



The Free Press

## East and West girls cross country

A field of corn makes a picturesque backdrop as Mankato West junior Claire Attarian (left) and Mankato East eighth-grader Emily Eckheart compete in a cross country race at Minneopa Golf Course on Tuesday. Photo by Pat Christman

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MANKATO — Mankato West girls cross country coach Scott Carlson knew his team had a chance at winning Tuesday's nine-team

Scarlet Invitational at Minneopa Golf Course.

All he wanted was an opportunity to see what his runners could do.

"I had seen Chanhassen's time, and I knew we were close. Maybe our times were a little slower than their's overall, but I thought if we went at them head-to-head, that might change things. Our girls ran well today, and that's all you can ask."

West placed five competitors in the top 20 and wound up tying Chanhassen with 60 points. The tie was broken in West's favor when the Scarlets' sixth runner — Briggs Carlson — bested Chanhassen's Lily Hanson 20:28.9 to 20:38.6.

Rochester John Marshall finished third (122 points), Mankato East was fourth (125), Belle Plaine was seventh (153) and Maple River was ninth (195).

The race featured a lot of close individual battles as medalist Emma Christensen of JM ran with Chanhassen's Anastasia Korzenowski virtually the whole race until pulling away down the stretch for a winning time of 17:14.7.

West's Claire Attarian and East's Emily Eckheart were also together most of the way until Eckheart pulled ahead over the last 200 meters. With about 50 meters to go, however, Attarian delivered one last burst to pass her rival and place fourth in 18:33.9. Eckheart was fifth in 18:34.7.

"She was right behind me the whole race," Attarian said. "I knew she was there. She likes to key on certain people, and I guess today it was me.

"She pulled ahead and then I got here right near the end. It was a satisfying win."

Eckheart admitted her strategy was to stay with Attarian.

"I know she's West's top runner so I wanted to stay close," she said. "I took the lead, but I didn't quite have enough to fend her off."

The seventh and eighth-place spots were also close as West's Anna Freyberg battled East's Ivy Glade. Freyberg was seventh in 18:50.7, and Glade was eighth in 18:56.4.

Sunshine Langworthy was 12th for the Scarlets (19:29.2), Jenni Schwartz was 18th (20:14.7) and Ana Goellner was 19th (20:17.7). Rounding out East's top five were Claire Johnston (3rd, 20:51.1), Treselia Greiner (38th, 21:23.0) and Quinn Johnston (42nd, 21:44.7).

Belle Plaine's top runner was Alissa Schultz (17th, 20:12.3), and Maple River's top finisher was Gabriela Passmore (16th, 19:58.4).