

Harriers Give Patriots Close Race

by Tim Probst

Prep News Sports Reporter

The traditional pre-season battle between the SLUH and Parkway South cross country teams took place Wednesday at Castlewood State Park. The varsity team lost a close race 24-31, but the junior varsity and freshman teams dominated the Patriots on their way to victory.

Senior Tim Probst won the varsity race in 18:24, running a "very smart race," according to Coach Jim Linhares. Parkway South followed with the next four finishers, but SLUH took places six through nine. Junior Ray Griner placed sixth overall and second for SLUH with a time of 19:02. Sophomores Pat Hamel and Kevin Myers and senior Matt Dougherty rounded out the top five for the Harriers.

Scoring for cross country races is done by adding the finish places of the team's top five finishers, with the lowest score winning. So even though the varsity team had individually won the race and had a strong pack, it lost because Parkway South's large pack finished ahead of SLUH's.

Coach Linhares remarked, "I was real pleased with the way the varsity competed man for man. Going in, I regarded Parkway South as a team that might make an impact at the state meet."

The junior varsity team defeated Parkway South by the score of 22-53. Senior Mike Russo led the way for SLUH by finishing second overall in a time of 19:39. Junior Jack Kennebeck was close behind with a time of 19:56 and sophomore Ben Goeke finished fourth overall in 19:58.

"We were super strong on the junior varsity level," commented Linhares. "We had a lot of depth. Russo and Kennebeck were expected to be well up, and they were. Also Ben Goeke is a big surprise."

Russo and Kennebeck will race on the varsity level in today's Southpaw Invitational because their times were faster than the sixth and seventh men in the varsity race, Matt Schuckmann and Chris Jones. Jones did not finish his race after collapsing fifty meters from the finish because of dehydration.

SLUH also showed its dominance on the Freshman level, as the first fourteen finishers were SLUH runners. Ben Fanson won the 1.3 mile race in a time of 8:54, closely followed by Joel Brown (8:55), Max Ferrigni (9:10), and Shannon Yates (9:11).

“I’ve never seen total domination like that. There is a lot of quality on the Freshmen level,” said Linhares.

The Harriers’ next race is today in the Southpaw Invitational, where SLUH is the defending champion. “But,” Linhares warns, “this year there are many tough teams. It is a class field.” The teams SLUH will be battling in defense of their title are Oakville, which is returning seven of their state meet runners from last year, CBC, Kirkwood, Mehlville, and Webster Groves.

“If we do what we’re supposed to do—stay in a pack, and race man to man—we will be successful. I’m also encouraged now that we can set our long-range goals and go to state.”