

Dunbar Optimistic heading to Nationals

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Erik Wander/KMXT

Kodiak High

School senior Trevor Dunbar earned his first ticket to the national high school cross country championships by placing third Saturday in the Foot Locker Western Region Cross Country Championships in Walnut, California. Dunbar becomes only the second Alaskan high school boy to make it to nationals and only the fourth Alaskan runner overall. KMXT's Erik Wander has more.

Dunbar, who earned the national berth by placing third at the event, was leading the race with 800 yards to go, before being passed by two runners on a downhill and finishing third, with a time of 15-minutes 43-seconds. The winner, Chris Schwartz of Bakersfield, California, was five seconds ahead of Dunbar, while the runner-up, Brian Shrader of Flagstaff, Arizona, beat Dunbar by just a second. Dunbar said he was far from disappointed with the third-place finish.

-- (Dunbar 1 26
sec
"The goal was just ... the time to do that.")

The Kodiak senior, who holds the nation's second fastest 5-kilometer time for high school boys this season, said he prefers running in warm weather climates when compared with the relatively inhospitable, cold and icy conditions of Alaska.

-- (Dunbar
2 35 sec "You can always ... mentally
tired of it, up in Alaska.")

Dunbar
said he expects vigorous competition Saturday when he faces the nation's best
runners from four different regions, the South, Midwest,
Northeast and West, but he looks forward to the challenge. He said that while
his goal is to finish in the top ten, he's not ruling out the possibility of
winning the race.

-- (Dunbar 3 45
sec
"I'm not expecting ... would be awesome.")

Kodiak's Sam Salus placed 42nd at
the event Saturday, finishing less than a minute behind the leader. Dunbar will
remain in California this week before
competing in the national championships in San Diego on Saturday. He said he will make a
decision in January as to whether to run at Oklahoma
State, Portland
or Northern Arizona next year. I'm Erik
Wander.

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