

Wichita County CC: Wells, Mehl All-State, Lady Indians 3<sup>rd</sup>

Sophomore Paige Wells garnered All-State recognition with a fourth place finish (16:21) at the 2A cross country championships held at Wamego on October 30, 2010. Wells began the race in the upper 20's nearing the ½ mile mark and had moved up to 14<sup>th</sup> place going through the mile mark. Over the last 1.5 miles of the 4K race Paige steadily climbed through the field to reach as high as 3<sup>rd</sup> place with ½ mile to go before settling into her final position of 4<sup>th</sup> which she held for the final 300 meters. Jenna Farris of Lincoln won the race with an excellent time of 15:33, followed by Jenna Snell of Ellinwood and Brooke Fisher of Pratt-Skyline. Farris and Snell had both won individual state championships the prior year with Farris claiming gold in the 1A 3200 meters in track and Snell in the 3A cross championships. The top 4 runners were underclassmen which will make for very competitive races over the next couple of years.

The Lady Indian team returned to Wamego following last year's 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish having been ranked in the top 3 teams all season. New to class 2A this season were two very strong teams in Ness City (1A) and Ellinwood (3A) who we knew would be very difficult to beat. As expected Ness City claimed the team title with 47 points by placing 5 runners in the top 24 of the 95 runner field. Nearly as stellar was Ellinwood with 57 points and 5 runners in the top 25 to claim 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Wichita County placed 5 runners in the top 41 as our 94 points placed us third, ahead of 4<sup>th</sup> place Pratt-Skyline's 116 points. The key to our success is to follow-up Paige's very few points with a solid pack of runners bunched very close together in the front half of the field and we were able to accomplish that as our next four runners finished within 10 seconds of each other from 17:49 to 17:59. Rachel Busch and Makenna Clark were the bookends to this group as both runners ran personal record times on the most challenging course that we run over. Sandwiched between were Sarah Ridder (17:54) and Nicole Huber (17:55). Hannah Mehl (18:32) and Lindsay Schumacher (21:01) ran in the #6 and 7 "pushers" positions that are important in tie-breaking situations. Makenna's improvement in her initial season of cross country, and, Sarah's return following a four race absence prior to last week's regional performance were keys to our return to the podium. This group of young ladies has worked extremely hard since the beginning of July and their work paid dividends in their 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish. Thank you to our two seniors Rachel Busch and Hannah Mehl for helping the Lady Indians to return to the top of the team standings in class 2A cross country. I would also like to thank our faithful followers, family and friends, who have supported us through this very successful season.

Freshman Joshua Mehl toured the hilly Wamego course in 17:37 while claiming 9<sup>th</sup> place and All-State honors as a Top 20 finisher. In the initial stages of the race Joshua was in 99<sup>th</sup> place in the field of 99. In his steady progression up the field he found himself in 33<sup>rd</sup> at the mile mark of the 5K course. Nearing two miles Mehl had made his way to 17<sup>th</sup> place and continued to pass to 14<sup>th</sup> at the 2.5 mile mark. Joshua's strategy is to run even split miles with the idea that over the last mile of the race he is competing with racers who may have run too fast at the start and are not able to finish strong into the finish chute. Passing 5 runners over the final ½ mile Mehl found himself in a sprint finish with league foe Seph Iman of Elkhart who was able to hold Joshua off and claim the 8<sup>th</sup> spot. Joshua's time was the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest for freshman boys in all four classifications (1A-4A) that ran at Wamego. Congratulations Joshua on a very successful freshman season.

Girls: 4K (2.48M)	time	pl	Boys: 5K (3.1 M)	time	pl
Paige Wells-so	15:25	2	Joshua Mehl-fr	17:39	9
Rachel Busch-sr	17:49	34			
Sarah Ridder-jr	17:54	37	Girls Team Score: Ness City 47, Ellinwood 57, Wichita Co 94,		
Nicole Huber-so	17:55	39	Pratt-Skyline 116, Lincoln 124, Sacred Heart 125, Berean		
Makeena Clark-jr	17:29	41	Academy 170, Maranatha Academy 194, Northern Heights		
Hannah Mehl-sr	18:32	55	213, Washington Co 250		
Lindsay Schumacher-jr	21:01	89			