



John Conrey photo

Kevin Myers

Cross country runners are bunched tightly together at Saturday's Class 4A District 2 meet at Eureka. SLUH's Pat Hamel, center, ended up finishing ~~second~~ ^{SIXTH} as the Junior Billikens placed first as a team, edging Webster Groves by three points.

SLUH riding high on wave of success

CROSS COUNTRY

By Daniel J. Ladd
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For the St. Louis University High Junior Bills, the '93 season has been like riding the crest of one long, fine wave. And the surf is still up.

SLUH clinched the Class 4A District 2 championship Saturday at Eureka, barely beating Webster Groves 52 to 55.

"I've never had a team that won districts before," SLUH coach Jim Linhares said. "Our guys had to run a great race because Webster Groves ran a great race. It was a nip-and-tuck battle."

The title was the next installment of "SLUH's Best Season in Decades."

"I don't think there's been anything comparable to this

since we won the state championship in '61, and our guys know that something special is going on," Linhares said.

Linhares got another great run out of Pat Hamel, a junior who has been the backbone for the SLUH juggernaut. Hamel was second with a time of 16 minutes, 54 seconds. That trailed Webster's Ron Wagner by only four seconds. Hamel had been gaining on Wagner for the last 100 yards and just missed passing him at the tape.

Senior Ray Griner was fifth and junior Kevin Myers was right on his heels in eighth place. Both Griner and Myers posted personal records at the meet (17:04 and 17:08, respectively).

To Linhares' thinking, Myers turned in the race of the day.

"He's the guy who had the breakthrough day that made

winning possible," Linhares said.

SLUH also got strong performances out of sophomore Tim Chik and seniors Jack Kennebeck and John Barrett.

For Linhares, next week's sectional competition at Jefferson Barracks is almost inconsequential.

"I don't feel like we're invincible," Linhares said, "but my guys have come through week after week. I don't think anything short of an injury will stop us."

After sectionals, SLUH enters a whole new arena with the state meet in Jefferson City.

"I'm not sure what our expectations are going to be once we get there," Linhares said. "It's kind of an open-ended adventure."

"We're after top five or better. My guys have never run at state before, so it's kind of an abstract goal.