

**Sophomore Lindsey Riker has had many strong routines for the Hinsdale Central girls gymnastics team this season, but never in the same meet.**

**"There's one (event) I mess up, especially (balance) beam," Riker said.**

**On Saturday, Feb. 1, in their main gymnasium, Riker and the Red Devils were the last team to compete on beam to conclude the West Suburban Conference Silver Division Meet.**

**This time, Riker didn't fall. It was the final piece to a season-high 33.275 all-around total for 10th place that helped the Red Devils finish fifth with 127.975 points.**

**"I thought it was one of my personal best meets. I got 8s on everything and it was fun, exciting," said Riker, whose previous season high was 32.50 Dec. 11.**

**"I was doing well so it felt good, especially because we were in the main gym (instead of the fieldhouse)."**

**Riker and the Red Devils hope to be competing in the main gym again at the Hinsdale Central Sectional at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12. They'll have to qualify first via the Lyons Township Regional at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 7, in La Grange.**

**On Saturday, the Red Devils competed with just four all-arounders – Riker, junior Maddie Sesemann, who had two top-10 event finishes, senior Alex Yager and sophomore Jamie Sherlock.**

**While defending state champion and top-seeded LT should easily win the regional, the 10th-seeded Red Devils can qualify as a team as one of the two highest-scoring non-regional winners from the four feed-in regionals. They probably will have to score in the mid-130s and have scored more than 130 only once this season (130.65 Jan. 16).**

**Individuals also can advance automatically with top-five regional finishes or at-large by being among the top 12 remaining scores. Other teams at**

the regional are No. 8 Downers Grove North and No. 16 Geneseo, which has competed mostly on the junior varsity level.

Hinsdale Central edged Downers North (127.975) for fifth Saturday to tie for fifth in the final overall Silver standings with the Trojans, who won their Dec. 18 dual.

"An outside (chance to advance as a team). It would be nice, especially since we are hosting, to make it at-large," Hinsdale Central coach Kim Estoque said. "Hopefully with some JV kids up for regionals, it'll help out our score."

The kind of determination the Red Devils displayed Saturday also will help their chances.

Even after hyper extending her knee while vaulting during the rescheduled dual with Oak Park-River Forest Wednesday, Jan. 29, Sesemann managed to continue competing all-around. She finished ninth on uneven bars (8.375) and 10th on floor (8.775) en route to 11th in all-around (33.075), in range of her 33.50 career-best.

"It was harder because once warmups were done, it really started to hurt, but then it was fine for the rest of the meet," Sesemann said. "If I would have had a better bars score, I could have placed (top five) in all-around, but you've got to try your best."

Yager (31.60) and Sherlock (30.025) were 16th and 20th in all-around. Sherlock was 11th on vault (8.575), .025 from 10th, Yager was 13th on uneven bars with a season-high 8.15.

Riker approached beam with plenty of momentum. She was coming off a season-high 8.55 on floor that finished 12th and also was 11th on uneven bars (8.325) and tied for 21st on vault (8.375).

For a fleeting second, Riker nearly fell on her 1 1/2 turn, but she quickly regained her composure. She finished 14th (8.025), .275 from her season

**best even with tight scoring.**

**"I wanted to stick it so bad," Riker said. "I knew (beam) was the last event and I wanted to just finish the meet out strong. I wanted to finish it and know I did my best on each event, which was the first time that happened in the season."**

**Sesemann was the only returnee from last year's varsity lineup at the Silver Meet, competing on uneven bars and floor and finishing 17th on both.**

**"(This year) was more fun and it was kind of fun to be last on some events," Sesemann said. "We went in knowing we weren't going to win conference, obviously. LT was going to win. It was more fun for everyone. It was like, 'Go out, get your best scores, go for the tricks that you're scared of, just have fun.' There wasn't as much pressure this time compared to other meets."**

**This was the fourth straight meet in which the Red Devils competed with just four all-arounders, meaning every score counts toward the team total. Teams are allowed to enter five gymnasts per event, and the Red Devils will do that again at regionals.**

**Estoque decided to keep the JV I team's lineup intact to compete in its Silver Meet, which is held at the same time as the varsity.**

**"We're lucky enough for regionals to pull up JV girls. We'll have a full five girls per event, which will help out with some of the falls, which definitely helps out with our score," Sesemann said.**

**Sesemann and Riker are the only returnees from last year's sectional lineup. While they have to compete against LT, the Red Devils will have the advantage of competing in the final regional so they will know at least what they need to score to contend for berths.**

**The Lions will take most of the top-five finishes, if not all. That will leave the Red Devils and Downers North competing for any remaining medals**

**and at-large spots.**

**"Downers North and us have been pretty close so it could go either way," Estoque said.**

**Sesemann said she would continue icing and tending to her knee so she can compete as an all-rounder.**

**"For regionals, the goal is really to (qualify as) a team. Personally, I definitely want to make it to sectionals, hands down, whatever I have to do," Sesemann said. "A lot of us are going in (realizing), 'Don't be really, really worried if you don't place. You can have a chance at-large.' It's like, 'Get your best score because even though you don't place, you definitely have a chance to still make it.' "**

**-- by Bill Stone**