

Cross Country Team Takes the District Championship

by Ray Griner
Prep News Sports Reporter

As the season draws to a close, the varsity, junior varsity, sophomore, and freshman cross country teams have been reaping the benefits of their hard training, claiming four first place, one second place, and one third place finish at four different meets in the past two weeks.

Inspired by the support of a STUCO Blue Crew, the varsity, junior varsity, and freshman teams repeated last year's performance, convincingly sweeping the MCC Conference Meet two Saturdays ago at Blackburn Park.

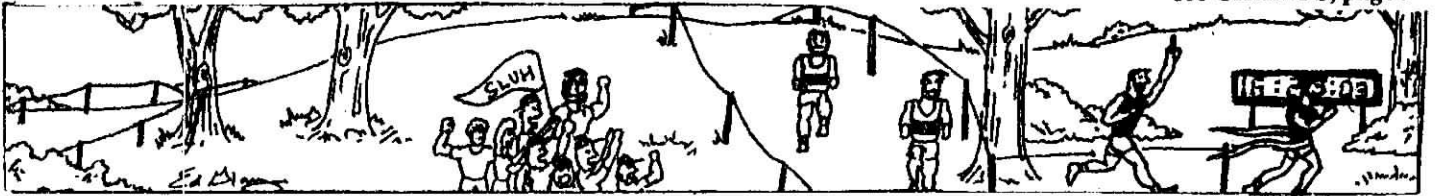
Freshman Joe Donnelly set the tone in the first race of the day, finishing first individually in the freshman division and leading the freshmen Harriers to an easy victory over their conference rivals. SLUH's next five runners, Eric Monda (18:17), Tim Blessing (19:03), Tim Costigan (19:18), Ryan Monahan (19:24), and Brian O'Neal (19:41) all placed in the top ten, finishing second, fourth, sixth, seventh, and eighth respectively.

SLUH's battalion of junior varsity runners ran next and dominated the race both in numbers and in places, as they scored a perfect fifteen points. Senior John Barrett (17:42) won the race, but was

closely followed by senior Chris Jones (17:48), senior Dave Chilenski (17:59), sophomore Ben Fanson (18:03), sophomore Joel Brown (18:05), and junior Matt Schuckmann (18:27), who all finished before any rival runners.

In the final race of the day, the varsity Harriers completed the sweep of individual and team titles. In the field of thirty-five varsity runners, junior Pat Hamel (16:20), senior Ray Griner (16:56), junior Kevin Meyers (17:08), sophomore Tim Chik (17:31), and senior Jack Kennebeck (17:33) all finished in the top ten, with finishes of first, third, fifth, eighth, and

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ninth place, respectively. Senior Jay Hunzeker (17:43) and junior Tim Denny (18:17) finished thirteenth and twenty-first to complete the top seven, as SLUH's total of twenty-six points won the five-team meet by a thirty-five point margin.

After competing together at the MCC meet, the varsity, sophomore, and freshman teams separated on various days last week to run at different invitationals.

The sophomore squad showed depth as all seven runners finished in under twenty minutes at the Tiger Classic on the Southern Illinois University campus at Edwardsville. Brown (18:04), Fanson (18:08), John Caldwell (18:08), Keith Myers (18:58), Francis Shen (19:05), John Flynn (19:19), and John Emert (19:20) took places nine, ten, twelve, twenty-seven, thirty, thirty-three, and thirty-four and finished a respectable third to strong East St. Louis and Belleville East squads.

The next day, the freshman squad battled rain, hills, and a late bus as they took second among fourteen teams at the Hazelwood Freshman Invitational at Sioux Passage Park. Transportation problems caused the team to arrive just fifteen minutes before their race, but the freshmen had a strong day nevertheless. Monda (19:24) and Donnelly (19:34) both finished in the top ten with fourth and sixth place finishes. Costigan (20:40), Joe Monahan (20:48), Tim Blessing (20:49), Ryan Monahan (20:57), and Mike Sciaroni (21:15) were SLUH's next five as the team lost by ten points to Parkway West.

Last Saturday, the varsity carried its two-meet winning streak into the District meet at Eureka High School. Theoretically, the favored Harriers' season could have ended there, as only four of the district's ten teams would advance to sectionals. However, the team responded

to tough competition from Webster Groves, Kirkwood, Parkway South, CBC, and Marquette and brought home what no recent SLUH cross country team has achieved—the district championship.

The top three of Hamel (16:54), Griner (17:04), and Myers (17:07) all had strong last half-miles to climb to second, fifth, and sixth place. Kennebeck (17:32), Chik (17:43), Barrett (17:44), and Hunzeker (18:14) also held off key competitors as they rounded out the Junior Bill top seven. After a suspenseful ten minutes, the varsity team learned it had defeated Webster Groves by three points—fifty-two to fifty-five.

Parkway South and Kirkwood also cleared the district, and these four schools will be joined by district 1 teams Northwest House Springs, Mehlville, DeSoto, and Fox at the sectional meet tomorrow at Jefferson Barracks Park.