Collins is first Swede to earn three state medals.

KEARNEY—With average times better than previous performances at Kearney as well as a state medal and a fourth-place team finish, the Gothenburg boys cross country team has plenty of reason to be proud of the way it ended the 2009 season on Friday.

Swede senior Andrew Collins earned his third straight medal in 10th place at the state cross country meet as the boys finished fourth in the team standings behind champion Norfolk Catholic, Ogallala and Wayne.

“Class C was tremendously tough this year,” said Gothenburg coach Steve Reeves. “Even though the boys had an outstanding performance, I think they were a little disappointed.”

After such a solid season, Reeves said the Swedes had hoped to bring home a trophy.

“We did the best we could and had a little better times across the board,” he said. “That’s all we can ask.”

Norfolk Catholic won its fourth straight team title behind all-class gold medal winner Jarren Heng, a Knight senior.

Heng's time of 16:05.5 gave him his second Class C individual title and was the best of all runners in all classes.

Reeves said the Swedes defeated Class D state champion Hastings St. Cecilia earlier in the year and competed well against Class B champion Lexington all season.

"There was just an awful lot of talent in our class," Reeves said.

Collins becomes the first Gothenburg runner to earn three state medals, the coach said.

Collins qualified for the state meet all four years, finishing just outside a medal as a freshman.

"Obviously it's going to hurt losing Andrew next year," Reeves said, "and Eric Stevens too but we have a lot of kids coming back who will be successful again if they set their goals high and work hard in the off-season."

Sophomore Brett Dockweiler was just two spots from earning his first state medal, finishing in 17th place.

Fellow sophomores Bryce Eggleston and Joshua Clark came in 22nd and 33rd respectively, while junior Luke Rehmert and Stevens were 68th and 69th out of 91 runners.

"These kids have a lot of character and a great work ethic," Reeves said. "If a coach could have this kind of group every year, he'd coach forever."

The Gothenburg boys won four of the eight scoring meets prior to state this season and did not finish below third in any meet.

Reeves said he doesn't think this group will be as recognized collectively as some of the other Swede cross country teams he has coached over the years, simply because of the competition they've faced.

"But this is an outstanding group of young men and it will be interesting to see what the future holds for them."

BOYS TEAM SCORING

1. Norfolk Catholic 27; 2. Ogallala 43; 3. Wayne 48; 4. Gothenburg 63; 5. Broken Bow 87; 6. Milford 116; 7. Boone Central 124; 8. Bennington 138; 9. Arlington 140; 10. Lincoln Lutheran 150; 11. Boys Town 171; 12. Wood River/Shelton 181.

SWEDE VARSITY BOYS

10. Andrew Collins 17:22.8

17. Brett Dockweiler 17:38.4

22. Bryce Eggleston 17:52.2

33. Joshua Clark 18:10.7

68. Luke Rehmert 18:58.0

69. Eric Stevens 18:59.2