

SLUH enjoys its best day in 30 years

CROSS COUNTRY

By Daniel J. Ladd
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And just how good a day did the St. Louis U. High Junior Bills have Saturday at the Hazelwood Central Invitational?

"I think it was the best day we've had in 30 years," SLUH coach Jim Linhares said. "In '61, SLUH won the state championship, but since then there hasn't been anything approaching this magnitude."

In a field of 29 teams, including powerhouses Jefferson City and Hazelwood Central, SLUH cruised to a first-place finish, ending the day with 119 points to second-place Hazelwood Central's 133.

The two strongest performances of the day were turned in by juniors Pat Hamel and Kevin Myers. Hamel was sixth with a time of 17 minutes, 36 seconds — a new personal record, and Myers was 10th with a time of 17:49.

"They both ran like champions," Linhares said. "Hamel especially distinguished himself as a champion. No one can deny that when he takes sixth in that field."

Also running strong for SLUH were sophomores Tim Chik, and Ben Fanson, and senior 'Captain Jack' Kennebeck.

The competition at the meet, held on one of the most grueling

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courses in the area, the hilly field at Sioux Passage Park, was the most challenging SLUH has faced.

"Beating Jefferson City was important," Linhares said. "They are legendary runners. When they come to town, they usually leave with all the hardware."

However, the most moving moment for Linhares came when he watched his runners pass the most challenging part of the course, a ¼-mile long hill ½-mile from the finish line that is so steep, so challenging, that local runners call it "Man-Maker Hill."

"I stood on top of Man-Maker Hill," Linhares said, "and I saw the kids come to the top of the hill, and still be running strong. It was a good moment. No one really beats that hill. They just survive it."

For the Junior Bills, a victory on the brutal course may have given them a priceless gift.

"It gave us a great jolt of confidence," Linhares said. "We knew we had a good team, but now we have the psychological boost to believe that we may have a great team."

Adding to Linhares' excitement about the Junior Bills' future was the performance of his junior varsity team. It fin-

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ished with a perfect score of 15 as SLUH runners took the top five places.

Lutheran South continued its unbeaten season, posting its third straight win Saturday at the Fulton Invitational.

Jack Preus, a junior, finished a close second to Rock Bridge's Mike Schneider, after holding the lead until the last half mile. Schneider crossed the finish line at 16:50 and Preus followed at 16:54.

The first-place victory for Lutheran South followed a big sprint by the Lancers' top five in the last mile.

"Halfway through we were in third place," Coach Phil Kershner said.

Also running strong for the Lancers were juniors Bryan Gill, Matt Rall, Bryan Looney, and Jason Maddox.