freshman Bryce Kowalewski.

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“Bryce ran his best times on one of the more challenging courses,” Reeves said. “He did a really nice job.”

Lexington took the boys team title with four medalists, followed by Minden.

Gothenburg runners have only one meet remaining before the C-4 district at Ogallala on Oct. 11.

The Swedes will run in the Southwest Conference meet at Valentine on Thursday.

“It’s going to be a fight,” Reeves said of the SWC field. “I think among the seven schools to finish fifth or higher as a team we’re going to have to run pretty well.”

Thursday’s meet will begin at 4 p.m. in Valentine.