

The Warsaw boys cross country team opened the 2026 season in impressive fashion Saturday, winning the Tiger Invitational for the first time since 2023.

Senior Jaxon Lehman led the Tigers with a runner-up finish, crossing the line in 17:20.6. Warsaw placed all five scorers inside the top 10, with junior Keenan Lyons finishing fourth in 17:32.4, sophomore Eli Swinehart sixth in 17:35.9, sophomore Luke Vander Bie eighth in 17:48.3, and freshman Jadon Flamm ninth in 17:49.9.

Rounding out Warsaw's top seven were senior Jack Boggs, who finished 13th in 18:07.9, and freshman Brady Dewey, who placed 15th in 18:09.7.

"Our coaching staff wasn't quite sure what today would look like," head coach Matt Campbell said. "We didn't talk much strategy. We just wanted the boys to compete and see what happened. This group put together one of the best summers we've had, so we were excited to see what they could do with very little guidance once the race started.

"It wasn't the most ideal day for racing with the humidity, and the course certainly wasn't running fast, so I thought the times our guys put up today were really solid. We walk away feeling good about our start while also knowing there are plenty of things we can improve.

"What I'm most excited about is having our top five within 30 seconds of one another and our top seven within 50 seconds. That's a strong pack, and I think that will be the strength of this team. We may not have the guys right now who are going to go out and win every race individually, but we have a group capable of coming across the line very close together.

"I also think our top 10 could look different from race to race. If someone has an off day, we have guys capable of stepping up and filling that void."

Lehman's performance was especially encouraging after a strong summer of training.

"Jaxon raced extremely well today," Campbell said. "He competed up front the entire race, and it was great to see him walk away with a runner-up finish. He put in a huge summer, along with fellow senior Jack Boggs. Both of those guys want to finish their senior seasons on a high note and help lead this group to a successful finish.

"They've been great examples for our team and are helping set the tone for the entire group. I'm really proud of how they are leading our front pack."

Warsaw also showed plenty of depth throughout its lineup Saturday, with 12 of its top 20 finishers coming from the freshman and sophomore classes.

"That was certainly encouraging to see, but I think it speaks more to the overall depth we're starting to build within the program," Campbell said. "We have a nice mix of experience and youth right now. Our older guys are doing a good job setting the example, and our younger guys are learning what it takes to be successful at this level.

“We still have a lot of areas where we can improve, and it’s only one race, but I really like the direction this entire group is heading. The commitment we saw from our guys this summer has carried over into the start of the season. Now it’s about continuing to show up, staying consistent and getting a little better each week.”

25 New Personal Records:

Keenan Lyons — 11
Eli Swinehart — 10
Jadon Flamm — 9
Brady Dewey — 9
Alek Lantz — 9
Logan Martin — 10
Roosevelt Hoffert — 9
Benjamin Maile — 9
Rushabh Gorhe — 10
Henry Schotter — 9
Teo Petre — 9
Evan Souther — 9
Abner Boren — 9
Logan Hamstra — 9
Christopher Sanchez — 9
Colin Meerzo — 9
Dean Hamstra — 9
Scotty Lyons — 9
Mitch Warner — 10
Kevin Gough — 12
Isaiah Powers — 9
Gavin Mort — 9
Luke Macke — 9
Braden Goshert — 11
Parker Leeuw — 9