

The Warsaw boys cross country team finished eighth out of 19 teams at the Flashrock Invitational on Saturday. The Tigers entered the meet with 15 teams in the field ranked ahead of them.

Warsaw's youth was a bright spot, as sophomores Eli Swinehart and Luke Vander Bie led the Tigers across the finish line. Swinehart placed 47th in 16:58.7, with Vander Bie right behind him in 48th at 16:59.0.

The Tigers' next three scorers weren't far behind. Junior Keenan Lyons finished 65th in 17:14.3, freshman Jadon Flamm was 69th in 17:17.1, and senior Jack Boggs placed 77th in 17:19.9. Warsaw put all five scorers within 21 seconds of one another.

Freshman Brady Dewey finished 81st in 17:21.8, while senior Nolan Stump rounded out Warsaw's top seven in 87th at 17:27.2. All seven Tigers finished within 30 seconds of Swinehart.

"I was really happy with our performances today," Warsaw head coach Matt Campbell said. "With such a big field and not having a front-runner near the very front of the race, it was difficult during the race to tell exactly where we stood as a team. Then all of a sudden, there was this blob of Tigers coming in together. Seeing our top five within about 20 seconds and our top seven within 30 seconds was great."

Campbell was especially encouraged by the performances of the Tigers' younger runners.

"Our underclassmen were super impressive today," Campbell said. "To have two sophomores and two freshmen at 17:21 or faster is awesome. Eli, Luke, Jadon and Brady work extremely hard, and they're ahead of the game because they started investing early in their high school careers. All four of those guys put together great summers."

The improvement of Swinehart and Vander Bie has been particularly noticeable. Neither sophomore was among Warsaw's top seven at Flashrock a year ago, when Vander Bie ran 18:25.0 and Swinehart finished in 18:51.1.

"That's huge improvement," Campbell said. "Jadon also had a great bounce-back race from Tuesday, and Brady is really starting to get it figured out. It would be really cool to see both of those guys break 17 minutes as freshmen. They're getting closer."

Warsaw also received several strong performances from its upperclassmen.

"Keenan has been impressively consistent and reliable," Campbell said. "He has our fifth-fastest time this season, but he's averaging around our No. 2 runner. Some days you have it and some days you don't, but even when he isn't feeling his best, he continues to deliver consistent performances. That's huge, and that kind of reliability can make a difference when it matters."

“Jack had a great bounce-back race today,” Campbell said. “He ran more than a minute faster than he did on Tuesday and looked much more like himself. Jack led our team in mileage this summer, so we know how much work he has put into this season. It was great to see him back up there with our scoring group today. He’s a senior who has invested a lot into this program, and I’m excited to see what he can do for us down the stretch.”

Stump continued his steady progression as the season moves along.

“Nolan continues to gain fitness every week,” Campbell said. “He’s a wrestler and a pole vaulter, so cross country is really his third sport. He only trains specifically for cross country for two or three months, and we’re starting to see him round into form.”

Rising Varsity Finishes Seventh

Warsaw finished seventh out of 12 teams in the Rising Varsity race.

Senior Jaxon Lehman led the Tigers in 22nd place with a time of 17:42.3. Freshman Alek Lantz followed in 38th at 18:17.2, sophomore Logan Martin was 51st in 18:54.1, senior Owen Meerzo placed 53rd in 18:58.0, sophomore Rushabh Gorhe was 55th in 19:00.9, freshman Henry Schotter finished 57th in 19:10.0, and senior Ben Mort placed 58th in 19:21.6.

“I know this wasn’t the race Lehman wanted today, but he had a strong start to the race,” Campbell said. “I think the cooler weather in the coming weeks will make a big difference for him. He still owns our fastest time of the season, and today he was our eighth runner. That shows how much depth we have, and I believe Jaxon will be a difference-maker for us when it matters.”

Campbell also highlighted the continued progress of Lantz and Gorhe.

“Alek continues his impressive freshman season,” Campbell said. “He’s been very consistent and is knocking on the door of our tournament roster standard. Rushabh continues to make steady improvement as well, and today he hit our 19:00 varsity letter standard. That’s a big accomplishment for him. He’s continued to work and improve throughout the season, and it was great to see that work pay off today.”

Tigers Place Ninth in JV Race

Warsaw finished ninth out of 18 teams in the JV race.

Freshman Ben Maile led the Tigers in 59th place with a time of 19:08.4. Freshman Teo Petre placed 88th in 19:33.9, freshman Chris Sanchez was 119th in 19:53.4, sophomore Keaton Kuhn finished 127th in 20:02.5, junior Owen Aukeman was 130th in 20:04.9, senior Caleb Poorman placed 132nd in 20:05.4, and senior Grayson Waldo finished 150th in 20:22.5.

Campbell highlighted freshmen Schotter and Maile, who are both closing in on Warsaw’s varsity letter standard.

"I'm rooting hard for Henry and Ben," Campbell said. "They're both just seconds away from earning varsity letters. Coming into the season, Ben was around our No. 7 incoming freshman and Henry was around No. 10. Now Henry is averaging around 13th on our entire team and Ben around 15th. They put in huge summers, and it's paying off."

Campbell believes both freshmen have the potential to become important pieces of the program moving forward.

"I would love to see both of those guys hit that 19-minute standard and earn their varsity letters," Campbell said. "They both have promising futures in our program because they have incredible work ethics and are willing to put the work in. They're going to continue to get better, and we're really excited about their futures."