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County youth equestrian team named state co-champions

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FREMONT -- A Sandusky County equestrian team recently received the title of state co-champions.

The fourteen on the team are from several area high schools, including Ross, Clyde, Lakota, Gibsonburg and St. Joseph Central Catholic.

Coach Bill Wallace, of Helena, said there were three regular shows in September, which they won at the Wood County Fairgrounds. The last show was the state championship Oct. 4 in Oregon. The local team tied with a team from Napoleon.

"Our group has participated for about 10 years," Wallace said. This was his first year as coach.

The team is part of the Ohio Interscholastic Horseman's Association.

During the shows, the team participates in events such as showmanship, English showmanship and hunter under saddle, among others.

"They really did a nice job," Wallace said of the team. "They have a willingness to work together, and all of them did their best."

He said the team will lose six seniors this year to graduation, so next fall a lot of the team members will be new. The team is open to boys and girls in grades nine through 12.

"Everyone has to have their own horses, and the season begins after 4-H ends," he said.

Joy Hoffman, a senior at Fremont Ross High School, said she hopes to continue showing horses in college.

"It's unique," she said. "When you're showing it's individual, but you're still part of a team."

Hoffman said she has been a part of the team since she was a sophomore.

Jessica Long, a senior at St. Joseph Central Catholic High School, said she will continue to show horses because it's such a big part of her life.

"I learned that winning isn't everything and being a part of the team is what matters," she said. When showing, she said, "You're working together and you're more motivated to place because we always get points no matter where you place."



Members of a local equestrian team Allie Hoch and Joanne Fish participate in a relay race. (Submitted photo)