

Donahue's dedication pays off in top finishes

CROSS COUNTRY

By Chris Murphy
Correspondent

Cross country coaches love runners who follow their summer training schedules without coaching guidance.

That's why CBC coach Gaylerd Quigley, a fine distance runner in his own right, speaks so highly of junior Owen Donahue, an apparent master of self-motivation.

"I had a plan for him last summer and he did every workout I asked of him except one," Quigley said. "He was sick that day.

"He's a tough kid, but he's real meticulous about training. I don't know if I've ever had a kid so good about that."

Donahue, a Maplewood resident, has quickly become one of the top runners in St. Louis this fall. After placing 39th at state as a sophomore and showing future all-state promise, a fine track season and a solid summer of mileage put him among the elite. He has finished no lower than ninth in a major invitational this fall.

Donahue solidified his position Friday by finishing fourth overall at the Metro Meet at Jefferson Barracks. Donahue covered the flat 5,000-meter course, which was altered by course officials because of recent rains, in 16 minutes, 46 seconds.

Mike Burnett of Hazelwood East won the boys division in 16:37. Donahue had to hold off a surging Pat Hamel of St. Louis University High to keep his fourth slot. Hamel, also a junior, finished in 16:47.

"I could feel him coming on," said Donahue.

Donahue has assumed the leadership role on CBC's team, which has just one senior. He also has had to pick up the slack since Paul Fitzpatrick, a sophomore and another outstanding CBC runner, suffered shin splints, forcing him out of action for the last three weeks.

Fitzpatrick may return to training this week, Quigley said.

"We all have to pick up spots when Paul's not here," Donahue said. "Our team hopes to win conference if Paul comes back. But we know that SLUH is very tough."

SLUH, in fact, won the Metro Meet team competition with 102 points.